

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

November 2016

Summer School on Ecumenism

This programme of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity will be held at the Upper Riccarton Methodist Church from Monday 20th to Friday 24th February. In association with the Centre for Ecumenical Studies, Charles Sturt University, Canberra the school provides an introduction to ecumenical history, spirituality and theology. The theme is Toward a Common Vision. The course may be done for undergraduate credit (\$300) or simply attended for personal growth (\$175). Registration (before 30 November) and further information at: Secretary, National Dialogue for Christian Unity, C/o Mission and Ecumenical Office, Private Bag 11 903 Ellerslie Auckland 1542. Email: mm-e@methodist.org.nz Methodist participants may apply for funding to Professional Development Grants Committee by 15 November 2016.

Visit by General Secretary World Council of Churches

During October the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit made a pastoral visit to New Zealand. He and his wife Anna, along with Dr Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, briefly toured the country meeting heads of churches and leaders of other faiths. They were welcomed in Auckland with a Powhiri and prayer service at Te Karaiti Te Pou Herenga Waka Anglican Maori Church, Mangere. In a brief address Dr Olav reflected on Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 1: 76-79 and saw this as a central passage guiding the work of the World Council of Churches. He expressed pleasure at the establishment of the National Dialogue on Christian Unity. Then followed visits to Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington.



"Peace Bells for Aleppo" ring throughout Finland, spread worldwide.

At five o'clock in the evening today – and every day – in Finland, church bells are ringing across the country, symbolizing people's sadness and solidarity with the people of Aleppo, Syria.

World Council of Churches News, October 2016

Churches demand action on Aleppo

The Baptist Church of Great Britain, the Church in Wales, the Church of Scotland, Quakers in Britain, The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church have released a statement calling upon the Syrian and Russian Governments and other forces to stop their bombardment of Aleppo.

"The destruction of Aleppo must stop.

We are appalled by the attacks on civilians by the Syrian Government, Russian and other forces. Life is a gift from God. The targeting and killing of civilians can never be passed off merely as a consequence of war. Aerial strikes on homes, hospitals and aid convoys are never acceptable, under any circumstances.

The responsibility for such attacks lies first and foremost with those who have carried them out. But the frequency of such attacks in Syria also underlines a failure on the part of the international community to uphold long-established principles concerning the immunity of civilians in conflict. Member states of the United Nations should seek to hold to account the parties responsible for indiscriminate attacks on men, women, children, hospitals, humanitarian and rescue workers, which could be construed as war crimes.

The world cries out for an end to the death and destruction in Syria that adds daily to the largest flight of refugees since the Second World War. We join with our brothers and sisters of other churches and other faiths in praying for the people of Syria. We claim no simple solution to a complex political reality but offer the simple message of our faith: that every life is valued by God and that the slaughter must end now." 20 October 2016.

Methodist Catholic dialogue meets in Auckland



From the 19th till the 20th October the Methodist-Catholic dialogue met at Methodist Church Offices at 409 Great South Road, Penrose, Auckland. Methodist co-convenor Trevor Hoggard and Tony Franklin Ross reported on the World Methodist Conference

held in Houston. Sr Sian Williams gave a paper on "Contemplative prayer in the Catholic tradition" and Merv. Duffy presented a paper on "What Catholics have received from the Reformation." A special focus was on the ministry of the permanent deacon in the Catholic and Methodist Churches. Margaret Birtles shared from a Methodist perspective and David Randall from his Catholic experience. Terry Wall outlined the highlights of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudate Si* which explores the motivation offered by Christian faith to care for creation.

Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity 2016

From 29 May till 12 June thirty young Christian ecumenical leaders and activists from fourteen nations gathered in Jakarta to engage in an inter-religious dialogue known as YATRA. Two New Zealand Methodists participated: Janine Tuivaiti and Lesieli Samiu. Here Lesieli reports on her impressions:

Being a participant in this programme was mind blowing, inspirational and truly life-changing in so many ways. Quoting one of our brothers from Pakistan: "YATRA was not two weeks: it was a life, but life in two weeks." We came as strangers, from different contexts with different experiences and we departed as a family.

YATRA provided us with the space to listen to the stories and experiences of each person and their context. YATRA provided us with the platform to dialogue from our own local soil and to see how God is working in our lives, in our context, in the church, in his creation and in the world. The lectures, bible studies, exposure visits, passionate speakers, spiritual activities and reflections – all contributed to the richness of this training and this inter-religious dialogue. This programme gave me hope for the future of the Methodist Church of New Zealand in knowing that we are leaders of today, and we have a responsibility as Christians to stand for justice and peace through love.

YATRA also encouraged me to stand firm in my Christian faith. Yet it also challenged me to see beyond my "otherness", because the way we deal with "the other" is determined by way we treat "the other". Therefore, if we claim to know Jesus, we need first to remove our biases, assumptions and prejudices of "the other" and to really see them through Jesus' eyes, that we are all his beloved. As Christians, we are accountable for the lives of others because to be a 'host' is also to be a 'guest' in each other's foreign spaces – through love, hope and trust that we are participating in God's purpose for his kingdom.

On the last day of YATRA, Dr Sivin Kit, a Malaysian theologian, introduced a phrase that perfectly summed up my YATRA experience. "Small is beautiful". The human default position is to aim for

the biggest outcome, because the world is big and ugly. And we want to change that, we want to see the biggest result. But in the end it is not about being big; it is about doing something "small and beautiful."

I always liked the concept of "being the salt of the earth." My underlying thought was that we can always use more salt in the world. Through YATRA, I feel more called to be "yeast". You see, it doesn't matter how small the yeast is because it will make the dough rise. And that is what we need in today's world. The phrase "small yet beautiful" has given me great inspiration and encouragement. I now realise that to make a difference I need to find my own vision and voice. It is not about getting the biggest results. It is about doing small things with the knowledge that God is at work in us. And that I believe church is already challenging enough!

Rev. Wilfred Kurepitu – Moderator, United Church Solomon Islands



Mission and Ecumenical were host to the Moderator of the United Church of the Solomon Islands in October. The Rev. Wilfred Kurepitu attended the Methodist Conference at Wesley College and then stayed on for a few days. In conversation he expressed his thanks for the continued partnership in mission with the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hahi Weteriana O Aotearoa. He reported that his church now had a membership of 80,000 and was growing. He also shared his experience of evangelizing communities on the island of Malaita. As guest of the Mission and Ecumenical Board he enjoyed visiting sites of interest in Auckland, including Church Stores. On the Sundays he preached at Chartwell Cooperating Parish and Trinity Waiake churches. Developing personal relationships of this kind is invaluable. He travelled back to prepare for his church's General Assembly.

MISSION AND ECUMENICAL BOARD

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**Methodist Mission and Ecumenical
Annual Appeal 2016
Kokeqolo Water Scheme Fund**

Life giving water

**The appeal is from United Church Assembly Office to develop a
Reliable water supply for the village of Kokeqolo**

The people of Kokeqolo, the schools and the United Church of Solomon Islands assembly office are dependent on rain water. A recent survey of the area located a bore hole that was used by the American forces during the Second World War. The United Church has requested our help to use this source of water by building a water supply unit. The cost is NZ \$ 80,000. M&E committed to raise \$ 40,000 which is half of the total cost and asked UCSI to look for another donor to cover the other half.

The beneficiaries of this water supply will be

Kokeqolo Primary School



Youth Centre



United Church Office



Methodist Mission and Ecumenical appeals to all to contribute to the

**KOKEQOLO WATER SCHEME FUND
To raise \$ 40,000 in 2016**

... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. [Matt. 5:16]

Mission is possible only with your participation and contribution to the fund.

Mission and Ecumenical Fund is registered with the **Charities Commission**.

Registration Number CC51048. Receipts will be issued for tax rebate on the donation.

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ANNUAL APPEAL 2016 - KOKEQOLO WATER SCHEME FUND

Please remember to send this cover slip for a receipt when you make a deposit.

<p>Please send your donations by cheque in favour of Mission and Ecumenical Fund</p> <p>To Rev. Prince Devanandan Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Private Bag 11903 Ellerslie Auckland 1542</p>	<p>You could also make your donation directly into BNZ Account No. 02-0800-0766004-03</p> <p>Amount: \$ _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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