

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

August 2014

SITUATION IN GAZA

Death toll in Gaza continues to rise. It is a situation of people killing people with more powerful weapons. The destruction in Gaza is of such a magnitude, it will take decades for the people to rebuild their lives but will never see the lost loved ones again. We are unable to deal with the perpetrators, but have committed to help the victims. Christian World Service has appealed for funds to support the displaced people.

Donations to the Palestine Appeal for emergency relief can be made:

on line at <http://www.cws.org.nz/donate>

by post sent to

PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8140

by calling 0800 74 73 72.

CWS has provided support for Palestinian refugees since 1949. CWS is receiving daily reports from the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) on the situation. It was reported that the doors of one of DSPR's three maternal health clinics had been blown off. It is being guarded by local people. A statement by the church leaders is expected to be out soon.

GOOD NEWS FROM GOLDIE COLLEGE – BRIAN BIRD – THE NEW PRINCIPAL OF GOLDIE COLLEGE WROTE TO THE SECRETARY MISSION AND ECUMENICAL:



Brian Bird at the newly built tower for the storage tank to supply water from the borehole

Greetings from Goldie College.
I must apologize for the delay in getting back to you.
The materials for the borehole water project finally are landed at Goldie College last month.

We have managed to get extra pipes to extend the number of outlets for the system. In the meantime, we are waiting for Mr. Isaac Lekelalu who will supervise the installation to fly over to Goldie from Honiara to set up the system probably next week. I will get photos of the completed system and send over for your reference later.

The School Community once again owes you and the organization much. We just want to say thank you very much for your support.

Further, in undertaking our upgrade and reform program forward this year, the school is striving to build a new 3 block classroom. The school at present milled the timbers and at the same time making appeals to raise SBD\$35,000.00 towards the purchasing of roofing irons, nails and paints. We once again make appeal to your organization for help. The school will bear the cost of timbers, labour and all logistic related costs.

Sincerely

Brian

INTERCHANGEABILITY OF MINISTRIES: METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND AND CHURCH OF IRELAND (ANGLICAN).

The Methodist Church in Ireland and the Church of Ireland (Anglican) have been in dialogue for many years. In 2002, a Covenant was signed, committing the two churches to growing together in unity at congregational, structural and theological levels. Further years of work ensued. As a result, the churches have come to work closely together at local and national level; there is participation at committee level in key areas, not least that of mission.

It became clear that more could be achieved if the respective ordained ministries might be interchangeable. After much prayer and theological discussion, those charged with this work came to the point where they were able to affirm that

We have discerned consonance between the office and function of Presidents and Past Presidents of the Methodist Church in Ireland and in the office and function of Bishops in the Church of Ireland based on the current doctrinal understanding and ecclesiology of both Churches.

The Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the General Synod of the Church of Ireland concurred and the necessary legislation was drafted. In May 2014, the General Synod of the Church of Ireland passed the third reading of the Bill on Interchangeability almost without opposition. Both the Primate of All-Ireland, Archbishop Richard

Clarke, and the then President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Revd Dr Heather Morris, recognised that there were those with reservations, but affirmed that the action taken was clearly the considered mind and will of the church.

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Revd Peter Murray, was duly installed on Wednesday, June 11th, 2014. Together with the officers of the Methodist Church, the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin and Bishop Harold Millar of Down and Dromore¹ participated in prayer and the laying on of hands as the new President assumed office. The Prayer of Consecration, the text of which had been ratified by the Conference in a previous year, read:

Almighty God, giver of all good things, by the Holy Spirit you have appointed different offices in your church. Send your Holy Spirit upon this your servant (Peter) now called to be an Episcopal minister in the office and ministry of the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland. So fill him with grace and the truth of your doctrine that, both by word and deed, he may faithfully serve you in this office, and use the authority given to him to the glory of your name and the encouragement of the Church, through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, world without end. AMEN.

Within the next few months, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland will similarly participate in the consecration of the incoming Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe.

From now, Bishops will be involved in the installation of Presidents and Presidents or past Presidents will be involved in the consecration of Bishops. The Presbyterian ministry of all those ordained in both churches, including those ordained in the past, is celebrated and affirmed. As a consequence, the ministries of the two churches are regarded as interchangeable.

1. Anglican co-Chair of the Anglican /Methodist International Commission on Unity and Mission (AMICUM).

<http://firstfridayletter.worldmethodistcouncil.org/2014/08/interchangeability-of-ministries-methodist-church-in-ireland-and-church-of-ireland-anglican/>

Following Ireland, in UK - Methodists step up to the challenge of the Covenant

The Methodist Church has made a commitment to taking a major step forward in its relationship with the Church of England. The two Churches are committed to making their unity more visible through the Anglican-Methodist Covenant signed in 2003.

The Conference received a report, entitled **The Challenge of the Covenant**, which recommends that both Churches take action to enhance unity between them, with the work being fully embedded in Church structures.

Professor Peter Howdle, Co-Chair of the Joint Implementation Commission, which produced the report, said: "I think that now is an auspicious time in ecumenical relationships and that the Methodist Conference has taken a courageous and historic step in endorsing our recommendations. A similar bold step by the Church of England will completely change the relationship between our two Churches and make our joint mission much more credible and deepen our communion together."

The Conference directed that proposals for a form of Methodist Episcopal ministry (such as a 'president bishop') be developed for consideration. It also urged local churches, circuits and districts to make the most of what Anglican and Methodist churches can already do together in joint worship and in serving their communities. One example of this is the creation of 'Covenanted Partnerships in Extended Areas', which allow an increase in shared ministry in local areas.

"Covenanted Partnerships in Extended Areas are a very welcome progression for us in Cumbria," said the Revd Richard Teal, Chair of the Cumbria Methodist District. "We hope the whole of the county will become one because they enable covenant partners to share ministry and develop strategies across the area. They also allow Methodist ministers to conduct baptisms and preside at holy communion in Anglican churches and Anglican clergy to do the same in Methodist churches." The Church of England is expected to consider the same report at the meeting of the General Synod following the sessions in July. The report specifically challenges the Church of England to resolve the issues that stand in the way of the interchangeability of the ordained ministries of the two Churches. In response to the publication of the report in May, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, together with the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, issued a joint statement welcoming the report. More details are at <http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/news-releases/>

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The central committee met from 3 to 8 July 2014 in Geneva with its 150 members from all global regions. Most Rev. Ray Coster, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

represents the New Zealand churches in the central Committee.

EMERGING CONCERNS FOR THE GLOBAL CHURCH

Renewal of churches' commitment towards Christian unity as well as solidarity with churches in conflict situations remained in focus during the meeting. Countries where churches' work for justice and peace is being prioritized include the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Nigeria, Syria and Israel and Palestine. Strategies were also developed on how to promote churches' work for the reunification of the Korean peninsula.

Climate change, ecological and economic justice, and sharing of resources among the churches emerged as major topics during the six-day meeting.

The need for stronger engagement from youth in the ecumenical movement was stressed in a message from the WCC Central Committee moderator Dr Agnes Abuom, during the opening day.

In his report, the WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit highlighted the significance of ecumenical, inter-religious and ecclesiological dialogue, as well as Christian mission. He mentioned the need to enhance support for refugees and displaced peoples, as well as efforts from the churches in addressing issues related to HIV and AIDS.

In pursuit of "justice and peace", Tveit encouraged a stronger participation in the churches from youth, women, as well as people with disabilities.

DESPITE HURDLES, CONTINUING PILGRIMAGE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

WCC president for Asia Rev. Dr Sang Chang stressed the importance of the WCC Assembly message for the work of the Council and its 345 member churches around the world.

She said, "We Christians are called to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). As a global body of believers in Jesus Christ, the WCC has always been committed to peace-making efforts."

"We have embarked on a pilgrimage of justice and peace starting from the Busan assembly. We, of course, are well aware that there are and will be challenges and obstacles on the road along the journey," she added.

The WCC president for Latin America, Rev. Gloria Ulloa Alvarado, expressed her hopes for positive outcomes in translating the theme of the meeting into concrete actions by the churches. "There is nothing that can clip our wings and can stop us from dreaming. We should achieve lasting peace that will better our lives as people," she said. Joyanta Adhikari, WCC Central Committee member from Bangladesh, called the "pilgrimage for justice and peace a continuous process."

"It is not only a particular objective we are moving toward. We are on-going with many things; friends,

colleagues, neighbours, in addition to this Central Committee. Eventually, that will lead us to a new understanding," he said.

STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE A NUMBER OF STATEMENTS WERE ADOPTED BY THE WCC CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

(The statements in detail are available when the link in blue is clicked)

One statement focused on promoting a [nuclear-free world](#). Nuclear power is the pathway to acquiring nuclear weapons, the statement says, while pointing out parallel health, humanitarian, environmental and security dangers in civilian and military uses of nuclear energy.

Concern over the reinterpretation of [Article 9 of the Japanese constitution](#) was the focus of another statement. Recently the Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe proposed a reinterpretation allowing for the Japanese Self-Defense Force to use force alongside other national militaries. In the document, the Japanese government was urged to honour the spirit of the Japanese constitution which recommends nonviolence as a way to settle disputes.

The current situation in Mosul, [Iraq](#) was highlighted through a statement. The document acknowledges that **Mosul had been completely emptied of Christian population during the recent conflict**. While commending efforts for humanitarian relief from churches in Iraq, the statement urges the international community and United Nations agencies to ensure humanitarian assistance to all vulnerable communities. It urges the Iraqi authorities to launch an inclusive political process, and to strengthen human rights and religious freedom.

Continuing with expressions of solidarity with those working for peace in [Israel and Palestine](#), the Central Committee adopted a statement encouraging churches to engage in advocating for economic measures that promote peace with justice for both Israelis and Palestinians. To accomplish the vision for peace in the region, the statement encourages churches to "engage in dialogue with Palestinian churches, civil society actors, and Jewish partners". More details at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/churches-to-continue-their-201cpilgrimage-of-justice-and-peace201d-in-the-world>

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