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Clearing the Way for Jesus

The newsletter of **Five Islands Christian Ministries** links Christians and churches from Helensburgh to Gerroa to promote church unity. Printer-friendly 2 x A4 PDF files of the newsletter may be downloaded from www.5icm.org.au/resources.html.

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One in Christ

Michael Kinnamon in his book, "Truth and Community. Diversity and its Limits in the Ecumenical Movement", says that although diversity is a good thing, it should not detract from the church's faith in Christ. Both the first and second commandments must be maintained. The pursuit of doctrinal purity should not be at the expense of unity of the body of Christ for this would be idolatry.

The World Council of Churches assembly of 1954 stated, "There is a diversity which is not sinful but good because it reflects both the diversities of gifts of the Spirit in the one body and diversities of creation by the one Creator. But when diversity disrupts the manifest unity of the body, then it changes character and becomes sinful division." (p17).

How much room is there for diversity? Kinnamon argues "that diverse community is the context for discovering truth." (p105). He quotes James Dunn's commentary on Romans 14 that conservatives and liberals must learn to respect each other's faith and not despise one another because the other counts as non-essential what they consider essential (p105).

Quoting the first General Secretary of the WCC, Willem Visser, Kinnamon wrote, "Genuine ecumenical dialogue must be understood as 'spiritual battle for truth,' although he added, it is a common battle against error and not a fight between partners based on the assumption that one is already right and wrong." (p9). "Some [churches] will stress that truth is the basis for real community, others that community is the context for discovering truth." (p12).

"Ecumenism is a way of looking at reality that refuses to absolutize relative perspectives." (p109). Kinnamon says there are two unacceptable diversities.

1. The absence of love for fellow believers.
2. The idolatrous allegiance to things that are less than ultimate. Most members of the church are idolatrous to some extent, but our emphasis should be on excluding error not congregations.

Illawarra Church News

1. Fr James Arblaster has been appointed as Catholic Chaplain to the University of Wollongong. This will be in addition to his duties in Lumen Christi Parish.

2. The Autumn edition of Scripture Union News reported that there was the **Bulli Beach Mission** could not be held as normal this year because of a mix up by the caravan park. 30 members of the team conducted a rural mission at Narromine (near Dubbo) and the remaining 20 team members made day trips to Bulli to conduct the beach mission. The Narromine "beach" mission was a resounding success and future annual rural missions are planned. Meanwhile at **Corrimal Beach Mission** a primary aged girl is quoted as saying, "I didn't know about Jesus before coming to Mission, and now I believe in him."

Sicm News

- 1. Wollongong Gospel Choir** rehearsals will not recommence until May but you may make a free booking for later in 2023. For further information, see the WGC [website](#).
- 2. Gary Hetherington** will try to plant a church in Canowindra after Easter.
- 3. Illawarra Seniors Band** reported: "Blue Haven Kiama welcomed The Illawarra Seniors Band once again to their beautiful Atrium where we held a very entertaining concert. Phil Eades was the stand-in Musical Director who compered and entertained the audience with his almost "Dad" jokes and his excellent knowledge of the repertoire. The Band was well received as usual with pieces from Chopin to Andrew Lloyd Webber, Beatles to Louis Armstrong's "What a wonderful world" and included a Thought and Prayer before the Band played "He's got the whole world in His hands" and "An Irish Blessing"."
- 4.** The next issue of ***Clearing the Way for Jesus*** newsletter will be sent on **Tuesday 18th April**. Please send me church news items, prayer requests and combined church events to share with Christians of the Illawarra. To subscribe to this newsletter please email or message me on Facebook with your email address.

God bless,
Derek Thompson,
Five Islands Christian Ministries Inc., a registered charity.

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Ecumenical Activities in the Illawarra

Wollongong Gospel Choir – Rehearsals are held on Tuesdays during school terms and will recommence in Term 2.

7:00 pm. At Wollongong Senior Citizens Centre, 192 Gipps Road, Gwynneville.

Contact: [John Sandercock](#) 0499 444 151

Illawarra Seniors Band rehearsals are once a month on a Tuesday morning at 10.30am (these currently vary) at the Port Kembla Senior Citizens Community Hall.

Next Engagement: 2:00 p.m. Wednesday 19th April at IRT Woonona Aged Care

Maundy Thursday 6th April 2023, last day Term 1 for students

Good Friday 7th April

Easter Sunday 9th April

VMTC Training School 12th-15th April

4-day *Victorious Ministry Through Christ* healing and wholeness prayer ministry training.

Venue: The school is live-in at Chittick Lodge, Gerringong.

Cost: \$400 (includes accommodation and meals. [Download flyer](#).)

Register by 22/3/23 <https://vmtc.org.au/ministry/training-schools>

Orthodox Easter Sunday, 16th April

Pentecost Sunday 28th May

Musical Afternoon Celebration supporting Shoeboxes

Fundraiser for Samaritan's Purse - community singing, special musical items, speaker from Operation Christmas Child, trading tables. [Download flyer](#) for further information.

Venue: 2:00 p.m. Albion Park Uniting Church, cnr Terry & Russell Sts, Albion Park.

Cost: \$10 (includes afternoon tea)

Contacts: Lyn Brown 0425 219 233 and Daphne Chapman 4262 2314

See the [Sicm Events page](#) for more events and the **Regular Events** list.