

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

June 2014

CHURCH COUNCILS REFLECT ON THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN UNITY IN A TIME OF CHANGE

In her opening address to a world conference on the affect of ecumenical councils on the search for justice, peace and unity, the moderator of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee called for an openness to change in an era of encounter with “different types of cultures and religions”.

“The structures of the churches can either inhibit or enhance the spirit of the ecumenical movement”, said Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, during the opening speech of a Nairobi consultation being promoted by the WCC and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) for Regional Ecumenical Organizations (REOs) and National Councils of Churches (NCCs).

The second consultation on “Conciliar Ecumenism” is took place in the capital of Kenya between 2 and 7 June. These groups first met in Beirut, Lebanon, in February 2012. **Conciliar ecumenism is a term used to describe the quest for Christian unity as practised by formal councils and conferences of churches.**

Sharing theological reflections on the identity of councils, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit emphasized on the second day of the event the importance of the “Unity Statement” adopted by the WCC 10th Assembly. He also affirmed the consensus method used by WCC governing bodies as a crucial element for conciliar ecumenism. “The future of the ecumenical movement cannot be understood outside the history of the movement and the context. We need to see our context differently, taking into account that today we have different types of cultures and religions”, Dr. Abuom said.

The first days of the consultation in Nairobi were permeated with sharing how the councils have been working together with their members and looking for a community known for its unity. “Ecumenical councils need to be custodians of the call for unity and to be counsellors to each other, despite of the issues that sometimes divide their positions”, said Dr Abuom. “We need to build an ecumenism from below, an inclusive ecumenism, a framework where we harvest the wisdom from everywhere (east, south, north and west). This connection with the grassroots will help us to revitalize the role of the councils”, she concluded. Information available at

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/church-councils-reflect-on-the-spirit-of-christian-unity-in-a-time-of-change>

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MISSION AND ECUMENICAL TO REACH THE GOAL

The Mission and Ecumenical SEA AMBULANCE FUND reached the target of NZ \$ 42,000.



Our regular supporters and some new ones have contributed generously to collect the funds to upgrade the sea ambulance facility at the Helena Goldie Hospital in Munda, Solomon Islands. While we thank all of them we say special thanks to the entire Women’s Fellowships who continue to support the work of Mission and Ecumenical in Solomon Islands. In addition two of the donors contributed significant amounts that added up to more than 50% of the fund. We at Mission and Ecumenical thank and praise God for making it possible to be a blessing to the people in the Solomon Islands. We continue to count on your part in the future as well.

Ecology, theology and justice in practice

A seminar under the theme of Ecology, theology and justice in practice will take place from 23 – 27 June 2014 at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Switzerland.

This seminar will make the link between ecology, theology and justice visible, and draw attention to the potential for churches to develop viable, applied ethical responses and alternatives to the menace to nature from within their traditions. At the same time the seminar will provide insights into eco-theological discourses which emphasize the necessity of processes of mutual critique between ecology and theology in order to promote the common aim of a sustainable world for tomorrow.

Rev. Mark Gibson, Peter Lane and Liliuokahlani Teofilo will represent the Methodist Church of New Zealand at this seminar. We look forward to hear from their experience.

The seminar is organized by the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey in collaboration with the WCC programme on Ecological Justice and Climate Change and co-sponsored by the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN), the National Council of Churches of India (NCCI), the Pacific Conference of Churches and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Cameroon. More information available at:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/green-churches-ecology-theology-and-justice-in-practice>

Central Committee meeting – World Council of Churches

A new Central Committee was elected by the WCC 10th Assembly in Busan from among its delegates in November 2013. It serves as the chief governing body of the WCC until the next assembly, meeting every 2 years. It is responsible for carrying out the policies adopted by the Assembly, reviewing and supervising WCC programmes and the budget of the Council. The new central committee is due to meet from 2 to 8 July 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland. Most Rev. Ray Coster, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand will represent the member churches of Aotearoa until the next General Assembly in 2020. We assure our prayers and best wishes as he travels to attend the Central Committee meeting.

YOUTH IN ASIA TRAINING FOR RELIGIOUS AMITY – YATRA FROM 8 TO 21 JUNE 2014 IN SIAM REAP, CAMBODIA

YATRA 2014 has been met with broad interest. Christians from Asia who are between 20 and 35 years old were invited to apply. Michael Lemanu from Papatotoe Wesley Church and Nancy 'Amelia' Taktaka from Hamilton East Methodist Parish have left for Siam Reap, Cambodia to attend the training programme. They will attend the full programme and will return home after 21 June 2014.

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Busan, South Korea called the churches to embark on "a pilgrimage of justice and peace". Recognizing the need for such a pilgrimage to have an inter-religious dimension, as well as an inter-generational one (particularly with a focus on young people), the WCC programme on Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation is initiating the Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity (YATRA).

This training course will enable young Christian leaders from Asian churches to contribute towards

the building up of just, harmonious and peaceable communities by equipping them for ministries of justice and peace from an inter-religious perspective. The choice of name, YATRA (which is a common term for pilgrimage in many Indo-Asian religions and languages), is intended to reflect the idea of pilgrimage.

Yatra will bring together young men and women who are in positions of leadership within their respective churches. More information available at

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/youth-in-asia-training-for-religious-amity>

'Significant steps' needed to progress Anglican-Methodist Covenant

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, together with the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, have issued a joint statement to their Churches on 22 May 2014.

The Most Revd Justin Welby, the Most Revd John Sentamu, the Revd Ruth Gee and Dr Daleep Mukarji have issued the statement in response to a report that will be debated by the Methodist Conference and General Synod this year in UK.

The report, entitled The Challenge of the Covenant, recommends that both Churches take action to enhance unity between them, with the work being fully embedded in Church structures. The report also encourages the Church of England to address the question of interchangeability of ordained ministries between the two Churches, and the Methodist Church to consider the possibility of a form of episcopal ministry (such as a 'president bishop').

The statement from the Archbishops and Methodist Presidency welcomes the report, stating that: "The time has now come for our churches to take further, significant steps to achieve that level of reconciliation between us and partnership in the gospel that will enhance our mission together in local communities and our shared witness to the whole of society." Read the report of the Joint Implementation Commission from

http://www.methodistconference.org.uk/media/223578/conf-2014-21-the-challenge-of-the-covenant.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Methodist+Church+&utm_campaign=4168954_305+NR+JIC+Statement&utm_content=JICReport&dm_i=BVL,2HCSA,6MZ07L,918GL,1

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