

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

July 2016

WCC DECLARES THE CHURCHES' SOLIDARITY WITH TANAH PAPUA (WEST PAPUA)

28 June 2016
Amid reports of a deteriorating human rights situation in West Papua, a minute of support for Papuans was issued on 28 June during the closing day to a meeting in Trondheim, Norway, of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The WCC has followed the situation since before the 1969 incorporation of West Papua into Indonesia. During peaceful protests of government policies in May and early June of this year, more than 3,000 people are said to have been placed under arrest. A further 1,400 West Papuans are reported to have been arrested on 15 June.

Calling on member churches to pray and act in support of Christian witness in the region, the Central Committee authorized an international ecumenical delegation to be sent "as soon as possible" in order to "hear the voices of victims of violence and human rights violations, and to pursue the pilgrimage of justice and peace in this context."

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-declares-the-churches2019-solidarity-with-tanah-papua-west-papua>

Please note the date and observe in your congregations:

**International Day of Prayer for Peace
21 September 2016**



Each year on 21 September the World Council of Churches calls churches and parishes to observe the International Day of Prayer for Peace. 21

September is also the United Nations-sponsored International Day of Peace.

As it approaches, the World Council of Churches invites people to offer prayers for peace. Observances of the peace prayer day began in 2004 as part of the ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010) after an agreement between the heads of the WCC and the UN. The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum of the WCC invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil society organizations to observe a [World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel](#), starting on 18 September 2016. The

theme of the week in 2016 is: "God has broken down the dividing walls". More information available at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/international-day-of-prayer-for-peace>

A PILGRIMAGE WITH A DIFFERENCE DRAWS YOUNG LEADERS FROM 14 ASIAN COUNTRIES



Nearly 30 young ecumenical leaders from 14 Asian countries gathered at the Jakarta Theological Seminary in Indonesia for the third Youth in Asia Training Programme for Religious Amity (YATRA). Jointly organised by the World Council of Churches, Jakarta Theological Seminary and Communion of Christian Churches in Asia, the 2-week training will facilitate learning on the theme "Religion and Public Space" from an interreligious perspective.

Rooted in expertise and experience-based learning, the group started the first week with an orientation to the ecumenical and interreligious context of Asia. Participants visited the offices of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia where the moderator of the communion and the former general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, Rev. Dr Henriette Hutabarat Lebang addressed the group on the Asian ecumenical context.

Following lectures from leading scholars of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity in Asia, the group visited the Buddhist Vihara Mahavira Graha Pusat, the Sikh Gurudwara of Indonesia and the Pura Aditya Jaya, the biggest Hindu Temple of Balinese origin in Indonesia.

YATRA was started by the programme on interreligious dialogue and cooperation of the WCC in June 2014 following the 10th Assembly of the WCC in Busan, South Korea as an interreligious contribution to the pilgrimage of justice and peace. Now in its third year, the programme has captured the attention and interest of WCC member churches in Asia as a good means of capacity building.

Pointing to the growing interest among member churches in YATRA, Marietta Ruhland, who has been

one of the organisers of the YATRA programme alongside Peniel Rajkumar, WCC programme executive for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation since its inception, says: “Very quickly YATRA has become an important programme for the churches in Asia. While we had to advertise it in 2014 and approach churches and convince them of the utility and benefits, now we are being approached by the churches long before we even start designing the next YATRA programme and venue.”

She said the organising team gained valuable experience over the last three years. “We have gained a lot of experience on finding a balance between the different elements of the programme – lectures, worship, exposure visits and times for group building and personal reflection – in such a way that we benefit best from the location and the academic, spiritual, social and cultural resources it offers.”

Participants of YATRA 2016 were excited and encouraged to receive a video message from WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. Recognising YATRA as an Asian expression of the WCC’s commitment to capacity building, Tveit said, “the YATRA course is meant to equip and enable young ecumenical leaders to become messengers of love and agents of hope in our world today.” Wishing the participants an effective time of learning, Tveit said, “May you grow both as individuals and as a group through the strengthening of friendships and the widening of your perspectives and move towards that ecumenical vision of visible unity.” More information about YATRA:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/a-pilgrimage-with-a-difference-draws-young-leaders-from-14-asian-countries>

Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity (YATRA) 2016 Jakarta, Indonesia **“Religion and Public Space”**

Lesieli Samiu shares her experience

From 14 different nations, 30 young Christian ecumenical leaders and activists from different contexts and backgrounds were chosen to partake and engage in this inter-religious dialogue forum known as YATRA which was held in Jakarta,

We are the leaders of today and that we have a responsibility to stand for justice and peace through love.

Indonesia on May 29th to June 12th 2016. The programme is a part of the World Council of Churches (WCC) vision of Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace with an aim to equip young Christian ecumenical leaders to embrace the challenges and opportunities of their multi-religious contexts. This two-week training was based on the theme “Religion

and Public Space” where we had the opportunity to listen to lectures from leading scholars and theologians of Christianity in Asia including scholars from the three religions of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. In addition, we also had the pleasure of hearing from the two powerful feminist theologians, Lizette Tapia-Raquel from the Philippines and Dr Aruna Gnanadason from India where they shared about the struggles of Asian and Dalit women (classified as the lowest women in Indian society) in an Asian and Indian context, in light of scripture.

We also engaged in discussions and conversations about certain issues and challenges that we as Christians and the church faced in our own different contexts which I found very enriching, challenging yet inspiring.

young Christians partaking in social activism to help the poor who are struggling and living in the slums and the river banks. They provide study groups and tutorials for children in these regions so that they can attend school and health programs as well as inventing a creative economy where KGI helps to encourage people who are living in the area to recycle coffee and lolly wrappers to make bags, fans and other creative objects. One of the youngest activists that we had the pleasure of meeting was Faye Simajuntak, a young girl of 14 years’ old who is the founder of “Rumah Faye” an organization working against child prostitution. Rumah Faye saves human trafficking victims particularly those who are prostituted and help to make a better future for the next generation.

We went on exposure visits to the Buddhist Vihara Mahavira Graha Pusat, the Sikh Gurudwara of Indonesia, the Pura Aditya Jaya which is the biggest Hindu temple of Balinese origin in Indonesia, the Masjid Istiqlal which is the biggest Mosque in Southeast Asia, the Cathedral and the school of Ciganjur Gus Dur Jakarta which is a Muslim Boarding school.



Being a participant in this program was truly life-changing in so many ways. We came as strangers and departed as a family. Through the workshops, lectures, the Bible studies, spiritual activities,

reflections, exposure visits, discussions and conversations, all contributed to the richness of this training and this inter-religious dialogue. YATRA provided us with the platform to dialogue from our own local soil and to see how God is working in our lives, in our context, in the church, in his creation and in the world. This programme gave me hope to know that we are the leaders of today and that we have a responsibility to stand for justice and peace through love. YATRA also encouraged me to stand firm in my Christian faith yet it also challenged me to see beyond my "otherness" because the way we deal with "the other" meaning those who are different from us, is determined by the way we treat the other.

Therefore, if we claim to know Jesus, we need to firstly remove our own biases, assumptions and prejudices of "the other" and see them from Jesus' eyes that we are all his beloved. As Christians, we are accountable for the lives of others because to be a host is to also be a guest in each other's spaces through love, hope and trust that we are participating in God's purpose for his kingdom. ***

Note from Mission and Ecumenical:

Youth in the Methodist Church are encouraged to contact the director of Mission and Ecumenical if interested in attending another [YATRA programme in 2017](#).

Minute on Human Rights Situation in West Papua 28 June 2016

The conflict in Tanah Papua (West Papua) has cost the lives of thousands of people since the late 1960s. A former Dutch colony placed under United Nations administration in 1962, the region was unilaterally annexed by Indonesia and since then has experienced a pro-independence insurgency. In 1969 West Papua was formally incorporated into Indonesia, after a widely discredited ballot in which only about 1,000 Papuans voted from a population of 700,000.

In February 2012, the World Council of Churches (WCC) executive committee addressed the situation in West Papua in a statement expressing concern about the militarization of the region, economic exploitation of indigenous Papuans' natural resources by others, the impact of transmigration, under-development and lack of employment and economic opportunities for indigenous Papuans, gross and systematic violations of human rights (including arbitrary arrests, torture and extrajudicial killings), and violent suppression of indigenous Papuans' aspirations for self-determination in their own land. These matters have been testified to by WCC member church the Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua

(GKITP) and partners in the International Coalition for Papua.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo has promised to stop disproportionate use of force and human rights abuses against indigenous Papuans by Indonesian security personnel, and to pursue dialogue, reconciliation and development in West Papua, but hopes of an improvement in the situation for indigenous Papuans have not been realized. According to reports from West Papua, the situation has recently deteriorated markedly. In mass arrests in May and June 2016, more than 3,000 people are reported to have been arrested during peaceful protests in Papuan cities and in several other cities in Indonesia. Most of those arrested were subsequently released, but some were reported to have been tortured during detention. Most recently, a further 1,400 West Papuans were reported to have been arrested on 15 June. Violations of West Papuans' freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and other rights and freedoms are reported on an almost daily basis. But Indonesia routinely prevents access to the territory by independent human rights experts and journalists.

The WCC central committee, meeting in Trondheim, Norway, 22-28 June 2016, therefore:

1. **Calls on** all WCC member churches to pray and act in support of the witness of the churches – especially the Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua, and through the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) – for justice and peace in the region.
2. **Requests** that a solidarity visit to West Papua by an international ecumenical delegation be organized as soon as possible, to demonstrate the ecumenical movement's accompaniment of the churches in the region, to hear the voices of the victims of violence and human rights violations, and to pursue the pilgrimage of justice and peace in this context.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2016/minute-on-human-rights-situation-in-west-papua>

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**Methodist Mission and Ecumenical
Annual Appeal 2016
Kokeqolo Water Scheme Fund**

Life giving water

**The appeal is from United Church Assembly Office to develop a
Reliable water supply for the village of Kokeqolo**

The people of Kokeqolo, the schools and the United Church of Solomon Islands assembly office are dependent on rain water. A recent survey of the area located a bore hole that was used by the American forces during the Second World War. The United Church has requested our help to use this source of water by building a water supply unit. The cost is NZ \$ 80,000. M&E committed to raise \$ 40,000 which is half of the total cost and asked UCSI to look for another donor to cover the other half.

The beneficiaries of this water supply will be

Kokeqolo Primary School



Youth Centre



United Church Office



Methodist Mission and Ecumenical appeals to all to contribute to the

**KOKEQOLO WATER SCHEME FUND
To raise \$ 40,000 in 2016**

... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. [Matt. 5:16]

Mission is possible only with your participation and contribution to the fund.

Mission and Ecumenical Fund is registered with the **Charities Commission**.

Registration Number CC51048. Receipts will be issued for tax rebate on the donation.

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ANNUAL APPEAL 2016 - KOKEQOLO WATER SCHEME FUND

Please remember to send this cover slip for a receipt when you make a deposit.

<p>Please send your donations by cheque in favour of Mission and Ecumenical Fund</p> <p>To Rev. Prince Devanandan Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Private Bag 11903 Ellerslie Auckland 1542</p>	<p>You could also make your donation directly into BNZ Account No. 02-0800-0766004-03</p> <p>Amount: \$ _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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