

# Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

## August 2015

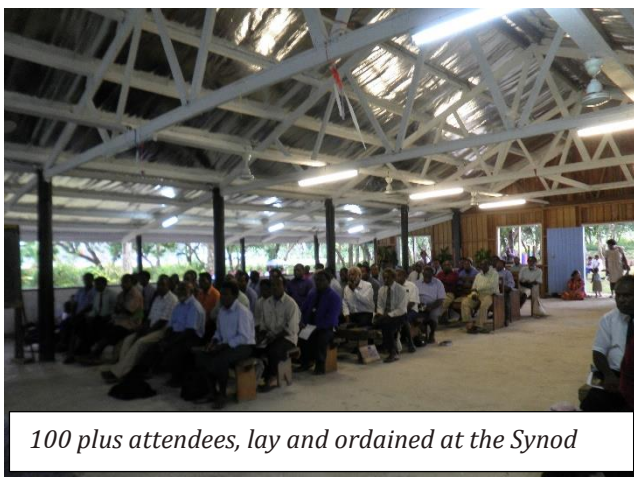
### Ecumenical Service to commemorate 70 years of Korean Armistice – 16 August 2015

An Ecumenical Service to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean Armistice will be held on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2015 at 5.00 pm at the Takapuna Methodist Church, Lake Road Takapuna. The service will be in Korean and English. Very Rev. Ray Coster, member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches will be the preacher. All are welcome. Please share this information with the war veterans of the Korean War and their families.

### Visit to Papua New Guinea

Director Mission and Ecumenical Prince Devanandan visited Papua New Guinea from 24 July to 2 August 2015. First part of the visit was to Kavieng, a town of two largest gold mines and a third to be started soon.

**New Ireland Regional Synod-Kavieng:** Prince was invited to preach in the opening service of the regional synod of New Ireland. Prince preached on 'Commissioned for mission'. The synod works under a theme of "Serve God with renewed commitment." The regional synod was celebrating 23 years of its service as a separate entity after carving out from New Brighton regional synod. The region has now developed into 34 circuits comprised of 307 congregations. The total membership of the United Church in New Ireland is approximately 86,000. The development secretary Martin told Prince that the synod is preparing to take a census in 2016 to determine total membership.



*100 plus attendees, lay and ordained at the Synod*

The synod also runs three higher education institutes, 18 primary schools 7 community schools and 47 elementary schools. They are preparing to host the general assembly of the United Church in 2016 in Kavieng. The leadership of regional bishop Rev. Salot Taran and the synod secretary Rev. Abraham Lampulubo is directed

towards developing the United Church and its service to the community. The focus on mission empowers them to strengthen ministries and grow. The ministries are categorised as Evangelism and Pastoral care, Administration and Finance, Health Services, Education Services, Children and Youth Ministry, Women's Fellowship, HIV aids ministry, Projects and Business Development, General Assembly 2016 and Life Bible School for lay ministers and preachers. The annual budget of the region is Papuan Kina 3 Million (1,660,000 NZ Dollars). Part of the money comes as Church-State partnership.

**"Men come out" – Men's Fellowship Convention:** Port Moresby North circuit organised a convention from 27 to 31 July 2015 with a focus on spiritual development of men. The convention of five days attracted more than 600 men both lay and ordained to meet together in the premises of Rev. Sione Kami Memorial Church under the leadership of Rev Sir Samson Lowa. The theme was chosen with Jesus calling Lazarus to come out of the tomb in John 11:43. The enthusiastic participation of the men in the programmes is an indicator of commitment to live out a Christian life in this context.



Rev. Sione Kami Memorial Church congregation has grown to be with more than 2000 members in Port Moresby. Prince attended the morning 9.00 am service on 2 August prior to leaving Port Moresby. Due to the numbers attending church and lack of seat for all in a worship hall for over 1000 people, the leaders have decided to have an experiment of two services from 2 August 2015. While Prince was in the 9.00 am service, he was able to see the people already coming for the 10.30 am service and waiting outside.

In addition to the two events, Prince also met with the moderator Rev. Bernard Siai, assembly

secretary Uvenama Rova and education secretary Rev. Arua Morea. Philip Conetero, treasurer of the Assembly ensured that accommodation and transport for visits for Prince was in place. The education programme of the United Church is going through a period of transition due to the change of leadership at national office. The church and the people show an ongoing commitment to what they believe. The assembly theme being "Fear God and serve him". \*\*\*

### **Nuclear arms control**

Advocating at various levels of national and international governance for nuclear disarmament



Nine years after the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japanese Christians presented a peace petition at the WCC assembly in Evanston, United States, 1954. The Assembly appealed to governments of the world to prohibit all weapons of mass destruction and to abstain from aggression.

### **Churches engaged for nuclear arms control**

The WCC raises ecumenical concerns and advocates at various levels of national and international governance for nuclear disarmament, control of the spread of other weapons of mass destruction, and accountability under the international rule of law, and fulfilment of treaty obligations.

Over the coming period, the Council's nuclear disarmament advocacy will focus on the Middle East and Asia; it includes collaboration with the Vatican, other faiths and civil society groups.

It urges churches to follow up on the [Ninth Assembly Minute on Nuclear Arms](#) and the [Tenth Assembly Statement on the Way of Just Peace](#) with their governments, and supports them with advocacy letters, background information and study materials. Participating churches and councils receive advice and develop new contacts

to support regional, national, local or civil society actions, including inter-religious initiatives.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/nuclear-arms-control>

### **The Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA) has inducted the Revd Otto Wade as its first Connexional Bishop.**

In a moving ceremony at the Bedford Methodist Church, Revd Wade was inducted by Bishop Kenneth Carter of the South Eastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church, USA. **The induction brings to an end 255 years of history during which the head of the Church was referred to either as Chairman or President.** The induction followed a decision made at the thirty-eighth triennial Connexional Conference meeting in Georgetown, Guyana, on 29 May. From now on, the heads of the Connexion and each of the MCCA's eight districts

(Bahamas/Turks and Caicos

Islands,

Belize/Honduras,

Guyana, Haiti,

Leeward Islands,

Panama/Costa

Rica and South

Caribbean) will be

referred to as

'Bishop'. The

presidents of each

of the districts

shall also now be

inducted as the

Bishops of the

Districts, with

services taking pla



*Bishop Wade's induction 31 May 2015*

during the course of the next few months. Andy Dye, a mission partner based in Grenada, attended the conference. "It was truly a privilege to be part of the meeting and to be able to reflect on my five and a half years in the Caribbean," Andy said. "It was a challenge being both a 'part of' the MCCA and a British representative. I was greatly encouraged by the thoughtful and caring people, both lay and ministerial, who undertook this work with a great seriousness of mind, seeking to chart a way forward."

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1765072/world-church-bulletin-july-15.pdf>

### **World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel – 20 to 26 September 2015**

During the week following the International Day of Prayer for Peace, church organizations, congregations, and people of faith are encouraged to make a common witness by participating in

worship services, educational events, and acts of advocacy in support a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil society organizations around the world to join together in 2015 for a week of advocacy and action in support of an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. Congregations and individuals around the globe who share the hope of justice shall unite during the week to take peaceful actions, together, to create a common international public witness.

The theme of the week in 2015 is: **"God has broken down the dividing walls"**

#### **HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

As participants in the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, from 20 to 26 September 2015, churches around the world shall send a clear signal to policy-makers, community groups, and their own parishes about the urgent need for a peace settlement that ends the illegal occupation and secures the legitimate rights and future of both peoples.

Participants will organize and join in events and activities around the following three principles:

1. Praying with churches living under occupation, using a special prayer from Jerusalem and other worship resources prepared for the week.
2. Educating about actions that make for peace, and about facts on the ground that do not create peace, especially issues related to prisoners.
3. Advocating with political leaders using ecumenical policies that promote peace with justice.

#### **WHY?**

This annual observance of a week of prayer, education, and advocacy calls participants to work for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine, so that Palestinians and Israelis can finally live in peace. It has been 66 years since the creation of the State of Israel. This has not led to the creation of an independent Palestinian state but has only deepened the tragedy of the Palestinian people. It is now 47 years since the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza overwhelmed the peaceful vision of one land, two peoples.

**Yet the dream of one nation cannot be fulfilled at the expense of another.**

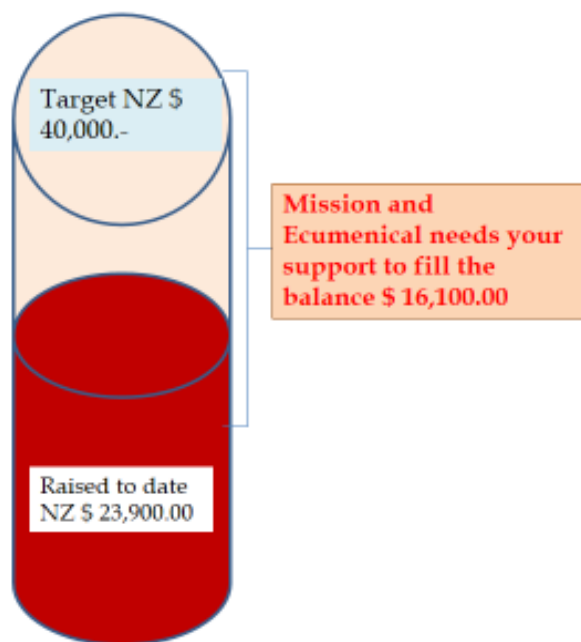
The action week's message is that now:

- It's time for Palestinians and Israelis to share a just peace.
- It's time for freedom from occupation.
- It's time for equal rights.
- It's time for the healing of wounded souls.

More information about this event available at <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/world-week-for-peace-in-palestine-israel>

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE TABAKA SOLAR POWER FUND - To light up the young lives Mission and Ecumenical needs \$ 16,100 more to make this project a success**

We thank all those who are continuing to support our assistance to Solomon Islands. We look forward to your contribution to complete the Tabaka project as well.



#### **FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TRAIN TO ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

**The role of faith in promoting women's human rights was the focus of an ecumenical training session held in Geneva, Switzerland, for representatives of faith-based organizations.**

The training seminar, organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC), Finn Church Aid- ACT Alliance, the World YWCA and the Lutheran World Federation on 7-10 July, equipped participants in becoming strong civil society actors in their struggles for gender justice. **Rev. Dr. Lynne Frith from the Methodist Church of New Zealand was a participant in this programme.**





*Participants in an ecumenical training session on women's human rights, at the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva.*  
© WCC/Albin Hillert

The participants came from around 20 countries. They explored effective ways to hold their governments accountable in ensuring women's rights in accordance with United Nations conventions and resolutions ratified by the member states. In a number of sessions, the participants enhanced their understanding of the tools offered by the UN mechanism for promoting women's human rights.

"At the training, we have tried to explore a holistic approach in defence of human rights and gender justice, where tools offered by the UN and churches speak to each other," said Dr Fulata Mbanu-Moyo, WCC programme executive for the Just Community of Women and Men. "We cannot monolithically flag the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women ([CEDAW](#)); we must also make use of the [Universal Periodic Review](#) and the UN Security Council [Resolution 1325](#)," said Moyo.

"These UN mechanisms can support policies of ecumenical institutions related to gender justice, harassment, and sexual and reproductive health and rights," she added. Nora Carmi, a seminar participant from Palestine, said, "In each of our countries, denial of women's human rights takes place at the local as well as at the national level."

"Here we have explored how we do advocacy and looked at the UN mechanisms, searching the principles that we can apply to our own contexts as people of faith," she added. Speaking of discussions on "faith", Carmi said that the "Christian understanding of service to humanity is central to the cause of women's human rights. We must work together to uplift all human beings, including women, who are created in the image of God."

Leena Sorsa, facilitator at the training session, said that "religions can offer a very positive support to human rights." She stressed that criticism of all religious traditions and culture is equally

important when it comes to the issue of subjugation and oppression of women.

"We must admit that religions are also causing a negative impact on human rights. We have to be critical of our own religious habits. Traditions that are repressive to women have always been part of our lives, and we have been told to be quiet about it. This is something that needs critical analysis from our side as people of faith," added Sorsa.

While in Geneva, the participants also attended the 8 July session of the CEDAW.

"After attending the CEDAW session, I have rediscovered the importance of the work of faith-based organizations in promoting women's human rights," said Lynne Frith from New Zealand.

She said that, as representatives of faith-based organizations, "we have the opportunity to gather information, and represent the voices of women, who are often not heard."

"Our commitment to justice, care for creation and the peaceful way of living offers us the unique opportunity to ask crucial questions, for example about the conditions of migrant women, and justice for all people, but especially for women and children," Frith said.

During the training, participants had the opportunity to develop their report writing skills. Together, they worked on ways to network and create human resources for gender justice. The development of such resources was considered significant by participants in the on-going ecumenical projects that seek the elimination of violence against women and girls. The participants in the training seminar came from Nepal, Haiti, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Nepal, Liberia, Kenya, the United States, Denmark, Myanmar, Palestine, Finland, Colombia, New Zealand, Guatemala and Switzerland.

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/faith-based-organizations-train-to-advocate-for-women2019s-human-rights>

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