

Stories on the Ecumenical Journey

Together in Hope – National Reformation Commemoration: story and reflections

On Tuesday, 31 October 2017, Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Christians from many denominations gathered together in Adelaide, to celebrate the hope we have in Christ. The weather was kind, and the day was laced with both grief and joy as we pondered our shared past, with delight at how far our relationships have progressed, and with recognition of the value of listening, all interspersed with warmth, humour and a deep sense of our unity in Christ. Receptive ecumenism was named on a number of occasions as being the path for drawing us closer in Christ, and for how the Christian community engages in and with the world.

The day began at 7am with morning prayer, followed by breakfast (Bethlehem), and ended with evening prayer at 6.30pm, followed by dinner (St Aloysius College). Throughout the day events in various city locations included Reformation History (St Francis Xavier's), Caritas and Australian Lutheran World Service presentation (Adelaide Town Hall), Tree planting (Pilgrim Peace Park, Veale Gardens), Luther movie screening (St Stephen's), Lunch (Victoria Square), Lutheran and Catholic Histories in SA (St Stephen's), Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Launch/signing of Joint Statement, followed by prayer (St Francis Xavier's).

The concluding paragraph of the statement which was signed by Rev John Henderson, Bishop, Lutheran Church of Australia, and by Archbishop Christopher Prowse, Chairman, Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, see photo www.sacc.asn.au, reads as follows: 'Unity is the gift of God and the will of Christ for his church (Cf. Jn 17:21; 1 Cor 12:13). Both the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Catholic Church acknowledge the unity we already share, and together we confess the one faith. We encourage all members of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church to hear from God a call to be continuously transformed by our encounter with each other and to be living witnesses to the power of the gospel (Cf. Ac 1:8; Rom 1:16).'

May it be so. *Geraldine Hawkes, Ecumenical Facilitator, SA Council of Churches*



*Rev John Henderson, Bishop, Lutheran Church of Australia,
and
Archbishop Christopher Prowse, Chairman,
Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and
Inter-religious Relations, Australian Catholic
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Signing the Joint Statement.*