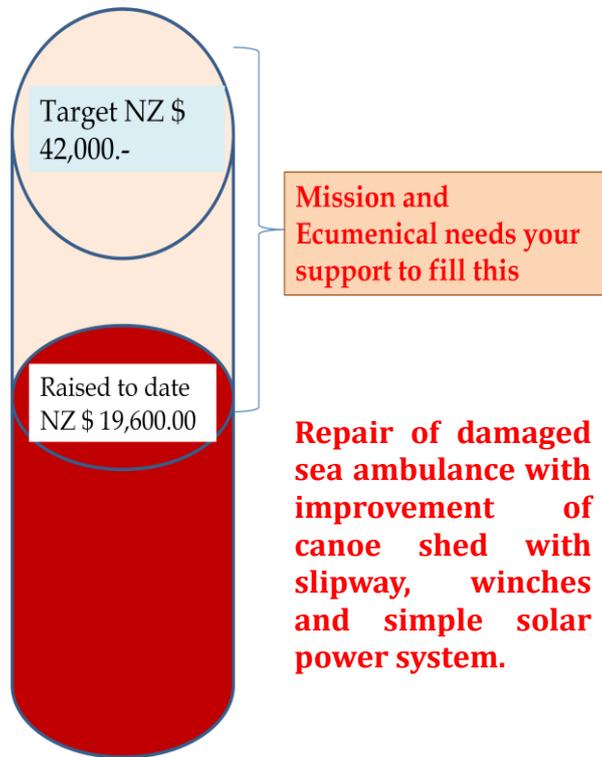


# Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

## March 2014

### HELENA GOLDIE HOSPITAL – SEA AMBULANCE FUND



Our mission is to assist people to have life in its abundance. The Sea Ambulance is the only way of transferring patients for advanced medical treatment in the nearest provincial hospital in Gizo. It takes 1 hour and 30 minutes by sea ambulance in normal condition. With your contribution to the fund you can be a participant in this life saving mission.

### THE NEED IN THE MISSION FIELDS IS TOO LARGE; HOW CAN WE GET INVOLVED IN MISSION?

This may be a question in our minds. We may feel discouraged and disempowered to do anything as we are unable to cover all the needs in the world. Whenever we come across such fear, what we need is a little faith. "Faith empowers; fear cripples".

Our struggle to meet the needs in this world is not going to change the world fully. But we can do our part. I share a poem I found in Our Daily bread:

*To ease the heartache in our world  
That causes us to cry,  
Let's do what we can do to help  
That needy one close by.*

**Do what you can where you are with what you have.**

John Wesley taught Christians of his time to "do all the good you can".

**If you have some work to do,  
Start this very hour;  
You supply the willingness,  
God supplies the power. (Anonymous)**

### DO YOU KNOW?

According to Professor Reeve Veluntua of Union Theological Seminary, Cavite, Philippines Americans spend:

\$ 7 billion each year on ice cream; \$ 7 billion each year on make up; \$ 7 billion each year for dog food; \$ 14 billion a year on chocolate, and \$800 billion dollars a year on weapons of mass destruction; The UNICEF estimates that it will only take 7 billion dollars a year to make sure that every child on earth gets vaccinated. Yet, the world apparently does not have funds to provide for food, education and basic health care. The result is 30,000 people, mostly children, starve to death each day.

**Do what you can where you are with what you have.**

### MISSION AND ECUMENICAL NOTES THE DEATH OF REV. DR. RON O'GRADY WITH SADNESS.

A great Ecumenical leader of Aotearoa New Zealand has taken his rest in the Lord. We convey to the family our heartfelt condolences.

**WCC expresses condolences on the death of Ron O'Grady** 03 March 2014

The World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit has expressed deep sadness over the death of the Rev. Ron O'Grady, who passed away on 26 February at the age of 83 after a battle with cancer.



O'Grady, an ecumenically committed **Minister in the Associated Churches of Christ in new Zeland** served in several leadership positions within the churches and their ecumenical organizations. He was known for his work on children's rights, and was founder of the child protection agency END Child Protection, Child Pornography and Trafficking for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT), based in Thailand.

Among the publications to O'Grady's credit, he was an author for WCC Publications. He was editor of *Christ for All People: Celebrating a World of Christian Art*, co-editor of *The Bible through Asian Eyes* and author of *The Hidden Shame of the Church: Sexual Abuse of Children and the Church* in the Risk Book Series.

"Ron O'Grady will be remembered for his contributions for human rights, especially his works as an activist, author and editor addressing the issues of child protection," said Tveit.

Commending O'Grady's leadership in churches and ecumenical organizations, regionally and globally, Tveit conveyed his "profound condolences" to the Christian Conference of Asia, where O'Grady served as an associate general secretary from 1973 to 1977 and in 1978.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-expresses-condolences-on-the-death-of-ron-o2019grady>

#### **YOUTH FROM ASIAN CHURCHES INVITED TO APPLY FOR YATRA 2014**

**06 March 2014**

**Young adults from Asian churches are invited to participate in a two-week-long training programme of the World Council of Churches (WCC) called Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity (YATRA). The project is aimed at promoting and strengthening religious harmony.**

The training will take place from 8 to 21 June in Siam Reap, Cambodia, bringing together young men and women between the ages of 20 and 30.

Initiated this year by the WCC's programme for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, YATRA is a response to a call from the WCC Busan assembly last year, inviting churches to undertake a "pilgrimage of justice and peace".

The term *Yatra* also means pilgrimage in several Indo-Asian religions and languages.

Addressing the theme "Together towards justice and peace: walking the talk in a multi-religious world", YATRA 2014 will provide its participants an opportunity to analyze the complex intersections between religion and politics in contemporary Asian contexts.

Training will help participants build peer networks and accompany local churches and national councils in their interfaith engagements while addressing issues of justice and peace.

The participants will also conceive creative and constructive models of inter-religious collaboration and projects. They will engage in dialogue on theological questions related to mission, inter-religious prayer, church, inter-religious solidarity, Christian witness and Christian self-understanding in a multi-religious world.

YATRA 2014 will provide its participants an opportunity to reflect on the diversity of Asian Christian experiences of living in multi-religious societies and discovering rich resources within Asian religious traditions that offer responses to issues of justice and peace.

The training will include theological reflections, workshops, Bible studies, lectures by religious scholars, study of ecumenical documents, analysis, exposure visits and the cross-cultural experience of living together and learning from each other.

Applicants are invited to send a completed application form to the WCC programme for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation no later than **1 April 2014**. *More information at* <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/youth-from-asian-churches-invited-to-apply-for-yatra-2014>

#### **CONFLICT IN THE "NAME OF GOD" Malaysia's God problem 'tarnishes' moderate image**

Stuart Grudgings (Reuters) reported in the Ecumenical News on 22 January 2014: The Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic church seems like a model for the multicultural, tolerant Malaysia that its government likes to present to the outside world.

An ethnic Chinese priest conducts the service in the Malay language to a congregation made up of migrants from the country's eastern Borneo island states along with a handful of Vietnamese immigrants.

But it takes only a few minutes for the worshippers to utter the Malay and Arabic word for God that has become a festering source of contention in the Muslim-majority country, deepening ethnic divisions and tarnishing its moderate image. "We believe in Allah, the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth," the 300 or so faithful chant.

A long tussle over who can say "Allah" in Malaysia has flared anew, as Islamization that many see as driven by political forces threatens to erode the secular constitution and minority rights in the

ethnically diverse country following a divisive election last year. A court ruling last October in favour of the government's case that Allah is exclusive to Muslims was followed this month by the seizure of more than 300 Malay-language Bibles by Islamic authorities using a little-known state law.

Lawyers say the row now threatens to become a constitutional crisis as the federal charter's guarantee of religious freedom is challenged by more assertive enforcement of little-used state laws and decrees by Malaysia's royal sultans - who have the authority to appoint clerics and instruct religious police.

The crisis appeared to deepen on Sunday when Malaysia's king, regarded as the defender of the Islamic faith, gave his backing to the October court ruling, the first time the largely ceremonial head of state has weighed in on the issue.

Malaysian police have recommended prominent Catholic priest Lawrence Andrew be charged with sedition for saying churches would keep saying Allah in Selangor, Malaysia's most populous and richest state which neighbours the capital Kuala Lumpur.

The tussle over the right to use the word is uniquely Malaysian, bemusing many religious scholars even in countries with a reputation for much stricter Islam. *More information at –*

<http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/malaysia-god-problem-tarnishes-moderate-image-22690>

### **A SIGN OF HOPE IN PORTUGAL**

Despite facing some major challenges, the Methodist Church in Portugal refuses to lose hope or let financial limitations impede its work.

Church members are working to help spread the gospel. One family is stepping out in mission where there currently are no local Methodist churches, while a family in Lisbon have taken the initiative to start evangelizing. A new congregation is also being started in Lisbon with the view that it will join the Portuguese Methodist Church.

The Church recently set up a communications and projects office. Two young people (both called Joana) accepted the Church's invitation to be involved in the communications and projects post. Youth unemployment is very high in Portugal, and many young people are leaving the country in search of jobs.

"As is well known, the financial situation in Portugal is not very good and the churches are being called to be closer to the people in need," says Bishop Sifredo Teixeira, head of the Methodist Church in Portugal.

"We believe that this project is a sign of hope for the young people in our Church and in this country."

David Friswell, the World Church Relationships Team's leader, recently accompanied three young Methodists to Nicaragua to meet with street children who will be playing in the Street Child World Cup in Brazil.

The Street Child World Cup is a UK-based charity which grew from the Amos Trust in the run-up to the 2010 World Cup. As Durban was being prepared for the World Cup, they spoke out against the forced 'round-ups' of street children who were being cleared from the sight of the watching world.

### **THREE METHODIST YOUTH FROM BRITAIN ENGAGED IN A MISSION**

In 2012, Methodist children and youth in Britain voted at 3Generate to raise £30,000 to pay for the girls' and boys' teams to travel from Nicaragua to Brazil. Casa Alianza (an international NGO dedicated to the rehabilitation and defence of street children in Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and Guatemala) and partners of the Street Child World Cup were able to send a mixed team to Durban. They have been using the tournament to encourage the street children to develop goals and purpose in their lives. To play on the teams all the young people need to not only be good at football, but must commit, prove they are clean of drugs, solvents and alcohol, attend all the training sessions and attend school. The chance to play football at international level allows these young people who have been viewed as 'nobodies' by society a chance to be 'somebody' and to raise the profile and plight of all the street children in Nicaragua.

The three Methodist youth from Britain engaged brilliantly, reflecting thoughtfully and prayerfully on their experiences. They were quick to build friendships, and the experiences gained by them will stay with them for many years to come. Each of them has real potential to play a significant part within the Methodist Church in Britain and must be effectively included from now on. They are somebody!

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