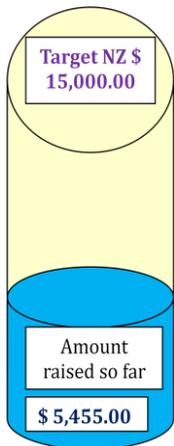


# Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

## July 2013



### **YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT FOR GOLDIE COLLEGE WATER SCHEME**

Support from many different sources help Mission and Ecumenical to raise the funds for the Goldie College Water Supply Scheme.

We thank the many Women's Fellowships and individuals who have contributed so far.

Your continued support would help this dream of Goldie College to become a reality.

### **CONSULTATION REFLECTS ON HOW TO BUILD PEACE WITH JUSTICE IN ASIA URGES CHURCHES TO BE AGENTS OF JUSTICE AND PEACE**



*Participants in the WCC Consultation on 'How to build peace with justice'*

At a World Council of Churches (WCC) consultation in Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong, participants reflected on "Asia's human security challenges" today and how to strengthen efforts of working towards "sustainable peace with justice in Northeast Asia."

In a communiqué issued at the end of the consultation, participants affirmed the diversity of their ethnicities and nationalities as a "celebration of God's image" compelling them to "protect human dignity and assert human rights in faithfulness to our God." Addressing the socio-political realities of Asia, the communiqué stated: "God's justice is about the victims, the helpless and the hurt. Touching their lives in solidarity and accompaniment is the true measure of Christian discipleship. Ensuring the fullness of life together and collectively with them is the true mark of Christian stewardship."

Organized by the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and the Christian Conference of Asia, the consultation was held from 3 to 6 June.

The consultation brought together fifty participants from Asia, Europe and North America representing

churches, ecumenical councils, specialized ministries, peace activists and academia, contributing reflections on the theme of the WCC's upcoming assembly.

"Our lament on Asian realities must be turned to affirmation of every effort and endeavour by all religions and ideologies to work tirelessly and sacrificially to make a more just and compassionate world and a friendlier, brighter tomorrow in Asia," read the communiqué.

It concluded, "We must triumph over militarism and militarization and move from militarized economies to peace economies." The communiqué urged the churches to be the "agents of justice and peace".

### **ASIA'S HUMAN SECURITY CHALLENGES**

At the consultation, Bishop Duleep de Chickera from Sri Lanka said, "To know what justice is, we need to know what injustice is. And to know what justice is we need to experience the plight of the victims".

He said that in order to establish the "reign of God" as Jesus preached, we have to rethink human relationships and obligations that can challenge the unjust structures in our societies.

At the consultation there was discussion of the role of Japan for human security in Asia. Prof. Kaseda Yoshinori, a presenter from Japan and a political scientist from the University of Kitakyushu, said, "Powerful countries such as United States, Japan and South Korea play with double standards".

He added that the approach these countries have towards North Korea is not helpful in protecting human security and sustainable peace in the Northeast Asia.

At the consultation, representatives of the WCC member churches in Korea and the National Council of Churches in Korea's committee for peace and reunification in the Korean Peninsula discussed the proposal for a public issue statement. They made suggestions for the content of the statement from the perspectives of the Korean churches.

The public issues statement on "peace, reconciliation and reunification of the Korean peninsula" was proposed by the CCIA and was mandated by the WCC Central Committee meeting in Greece, 2012. It will be presented at the WCC assembly in Busan.

Dr Mathews George Chunakara, director of the CCIA, said that several speakers at the consultation expressed the need for lifting economic sanctions against North Korea.

He added that participants' suggestion for the statement was to highlight "steps to realize peace in Northeast Asia by ending economic, financial and commercial sanctions against North Korea and turning from the armistice agreement to a peace treaty, effectively ending today's de facto war".

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/consultation-reflects-on-how-to-build-peace-with-justice-in-asia-1>

### **"GOD OF LIFE, LEAD US TO JUSTICE AND PEACE"**

The theme of the 10th assembly of the WCC is "God of life, lead us to justice and peace". The assembly is set to take place in Busan, Republic of Korea, 30 October to 8 November. There is a six-unit resource *Pilgrimage to Busan: an Ecumenical Journey into World Christianity* invites churches and congregations to explore the themes of Christian unity, justice and peace in advance of the WCC 10th Assembly. It is designed for use by congregations in study groups, adult forums, or for a day-long retreat. The following webpage about the assembly has resources for churches around the world to get involved.

<http://wcc2013.info/en/resources/pilgrimage-to-busan/pilgrimage-to-busan>

### **DIAKONIA IS CHURCHES' RESPONSE TO THE SUFFERING OF THE WORLD**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, called *Diakonia* an expression of faith that "embodies the signs of God's reign and makes it visible in all experiences of hope amidst turmoil, in actions that heal and nurture people and relationships." Tveit shared these reflections at the DIAKONIA 21st World Assembly, held in Berlin, Germany, 1 to 8 July, organized by the DIAKONIA World Federation.

*Diakonia* is a Greek term used in the New Testament to describe ministries of service, mission and support. It is the source of the English words "deacon" and "diaconal" addressed in the theme "*Diakonia* - Healing and Wholeness for the World" at the event.

Tveit noted that churches have a specific responsibility in responding to the suffering of the world with loving compassion. Therefore *Diakonia*, he added, is expressed in churches' call for unity, efforts toward reconciliation with other faiths, protecting human rights and advocating care for the creation and environment.

Inspired by the theme of the event, Tveit shared how the "call to unity is a call to *Diakonia*, to a common service for healing and wholeness."

He stressed that the "ministry of *Diakonia* is not, and indeed cannot, be divorced from the other marks of being church. It is part of the holistic expression of being church and also is, in itself, a full testimony of the good news of God's reign."

In his speech, Tveit also introduced the theme of the WCC's upcoming assembly "God of life, lead us to justice and peace." The WCC assembly will take place from 30 October to 8 November in Busan, Republic of Korea. The full version of the speech is available at

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/speeches/greetings-to-the-diakonia-21st-world-assembly-in-berlin/>

### **ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH REAFFIRMS POWER OF FAITH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I at the WCC Central Committee meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 2008.

**Faith can be a powerful ally in addressing issues of social justice**, said Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. He called faith a bearer of unique perspectives on eradicating poverty, balancing amidst globalization, combating fundamentalism, racism, and developing religious tolerance during conflicts.

"It is precisely the role of religion to respond to the needs of the world's poor as well as to vulnerable and marginalized people. In fact, it is a rare instance where a faith institution is not a defining marker of the space and character of a community," he said.

Bartholomew I explained the "supra-national and supra-regional" and global character of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, yet he noted a special place for the Balkans.

"We have always held a special place in our prayer for the people of the Balkans and reserved a special place in our heart for the innocent suffering of people and the unjustifiable death of children in recent wars of the Balkans."

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/ecumenical-patriarch-reaffirms-power-of-faith-for-social-justice>

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