

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

February 2017

Summer School on Ecumenism

The Summer School on Ecumenism to be held at the Upper Riccarton Methodist Church in the last week of February, has attracted twenty-seven participants. It is hoped that a contingent of ten Fijians will travel from Suva representing a group called Young Pacific Ecumenists. Originally an initiative of Methodist Mission and Ecumenical, the School on Ecumenism has been adopted as a programme of the new ecumenical body, the National Dialogue on Christian Unity. The school will provide a grounding in the biblical and theological basis for ecumenism. It will introduce an outline of the history of the modern ecumenical movement and explore the relation of the unity of the church to the priority of mission. There will also be consideration as to why the ecumenical movement has wanted to hold together issues of faith and order with issues of social justice. A team of experienced tutors has been assembled three of whom come from Australia - Robert Gribben with his background in Methodism and Ray Williamson and Stephen Pickard, both Anglicans. In addition to these speakers there are local presenters such as Cardinal John Dew, Rev. John Roberts and Jocelyn Armstrong. One afternoon will be devoted to giving participants in the school exposure to the reality of Christchurch after the earthquakes, listening to experience and reflecting theologically.

Tabaka Rural Training Institute gives thanks



Auditorium lit up in the night with solar power

Three years ago Methodist Mission and Ecumenical promoted its annual appeal for Solar power panels for Tabaka Rural Training Institute. The response was positive and our target was reached. Planning and development have taken place. We have heard in the last week that the solar panels have now been installed and the Institute is enjoying the way in which the new source of power has changed the life

of the community. Mission and Ecumenical have transmitted the funds for the completion of the project. We have received messages of gratitude for the gifts from the Methodist Church of New Zealand.



Solar Panels installed on the roof of the auditorium

Religious Diversity Centre

When the Religious Diversity Centre in Aotearoa New Zealand was launched at Parliament in March 2016, speakers expressed the hope that the centre would promote understanding of world religions. In keeping with this goal the Religious Diversity Centre has announced its first course - Discovering Religious Diversity - to be held concurrently in Auckland (Monday evenings) and in Hamilton (Thursday evenings) over four terms in 2017. Each term will be made up of eight lectures - cost \$95.00 term. The centre also announces the launch of its website where further details can be accessed. The new website will be able to be reached after 30th January and can be found at www.rdc.org.nz Other resources and events that the RDC is offering will be able to be found on the website.

Asian Ecumenical Institute 2016

Mission & Ecumenical made it possible for two young people from the Methodist Church to attend the 2016 Asian Ecumenical Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand - Abhishek Solomon and Michael Lemanu. Here Michael reports on his experience.

The Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI) is an ecumenical training programme for young church leaders in the Asia Pacific region. I was fortunate to attend this programme alongside the Rev. Abhishek Solomon, as representatives of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

As part of AEI a wide array of topics and issues which the church currently faces were covered - both in the Asian context and beyond. Workshops were facilitated by a range of skilled experts and people devoted to championing the ecumenical movement in their contexts.

With ecumenism at the centre of our gathering, we explored the role of the Church in issues such as HIV/AIDS, human trafficking and violence against women, as well as many others. We were challenged to consider those different to us, ethnically, religiously and theologically, through a different lens. There was a great amount of learning that I am excited to bring back to our New Zealand context and offer to our Haahi.

Another great aspect of AEI was meeting fellow church leaders from a hugely diverse range of contexts and walks of life. Meeting these people, listening to their stories and forging life-long friendships was an invaluable experience. This can also be said for the rich experience that was Thai culture.

Overall, AEI challenged and stimulated me in such a way that I have returned with a new found interest to explore ecumenism in Aotearoa – within and outside the church. I also believe there is a vital role for our young people to play in continuing to positively shape *the household* that God calls us to mission from.

I would like to extend my thanks to our church, Rev. Prince and Rev. Terry and the Mission & Ecumenical Board for making this unforgettable opportunity possible.

He waka eke noa – we are all in the waka together!

National Dialogue on Christian Unity

The new ecumenical body National Dialogue for Christian Unity, comprising Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches, with observers from the Presbyterian Church and Salvation Army will meet in its annual forum in Wellington at the Catholic Centre on Thursday 2nd March. At its General Assembly last year, the Presbyterian Church agreed in principle to seek membership. Observers from SCM, UCANZ and CWS will also attend. Among other matters on its agenda will be a presentation from Andrew Judd, past mayor of New Plymouth, reflecting on his hikoi to Parihaka with others. The experience was transformative with regard to the way in which he sees his relationship with Maori. An article in the February 2017 issue of *North & South* introduces Andrew Judd and interviews him with impressive text and photographs.

Christian World Service Reports

“Throughout its two-year term on the United Nations Security Council New Zealand focused on the situation in Israel Palestine. Days before New Zealand’s term expired, the Council adopted Resolution 2334 jointly sponsored by New Zealand, condemning the building of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory as “flagrant violation of international law” and its effects on the viability of the two state solution. CWS wrote to Minister of

Foreign Affairs, Mr Murray McCully, thanking him for his efforts and quoting Constantine Dabbagh, retired executive director of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees in Gaza and CWS guest in 2010. He wrote, ‘in appreciation and gratitude ... for the firm stand of New Zealand on the issue of the illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories.’” CWS *Update* also notes a recent United Nations study that indicates that 1,089 Palestinian owned structures were demolished in the West Bank during 2016, displacing 1,593 and affecting livelihoods of another 7,101 people. Soon after the inauguration of Donald Trump’s presidency Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced plans to build a further 2,500 homes for settlers on the West Bank.

Asia Mission Conference

This major conference with the theme “Journey Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light in Asia” will be held in Yongon, Myanmar from 11th till the 17th October 2017. Associated with the conference will be a celebration of the Christian Conference of Asia’s diamond jubilee. Expressions of interest to attend need to be sent to the acting director of Mission and Ecumenical by 30th April.

Beatitudes for today’s world

Recently on a visit to Sweden Pope Francis proposed six new beatitudes to guide us on our way through the troubling times of today’s world:

Blessed are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others, and forgive them from the heart:

Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalized, and show them closeness;

Blessed are those who see God in every person, and strive to make others discover him;

Blessed are those who protect and care for our common home;

Blessed are those who renounce their own comfort in order to help others;

Blessed are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians.

Tui Motu December 2016

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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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