

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

AUGUST 2013

LOOKING BEYOND DIVISIONS

A week long Winter School on Ecumenism

The ecumenical course organised by the Mission and Ecumenical, St. John's College and the Auckland Catholic Diocesan Commission for Ecumenism was held at St. John's College from the 8 to the 13 of July 2013. There were 18 participants in the week long programme. Another 8 joined the day symposium on the Saturday. The course was of academic and informative for the participants. Centre for Ecumenical Studies of Charles Sturt University, Canberra played a major role with sharing the resources. Rev. Prof. James Haire, Rev. Prof. Robert Gribben and Rev. Dr. Ray Williamson from the Centre for Ecumenical Studies led the group in the global and local perspectives of ecumenism. In addition Rev. Prof. Michael Kinnamon – former general secretary of the National Council of Churches, USA and Dr. Tamara Grdzeldze from Faith and Order of WCC brought in another academic dimension. Tamara's presentation was more on Orthodox theology and Faith and Order Commission's work of the WCC.

The participants stated that it was a programme of very high standard with inspiration and challenges to work for in the area of Christian unity. One of the participants wrote in his reflection *"To have brought together such an eminent group of ecumenists from around the world to NZ is impressive in itself, the quality and depth for the most part was equally impressive."*

In addition to the overseas presenters, Bishop John Bluck of the Anglican Church and Bishop Peter Cullinane from the Roman Catholic Church brought in the Aotearoa New Zealand feature of ecumenical journey. Sr. Catherine Jones and James Haire focused on Ecumenism and Interfaith relations.

The whole course was rated as very highly useful in many areas of ministry of the church. The participants have suggested that the course be repeated as a refresher and as an intensive for academic credits in future as well. Mission and Ecumenical Committee has agreed to hold the course biennially and the day symposium on ecumenism annually in future.

Mission and Ecumenical sincerely thanks all the speakers, participants and the Centre for Ecumenical Studies for sharing the cost of airfare. **

"Justice –Peace for Life: Sowing the Grains of Peace" – training programme for youth from August 11-17, 2013 in Hong Kong

CCA's Ecumenical Youth Leadership Development training on Justice and Peace building will be held in Hong Kong with the theme **"Justice –Peace for Life: Sowing the Grains of Peace"** from August 11-17, 2013.

Two of the interested youth from the Methodist Church: Janice Au'ava from Sinoti Samoa and Henry Hogleund from Vahefonua Tonga will be attending this programme.

The programme includes participants from churches and communities within the Asian regional ecumenical setting. We look forward for their sharing of experience when they return after the programme.

HELENA GOLDIE HOSPITAL IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS HAS AN EYE SURGICAL UNIT

Dr. Graham Longbottom at Helena Goldie Hospital reported that a new eye surgical unit was opened on 24 June 2013. A visiting eye surgical team treated the patients. The hospital operating theatre was used exclusively for eye patients all week – fortunately there were no emergencies. The patients receive local anesthetic in the outer part of theatre (left) before going into the main theatre. After the operation is completed the patient walks out of theatre with a member of the team.



The photo shows Dr. Jenny observing Dr. Pickache using the operating microscope to remove a cataract.

Annual Appeal 2013

The annual appeal 2013 for Goldie College water supply is receiving donations slowly. A sum of \$ 6,850 has been collected to date. The target is \$ 15,000. Mission and Ecumenical looks forward for continued support from the Methodist Church to reach this target.

Faith leaders promote protection of displaced people



25 July 2013

Along with other faith-based groups, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has helped develop a declaration, launched by the United Nations refugee agency. It aims to strengthen protection for the world's refugees as well as internally displaced and stateless people, who account for more than 40 million people in the world.

“A core value of my faith is to welcome the stranger, the refugee, the internally displaced, the other. I shall treat him or her as I would like to be treated. I will challenge others, even leaders in my faith community, to do the same,” reads the declaration. Based on common values of welcome found in all religions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, the declaration is titled *Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmation for Faith Leaders*. It was launched on 12 June in Geneva, Switzerland.

The development of such a declaration was recommended last year in a Geneva meeting called by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The meeting engaged faith leaders, faith-based humanitarian organizations and government representatives in addressing the theme “Faith and Protection”.

“Our Christian faith compels us to ensure that human life, physical security and personal safety are upheld in the law and institutions,” said Nduna.

The WCC's Migration and Social Justice programme will release a theological statement titled *The Other is my Neighbour: Developing an Ecumenical Response to Migration*. This statement is to be released at the 4th International Consultation of Churches with Migrants in New York in October, an event organized in conjunction with the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development. More on this is available at

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/faith-leaders-promote-protection-of-displaced-people>

Ecumenical observers at Pentecostal-Charismatic consultation

23 July 2013

Pentecostals and Charismatics are among the fastest growing Christian groups in the world. The question is to what extent the Pentecostals understand themselves as a church or a movement. This existential and ecclesiological issue remains ambiguous.

These views were shared by Dr Tamara Grdzeldze at the Empowered21 (E21) Global Scholars Consultation, held from 8 to 10 July in Sydney, Australia.

Grdzeldze, programme executive for the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, participated in the consultation as an observer, along with Prof. Neil Ormerod of the Roman Catholic Church.

The consultation gathered Pentecostal scholars, mostly from Asia, to reflect on ecclesial, sociological, theological and academic challenges that “Spirit-empowered” Christianity faces in the 21st century. The group of Pentecostal and Charismatic scholars are preparing for the Empowered21 Global Congress, set to take place at Jerusalem in 2015.

“The E21 brings various Pentecostal trends around one table, I believe; however, I wish I had seen more efforts in that direction,” said Grdzeldze.

“Delay in holding effective discussions among all trends of the Pentecostal movement can have serious repercussions for Pentecostal self-identity. There are no visible signs to strengthen the cognitive foundation of the rapidly growing movement,” noted Grdzeldze, who comes from the Georgian Orthodox Church.

More information at

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/ecumenical-observations-made-at-the-e21-global-scholars-consultation-1>

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