



November - December 2020, Issue 102

A time of richness and blessing: National Interfaith Peace Conference 2020



So much richness! So much to think about! So many insightful speakers calling us to a deeper connection with creation and with each other. These are my instinctive responses after the recent National Interfaith Peace Conference. The focus 'Care for the Earth, Care for Each Other' provided the speakers with so many opportunities to deepen our awareness of our true interconnectedness between ourselves and the whole cycle of life on this planet.



We were blessed to have three First Nations people speak on the first day. Kim Walmsley, Charles Trindall and Auntie Sandra King, all in different ways, connected us to land, to the people of the land and to our need to respect and care for both the land and the people. The land is sacred. It is sacred for the very fact that for 60,000 years ancestors have been buried in this land and the soil and everything that lives has been nourished by these generations of ancestors.



We were blessed also to have so many other speakers from different faith traditions. We learnt that Jesus' death was more than just the relationship between humans and God but also about the healing of all of creation. We heard Chinese traditional stories that challenge us to act for the good. We witnessed Shia and Sunni Imams joking together and telling the true history of living side by side for centuries. And we sang!

The speakers offered us analysis, faith insights and practical actions by which we can better care for the earth and each other. While many speakers talked about the moral issue of climate change, Venerable Wu Chin gave simple and honest ways we can better support each other in our families so that we are strong enough to face the world. And there were also two young speakers. Lakshmi Gandu and Mahsa Nabizada shared their concerns and hopes and dreams for the planet and for us as we live on it.



One key insight I will carry with me for a long time to come was from a Christian minister, Dr Clive Ayre. He said that we can only hear God in dialogue with people of other faiths. This is the richness and blessing of this conference. Many thanks to the Pure Land Learning College Association and the Goodwill Committee of Toowoomba for their support.

A special thanks to Mr Haniff Razak, Meiling Chow and Bishop Cameron Venables for the joy of working with them in organising this conference.



Plenary I and II: Caring for the Earth



Plenary III and IV: Caring for Each Other



Dr. David Tutty

Member of Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group