

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

August 2017

Tabaka Rural Training Institute

A number of those who served on different projects at the Tabaka Rural Training Institute gathered for a reunion in Hamilton at the end of July. Unable to attend, President Prince sent greetings and a word of appreciation for their work. He also sent a number of slides to illustrate the way in which the Institute has improved facilities recently. The most important development has been the installation of solar power for lighting, with assistance from Mission and Ecumenical.

Kokeqolo Water Project

The office continues to receive contributions from many sources for this year's special appeal. We are aware that the gifts represent a lot of work behind the scenes often from Women's Fellowship groups. Other donations come from people who take a special interest in our partners-in-mission relationship with the churches in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Once again a big thank you for your continuing support and generosity. We have received \$ 45,414 to date. We look forward to your continued support to reach the target of \$ 80,000.

Infectious Diseases Ward

Helena Goldie Hospital has made a decision to develop an Infectious Diseases Ward to isolate patients and prevent contamination. We have been sent a set of photographs of the stage that construction has reached. Pitt Street Parish and Trust have taken up funding this as 150th anniversary project. Work will continue on the building as more funds become available. The photo shows the construction so far.



Funding from Trust

In July we received news that the William F Walter's Trust, administered by the General Purposes Board

of the Methodist Church, had made grants to the work of Mission and Ecumenical. \$2,500 was applied to Helena Goldie Hospital and \$2,750 to Rarongo Theological College. A further contribution of \$2,500 will go toward the current appeal for the Water Scheme at Kokeqolo.

Commemorating the Reformation

Over the years I have taken insights from reading and gathered gleanings in notebooks. Here are three examples from the writing of Martin Luther that could form the basis of a sermon during this year when we commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

"Not reading or speculating, but living, dying and being damned make a man a theologian."

Luther brought a robust mind and heart to his work as a theologian. He wanted to reject the scholasticism of the medieval period with its fine distinctions. He sought to put theology at the disposal of the gospel. Theology was to serve the struggle to be human, to renounce evil and to live with integrity before God. It was a dangerous vocation.

"... the Bible is alive: it has hands and grabs me, it has feet and runs after me."

Luther rediscovered the Bible as a disturbing text. He translated it into German for the people, but after four years reverted to the view that only those who read Hebrew and Greek should interpret it. He did not read scripture as an ancient text: rather scripture addressed him and he could not get away from its claim. The Bible troubled Luther and turned his world upside down.

"A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing is worth nothing."

Luther is convinced that faith is not an easy option which insulates us from the world. While God loves unconditionally, yet at the same time this God, revealed especially in the Cross, makes demands. So discipleship becomes an entering into the suffering of God who loves the world. This kind of discipleship shakes us to the depths.

Terry Wall

Church leaders meet in London

British Methodist Church leaders, President Rev. Loraine Mellor and Vice President Jill Baker met with Archbishop Justin Welby at Lambeth on 14th July. They spoke about mutual concerns and were encouraged by reports of Anglicans and Methodists praying and working together in mission, witness and service all over England. Consideration was also given to the future of Europe and engagement in

public issues. Together the church leaders commended the report "Mission and Ministry in Covenant" for study and reflection. The report, which builds on the Covenant established in 2003, sets out proposals for a relationship of full communion with reconciled ministries, between the Methodist Church and the Church of England.

Treaty bans nuclear weapons

After many years of discussion, a treaty has been signed by 122 governments that makes nuclear weapons illegal. The 7 July decision at the United Nations bans the manufacture and possession, deployment and use of nuclear weapons. The treaty also provides a pathway for their eventual elimination. The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches Dr Olav Fykse Tveit commented, "I welcome this treaty with great thanksgiving. It is designed to protect all nations and the planet that is our home. It could ultimately save millions of lives. The World Council of Churches called for this very treaty at its Assembly in South Korea in 2013. We vowed there to live in ways that protect life and creation, not in fear protected by nuclear weapons."

Landmark ecumenical decision

History was made on 5 July when the World Communion of Reformed Churches signed a document in Wittenberg, where Martin Luther once lived and worked, that will help overcome past divisions and enable it to work for unity and joint witness. The signing associated the WCRC with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification which had been developed by the World Lutheran Federation and the Roman Catholic Church in 1999. The World Methodist Council affirmed the Declaration in 2006. The Joint Declaration states that mutual condemnations pronounced by Lutherans and Catholics in the sixteenth century do not apply to their current teaching on Justification. In 1999 Catholics and Lutherans agreed that a consensus now exists between their two traditions in regard to the theological controversy which was a major cause of the split in the western church. The issues are no longer to be regarded as church dividing.

Methodist pastor takes on Coca-Cola

The Christchurch *Press* reported on 15 July that the Rev. William Lamar, senior pastor at Washington DC's historic Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church is tired of presiding at funerals for parishioners who die from heart disease, diabetes and stroke. Along with a Baptist colleague, Dalman Coates, they have filed a suit against Coca-Cola claiming soda manufacturers knowingly deceived customers about the health risks of sugar-sweetened beverages – at enormous cost to their communities.

The article noted that nearly half of all African Americans and forty-two per cent of Latinos suffer from obesity, compared with just over one-third of whites. A key point in the dispute is the claim that Coca-Cola targets certain communities. Studies by the Rudd Centre for Food Policy and Obesity at the University of Connecticut found that black teens see three times more Coca-Cola ads than white teens.

Global Day of Prayer to End Famine

Recently a letter was received from the four sponsoring organisations – World Council of Churches, World Vision, All Africa Conference of Churches and ACT Alliance – expressing thanks for the many people around the world, perhaps one billion, who prayed for an end to famine. They wrote, "In prayer we stand together, invoking God's grace and blessing to overcome the famine... In action, through the on-going work of Churches and agencies in responding to drought and famine, we see people acting as God's hands in the world, alleviating suffering and advocating for justice..." The World Council of Churches commits to providing updates on famine and liturgical resources on a monthly basis. A regional conference took place in Nairobi at the end of June with the theme: "Mobilisation of faith communities for overcoming hunger and sustaining justice and peace in the Horn of Africa."

Visitor from Ireland

During July Gillian Kingston, past Vice-President of the Methodist Church in Ireland and a member of the World Methodist Council presidium, visited Auckland with her husband Tom. She was happy to share her experience of the Irish model of mutual recognition of ministries in the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church. The New Zealand Anglican – Methodist dialogue gathered in Auckland at the home of the Auckland Anglican Bishop. Bishop Ross prepared a meal for those present and Gillian shared her impressions of the major developments in Ireland. We sensed the excitement that mutual recognition of ministries brings. She spoke of new opportunities in mission, the sharing of resources and growing together in understanding and appreciation. The Irish model, adapted for our context, is currently being commended to Anglicans and Methodists in New Zealand.

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**Methodist Mission and Ecumenical
Annual Appeal 2017
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 2017**

... 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.

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