

Christians for an Ethical Society

Annual Report 2012-2013

Introduction

Christians for an Ethical Society (CES) is a working Group of the NSW Ecumenical Council, also known as Churches Together NSW/ACT, and an Associate Member of the ACT Council of Churches.

Its fundamental aim is to increase the level of knowledge and understanding of the community on key social justice issues and their Christian ethical basis. Social justice is not the monopoly of Christianity. It is also supported by the values of other religions and secular ethical systems, but, as Christians, we believe the dissemination of the truth is part of Christian discipleship. CES primarily meets its goals of promoting social justice and furthering public education in ethics, current social issues and the Christian perspective on them through public forums. In the 2012-2013 year three forums were held under the 2012 theme "Where Lies happiness? Recovering Community" and four under the 2013 theme "Political and Economic Wisdom: As Immoral as it is Unintelligent" Given the limited time and resources of CES members, we are only able to give minimum support to other social justice activities.

CES Chair Arrangements

At the annual general meeting in 2012 I agreed to act as chairman until replaced by someone else hopefully early in 2013. I am still chairman and am willing to continue in that position until the end of the current calendar year. If a successor is announced before then I will discuss with that person the best arrangements for a smooth transition. If not, the committee will have to appoint a new chairman.

Committee

I would also like put on record thanks to each member of the committee for their contributions. There is more involved in conducting forums than may be immediately obvious. Necessary tasks include negotiating with prospective speakers, preparing and distributing publicity flyers, recording the forums and then preparing the record for the web site, maintaining the web site, putting out media releases and other publicity; and of course providing supper and making our speakers and audience feel welcome.

Organisation also requires someone to take good care of the money and for someone to keep a record of our deliberations.

Committee members

Executive John Nevile (Chair), John Goss (Vice-Chair), David Palmer (Treasurer), Robyn Coghlan (Secretary);

Other members: Bill Bush, Jeremy Dawson, Heather McLaren, Werner Padarin, Ivan Roberts.

CES E-bulletin and general publicity

The CES provides a regular e-bulletin to supporters. The bulletin advises of CES forums and notifies of other social justice events occurring in the Canberra region. Publicity is a shared responsibility between committee members. Heather maintains the data base for our e-news and sends out the e-bulletins. This is a substantial task with some 350 supporters on this data base and I, and all the committee, are grateful to her for this especially but also for the many other contributions she has made in 2012-13. Also, although it is not strictly relevant to this report, while Heather is withdrawing from the committee from this year she will continue to maintain the data base and dispatch the e-news bulletins. Werner prepares publicity flyers which all committee members endeavour to circulate, and Bill Bush prepares media releases and Jeremy maintains the web site.

CES Website: www.ces.org.au

A comprehensive web site provides information about the CES, its forthcoming forums and audio tapes of previous forums. Other information on the web site includes notification of non-CES forums related to social justice, links to many papers and reports on social justice and ethical issues and links to other organisations working in the social justice field. Thanks are due to Jeremy for looking after all this.

Special Thanks to Robyn Coghlan

Due to my surgery early this year, our secretary carried a heavier load than usual. I wish to record my personal thanks to her for this. I am sure that the rest of the committee join me in these thanks.

Honorary President

Bishop George Browning continued as our president in 2012-13 and was a very active president, despite his residence on the coast.

Membership

In the year 2012-2013 CES had 31 members.

Thanks to Wesley Uniting Church

We are grateful to Wesley Uniting Church in Forrest for the provision of their premises for our committee meetings.

Thanks to the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Whenever possible, we hold our forums at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. We thank Rev Professor James Haire AM, Executive Director of the Centre; and staff, in particular Mrs Margaret Roberts, Centre and Programs Manager, and Mr Lyndon Mayfield, Administrative Assistant. The ACCC provides both the venue and the powerpoint and sound facilities at a very concessional rate and we are very grateful for their support

Retirement of Heather McLaren

Today is Heather McLaren's last day as a member of our committee. She has been a member of it continuously since the start of CES. I would like to put on the formal record the appreciation of all Heather has done over this time, including a long period as Chair of this committee

John Nevile,

Chair

31 July 2013