

CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE “H” Mission & Ecumenical

CONVENER: John Roberts

QUESTION 32: What are the decisions of Conference on matters relating to Mission and Ecumenical Affairs?

QUESTION 32(a): Mission and Ecumenical Committee

Report pp H1-H10

INFORMATION:

DECISIONS:

1. The report is received.

United Churches in the Solomon Islands and in Papua New Guinea

2. Conference notes the continuing significant relationship with the United Church in the Solomon Islands, and the United Church in Papua New Guinea, and the assistance being provided to them through Methodist Mission and Ecumenical.

Seasonal migrant worker scheme

3. Conference:
 - a welcomes the New Zealand Government's 'Recognised Seasonal Employer' policy with its focus on Pacific Forum nations,
 - b expresses concern that the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (two of the most troubled and impoverished nations in the Pacific) have been excluded from the list of countries to be the focus of special facilitative measures to get the scheme started and seeks their inclusion;
 - c through its parishes expresses a willingness to become involved in the pastoral care of workers who come to New Zealand under this scheme.

New ecumenical initiative

4. Conference expresses:
 - a Support for the ongoing work of the Strategic Thinking Group as it consults and seeks to develop a proposal for a new ecumenical initiative in Aotearoa in the 21st century.
 - b Expresses disappointment that while attention has been given to possible ecumenical structures initiative in the Strategic Thinking Group's report, there is comparatively little vision and theological rationale for a new ecumenical initiative.
 - c Requests that before any decisions are made about a new ecumenical structure, the Strategic Thinking Group initiate a dialogue between prospective ecumenical partners to address issues relating to:
 - i a robust biblical, theological and spiritual base for a future expression of ecumenism
 - ii a vision for expressing the visible unity of the church whilst affirming the diversity of theological wisdoms, spiritual insights, denominational traditions, and cultural insights, as treasures not to be lost
 - iii a vision of shalom, the realm of God, or new creation, that embraces healing, peace and justice in addressing issues relating to the earth, its peoples, and our country
 - iv an ecumenical body developing a life of its own that is more than the sum of its parts (i.e. the participating churches)
 - v the need for a forum that will enable churches to reflect on what it means to be churches together in the 21st century
 - d Commends to synods, parishes, rohe and church members the call for widespread prayer and discussion, and requests responses be sent to the Mission and Ecumenical Committee by 30 April 2007. (Note: The Strategic Thinking Group's report can be downloaded from the website www.stg.churches.net.nz)

Christian World Service

5. Conference encourages parishes to promote and support the CWS Christmas Gift appeal 2006 with the theme 'Water: The Gift of Life'.
6. Conference commends CWS emergency appeals to parishes and members for their support.
7. Conference encourages all parishes to consider becoming Fair Trade Churches by serving Fairtrade tea and coffee.
8. Conference calls on the New Zealand Government to set a timetable to reach the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of the gross national income for overseas development aid.
9. Conference encourages all parishes to select a layperson to be the Parish Link for CWS.

Churches Agency on International Issues

10. Conference encourages parishes, rohe and church members to make use of the CAII "hot topic" paper "The War On Terror" and the Pacific "hot topics" to be produced in 2006 And 2007.

World Methodist Council

11. Conference affirms its continuing membership of the World Methodist Council, congratulates Jill van de Geer on her election to the Presidium of the Council, Mary Caygill on her election as Co-chair of the Council's Social and International Affairs Committee, and expresses its support to Jill and Mary in these significant roles, and encourages their continued reporting to the wider church.

Committee membership

12. The Mission and Ecumenical Committee membership for 2007 is: Keith Hopner (convenor), Margaret Donald, Hugh Dyson, Kilifi Heimuli, Keita Hotere, Barry Jones, Lana Lazarus, TeRito Peyroux, Shanti Sinnaduray, Sheila Thorne, Uesifili Unasa, and one other to be approved by the President.