

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

October 2015

Ecumenism and Spirituality Lived and Practiced by Young People

Young people today are much more articulate about their values and beliefs than they had been in the past. They are increasingly aware of the contradictions and contention on religious issues, within religious groups as well as in society at large.



Prayer at Youth Pre-Assembly Gathering on Justice and Peace, 2013.

For many young people spirituality means positive personal and social development. They see spiritual development as an on-going and dynamic interplay between one's inward journey and one's outward journey in multi-faith and multi-cultural societies.

In addition to lectures and resources about spirituality and ecumenism, the seminar "Ecumenism and Spirituality Lived and Practiced by Young People" will encourage the sharing of the lived spiritualities of participants. On the basis of these experiences, the participants will enter into reflection and dialogue towards inspiring forms and practices of spirituality that can enrich the [Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace](#).

This seminar will be led by Carla Khiyojan (convenor) and Rev. Dr Ester Pudjo Widiasih.

Who can apply? Young adults below the age of 30 who are actively engaged in WCC member churches and ecumenical youth organizations.

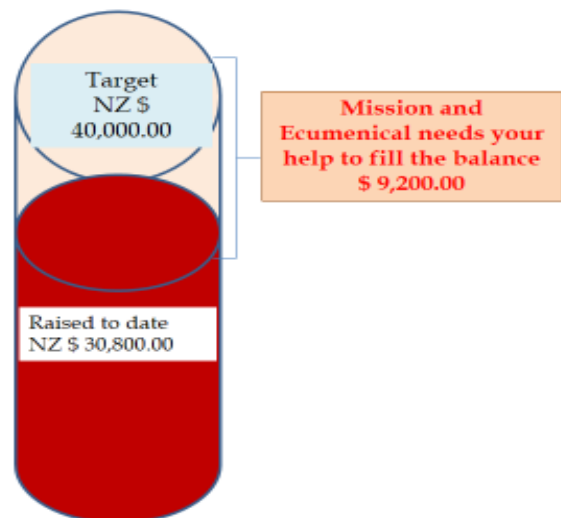
If you are interested, please contact the director, Mission and Ecumenical Board: prnced@methodist.org.nz

Deadline for applications: 23 October 2015

More details available at <https://institute.oikoumene.org/en/study-at-bossey/continuing-formation/ecumenism-and-spirituality-lived-and-practiced-by-young-people>

PLEASE SUPPORT THE TABAKA SOLAR POWER FUND - To light up the young lives Mission and Ecumenical needs \$ 9,200 more to make this project a success
Your donation makes a large impact

We thank all those who are continuing to support our assistance to Solomon Islands. We look forward to your contribution to complete the Tabaka project as well.



Pacific Church leaders call for 1.5 degree temperature rise limit

REGIONAL church leaders want the international community to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.



At a regional workshop in Auckland, New Zealand, members of the Pacific Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches in Australia and New Zealand stated their support for the Suva Declaration 2015, the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Declaration 2015 and the Moana Declaration 2009.

The leaders said a global temperature rise of 2 degrees Celsius would not safeguard Pacific islands from sea level rise.

They also agreed on a list of priorities for climate justice which they wish to be addressed by their representatives at COP21 in Paris later this year.

These include:

1. Provisions for resettlement/relocation for populations displaced by climate change.
2. Establishment of a new convention or mechanism to safeguard the rights of people forced to flee beyond their national borders because of climate change.
3. A framework of responsibility to take account of global interdependence, displaced populations, and livelihoods for future generations, shared responsibility for the planet, public good, and address transitions to decarbonised economies.
4. Recognition of the grave distress and suffering to people, societies, livelihoods and existential threats to the survival of Pacific Small Island Developing States.

The leaders recognised that climate change was forcing displacement of Pacific Island populations and called for a response which activated the full spectrum of rights enshrined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent Treaties.

They also called for the establishment of a regional task force on climate financing, and support for adaptation measures to address food security, health, water, sanitation, agriculture, forest, and fisheries.

The leaders identified strong relational values, responsibility and spirituality as the source of the resilience of Pacific Peoples and the basis of their collective priorities and interests.

Rachel Masterton participated in the workshop as the representative of the Methodist Church of New Zealand. Prince Devanandan, director Mission and Ecumenical Board assisted Rev. Dr. Dong Sung Kim of the World Council of Churches in organising the workshop.

WCC Pacific Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace - Rachel Masterton reports,

From 14-18 September I was privileged to represent MCNZ at the World Council of Churches Pacific Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace in Auckland. I think we all agreed we wanted to see our Churches become agents for change in our countries and communities.

There was a real expectation that we would be discussing Climate Change issues – of immediate concern to our Pacific neighbours – but there was also a lot of discussion around the need to change the current Patriarchal leadership being seen in many countries and to empower the Youth and give them a voice.

Micah 6:8 “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God” came through in the majority of the sessions and resonated with those there.

The actions agreed to from the Forum are:

- Climate Change: A statement to be prepared from the Forum to be sent out to all churches through WCC & PCC. Resources to be prepared for 40 days of prayer leading up to and throughout COP21 (being held 30 November to 11 December). Asking people to act justly – not just talking about emissions and statistics but also thinking about how we act and the affect it has on others.
- Strengthening relationships: Requiring the PCC to find new ways of being church, of being in solidarity and building ecumenism with its Partner churches. Deconstructing Patriarchy – recognising that all churches need to start talking about it, being aware of the effect on those in the church, especially women and youth.
- Leadership: Look to build partnerships between youth and older members, empowering the youth, strengthening communication and recognising that church will be different in the future.
- Stopping exploitation: Sharing information and resources – bible studies, experiences, and resource people. West Papuans - Wanting strong advocacy from our partners, and look to set up and/or assist with scholarship funding for the Youth of West Papua to be trained elsewhere eg University of South Pacific, (or hosting the students while they study).

The thoughts that I still reflect on are:

- If not us, who? If not now, when?
- As churches we need to stop talking about surviving and start talking about living.

“We need an international solution to the refugee crisis” - Tveit (General Secretary World Council of Churches):

Representatives of major international ecumenical organizations visited Hungary 25-29 September to strengthen efforts in support of refugees in Europe and the Middle East. The head of the WCC delegation, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav

Fykse Tveit, stated: "This is much more than a refugee crisis in Europe. We need an international solution to the refugee crisis. We call for an international solution now!"



Olav Fykse Tveit, and members of the delegation and the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary with Bence Retvari, parliamentary state secretary of the Ministry of Human Resources. © WCC/Paul Jeffrey

The delegation also included Dr Audeh Quawas, member of the WCC central and executive committees and the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs; Doris Peschke, general secretary of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME); Rev. Alfredo Abad, vice-moderator of the CCME; Marianne Ejdersten, director of WCC Communication; and Paul Jeffrey, photo-journalist for the WCC and ACT Alliance. The WCC solidarity visit was hosted by the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary.

Tveit addressed the basic humanitarian needs of the refugees in the meeting with Secretary Rétvári. The state secretary expressed appreciation for the visit and stressed the importance of listening also to Hungarian perspectives.

Tveit said: "Taking responsibility for human beings in desperate need must be done without discrimination on any criteria other than their needs. With more than 2,000 refugees each day, it is really challenging and it is not easy to find the right solutions. But it is crucial to always treat human beings with human dignity and with great respect for human rights law. The international laws must be respected. There are no alternatives."

In meetings with church leaders, Tveit said: "We can see the pastoral care. Be proud of what people are doing in Hungary and around the world. They are showing hospitality and care. For the politicians, the situation presents many responsibilities to deal with. We understand the critical situation and that those problems must be solved day by day. We need a more humanitarian approach. What is happening in Hungary is an alert to the European Union and the rest of the world." Doris Peschke, general secretary of the CCME, said, "The basic fact is of human beings in

need. Hungary and the EU were not mentally prepared. We have to prepare for next 10 to 15 years and discuss the role of the churches. How do we work integrating refugees into European society? How can we learn from others?" Tveit added after the meetings: "As the WCC we are worried about the humanitarian situation. We are worried about the tensions between different religions. We have to be aware of the relations between religions in different regions. We would like to encourage the churches to work together in solidarity, and we have to build bridges to other religions. We are facing lots of challenges as human beings. Can we find ways to live together?"

In their discussion with church leaders, the delegation expressed their interest in sharing experience with other churches in Europe. Local churches said they sometimes felt that they were left alone, even though a special volunteer movement was and still growing in Hungary. People have been mobilized through social media, often seeking Arabic interpreters or food supplies or water or clothes. Thousands of volunteers gathered at the main station, Kelti, in Budapest. The delegation also visited St Columba's Church of Scotland in Budapest to witness their local refugee work. The WCC is planning to initiate a special consultation on the refugee crisis in collaboration with the EKD at the end of October in Munich, Germany.

The WCC and its member churches' commitment to supporting refugees and displaced people is part of its origin and calling. When the World Council of Churches came into existence in 1948, the disastrous humanitarian impact of the Second World War was still a very present reality. The international community was still struggling to cope with the massive population displacements caused by conflict and crimes against humanity. Churches and their specialized ministries were key actors in the humanitarian response to the unprecedented suffering, and they have continued to be in the forefront of assisting refugees and immigrants, from emergency relief to long-term support. More information at

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/tveit-we-need-an-international-solution-to-the-refugee-crisis>

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