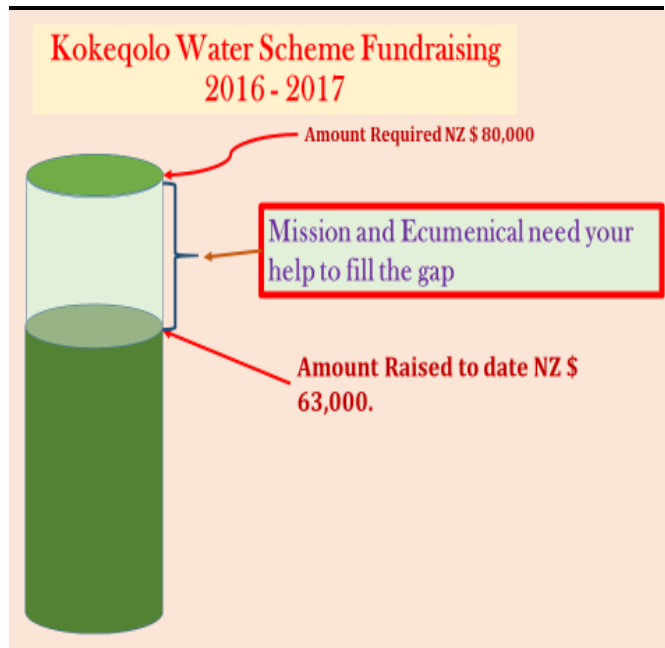


# Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

## November 2017

### Kokeqolo Water Project



Water is becoming a central issue for the well-being of communities around the world. It is also a source of conflict between nations as the resource becomes scarce. Safeguarding water supplies, ensuring them for the future and fostering an awareness of the critical value of water will be priorities in the future. We have seen a debate about whether companies should have free access to our water in New Zealand and export it for profit. Mission and Ecumenical seeks to develop a safe and reliable water supply for Kokeqolo, the school, youth centre and the church offices. It is not too late to make a contribution to this important project.

### Infectious Diseases Ward

Helena Goldie Hospital will now see its Infectious Diseases Ward completed. This is thanks to a generous donation of \$45,000 from the Auckland Central Parish and Trust as part of its 150th anniversary celebrations. David Davies visited the office of Mission and Ecumenical at 409 Great South Road, Penrose to present the cheque. In an accompanying letter written by the Rev. Dr Lynne Frith, Parish Superintendent, she commented, "The grant is a tangible expression both of gratitude for the generations who preceded us at Pitt Street and of commitment to the mission priorities of the wider church." It is hoped that when President Prince visits the Solomon Islands next year he will be accompanied by representatives from Pitt Street who might be present for the dedication of the ward.

### Sasamuqa Hospital

The Mission and Ecumenical office recently received news that an outboard motor on one of the sea ambulances had reached the end of its life. Sea ambulances play an important role in the Solomon Islands with its many scattered and remote centres of population. The East Coast Bays Methodist Parish has offered to cover the cost of the purchase of a new outboard motor. A replacement outboard motor will be fitted in the new year. The service of moving patients to the hospital will continue. Thank you.

### Commemorating the Reformation

Lutherans and Catholics, together with representatives from other Christian Churches gathered in the Auckland Catholic Cathedral of St. Patrick on 31 October to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. The theme of the service was "From Conflict to Communion". Liturgical riches of the two traditions were beautifully woven to produce a service that had elements of thanksgiving and penitence, lament and reconciliation. They committed themselves to common witness and continuing the journey together. A feature of the service was the leadership of Auckland Catholic Bishop Pat Dunn and Assistant Bishop of the Lutheran Church, the Rev. Jim Pietsch. Bishop Pat, reflecting on the conviction that the end of the journey is always hidden from us, told the story of the construction of the Duomo in Venice. Begun in 1296 no one knew how to install the dome that was planned. It had been done before on different buildings in the distant past but the formula had been forgotten. It was one hundred years later that an architect worked out how to install the dome without buttresses. We do not fully see the end but we are called to stay with the journey. Concluding with a prayer of Oscar Romero, it was acknowledged that the Kingdom of God is always beyond us: we are prophets of a future not our own.

### Yangon Mission Conference

The Christian Conference of Asia Conference on Mission was held in Yangon from the 15<sup>th</sup> October. Around 600 participants assembled from all over Asia where most of the churches are minorities. It was ground-breaking to hold such a conference in Myanmar where military rule has been maintained for so long. Tumuaki Diana Tana, in her role as Vice-Moderator, preached the sermon at the opening of the Conference. She asked, "What does the Lord require?" She emphasised the need for partnership to find the new right path and the importance of

listening to God's voice for the challenges ahead and for liberation from oppression. The key note speaker was Dr Wesley Ariarajah who contrasted the Buddhist mission in Asia with the Christian mission. Another speaker who made a big impact was Sister Sudha Varghese who told of her twenty-year ministry among the Rat-Eaters of Bihar, north-east India. Also associated with the conference was the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the East Asia Christian Conference, which became the Christian Conference of Asia. The general secretary of the World Council of Churches Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit gave the address noting that it was in Asia that the first regional ecumenical body was established. He went on to say, "Most churches in Asia have always operated in multi-religious societies, where they have represented a minority as Christians. That has given them a different perspective on mission, which we can learn from." He added that the sheer size in terms of number of members of the Asian churches makes them influential globally, despite their minority status in most Asian countries.

### Being a steward at mission conference

"If you do not experience anything, it's impossible to gain knowledge. I came back from the conference with a wealth of respect and admiration for the Asian communities and Christianity in Asia. Most of my learnings were from conversations not only with delegates, but also with other stewards whom I'm proud to call brothers and sisters. Learning about being part of a minority religion is very interesting and made me more appreciative of their resilience in their own countries."

Fusi Veia.

"The main role of the stewards was to help the conference run smoothly... we also got to participate in parts of the conference... I especially enjoyed being part of the group discussions. Being amongst theologians, ministers and scholars discussing current issues of the church in Asia was quite an experience. The key highlight for me was meeting and working together with the other stewards – friendships were formed. It was very evident, once we arrived in Myanmar that I was no longer in a country where Christianity was the main religion. In fact, only 7% of the population are Christian... It was amazing to see how far along Asia is ecumenically. In Myanmar, the Myanmar Council of Churches consists of thirteen different denominations working together as one group ... made me feel that in New Zealand denominations are a lot more segregated. I am also questioning why there are not more ecumenical conferences, groups and events in New Zealand... I am thankful for the chance to be thrown out of my comfort zone... Overall it was a life-

changing trip that has really broadened my perspective not only on church, but the way church mission is implemented throughout the world. I would like to thank Prince and the wider Methodist Church for entrusting me with this opportunity and I look forward to using what I have learnt through my experiences in Myanmar in my work not just within my parishes, but the wider church community."

Piula Lasi

### Pope greets Methodists in Rome

Methodists assembled in Rome to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of formal dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council. Among those present were Rev. Dr Trevor Hoggard and the Rev. David Bush. Gifts were exchanged. Among the gifts that the World Methodist Council gave Pope Francis were three hymns by Bill Wallace. In an address Francis welcomed the guests and reflected on the significance of the dialogue between the two communions 1967 – 2017.

"In the book of Leviticus, the Lord proclaims the fiftieth year as a special year that calls, among other things, for the setting free of slaves: "You shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants." (Lev 25:10) We are grateful to God because we can say that, in a certain sense, we too have been freed from the slavery of estrangement and mutual suspicion. The Lord also told Moses that in the fiftieth year "everyone shall return to his property and... to his family." As a result of these fifty years of patient, fraternal dialogue, we can truly say to one another in the words of the Apostle Paul: "You are no longer strangers" (Eph. 2:19). Yes, we are no longer strangers in our hearts or in our belonging to the Lord, thanks to the one Baptism that has made us true brothers and sisters." The Pope went on to say, among other things: "As we look to the future, beyond the past fifty years, one thing is certain: we cannot grow in holiness without growing in communion. This is the journey that awaits us in the new phase of the dialogue, devoted to reconciliation. We cannot speak of prayer and charity unless we pray and work for full communion... now is the time to prepare ourselves, with humble hope and concrete efforts, for that full recognition that will come about, by God's grace, when at last we will be able to join one another in the breaking of the bread. I would ask you to pray for this..."

### Environment on agenda

In a key note speech during the Arctic Circle Assembly held in Reykjavik, Iceland, in October, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I (Eastern Orthodox) termed their purpose "a fresh

deliberation on the future of the earth.” 2,000 participants gathered to consider the future of the Arctic. More and more people recognise that religious consciousness and environmental science are both concerned with ultimate questions – with the way we are shaping the destiny of humankind, the planet, and the whole of creation, reflected Bartholomew I. “For that reason alone, then, spiritual leaders and ecologists cannot avoid engaging in a profound dialogue.” A conference organised by the World Council of Churches and hosted by the Lutheran Church of Iceland under the theme “Just Peace with Earth” was held in conjunction with the Arctic Circle Assembly. World Council of Churches News Service.

### Lusaka meeting on Economics of Life

Gray Baldwin of the Putaruru Co-operating Parish has recently returned from Lusaka where he attended a World Council of Churches forum on “Governance, Economics and Management for an Economy of Life”. In his report he writes that issues discussed were banking regulation, foreign direct investment, taxation, third world debt, climate justice and various regional issues. There was exposure to different industries in Zambia. “Although some of the local speakers considered Chinese, Japanese, Russian and EU money to be important for African countries, it was clear from a field trip we did to an ore mine, that wealth from mining was not exactly ‘trickling down’ to the surrounding villages.”

Writing of his ecumenical experience Gray observed “I was staggered at the strength and influence of the Zambian Council of Churches... the ZCC is very important in the political and social sphere and this translates into significant resourcing, a head office, a number of permanent staff and connections into the highest levels of government. When I consider the modest resourcing and membership of our National Dialogue for Christian Unity, it is little wonder that a united and influential voice on economic justice eludes us.” Gray further commented, “In my opinion, many of our churches have been ‘out to lunch’ particularly on environmental matters...”

### Religious Diversity Centre

The Religious Diversity Centre was established in 2016. Its mandate is to offer educational and research excellence fostering appreciation and understanding of religious diversity among New Zealanders. The Methodist Conference has requested that Mission and Ecumenical take responsibility for interfaith relations of our church. So we are a founding stakeholder in the Religious Diversity Centre and to express our continuing support, the August meeting resolved to make a grant of \$1,000 to the on-going work of the Centre.

At the launch of the Religious Diversity Centre at Parliament the patron, the Rt Hon Helen Clark, issued a challenge: “The world badly needs voices of reason and tolerance, and those who will work to build dialogue and respect across faiths and beliefs. I do believe New Zealand can show the way.”

### Young interfaith visitors from France

On Sunday 29 October President Prince and Ramani and I were invited to the home of Jocelyn and George Armstrong in Meadowbank to meet four young people from France. They belong to Coexister, an interfaith group formed nine years ago in France which has already planted groups in Spain, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom. The dynamic movement seeks to promote dialogue and solidarity, establish outreach and training programmes and embark on study trips. The group wants to send small teams to visit the 193 member states of the United Nations. Benedicte Charrier (22) a student of political science is an atheist; Samuel Trouchard (21) training to be a teacher is a Muslim; Bettina Borgel (22) a student in management is a Jew and Eloi Deschamps (22) a student in management is a Catholic. They are investigating various models of interfaith relations around the world and shared their findings from their journey so far. They are documenting their conversations and planning to create a network to exchange models of good practice. The young people listened intently to how interfaith relationships are being developed in New Zealand and how the churches are relating to other faith communities. The Coexister movement is a promising initiative that arises out of the struggles in France to find creative ways of welcoming migrants and recognising the presence of diverse religious communities. We may see a branch established here!

### Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Be to us, O Holy Spirit, breath for our being, purity for our souls, healing for our wounds, and light for our path, that, with all creation, we may rejoice in your presence; now and forever. Amen.  
Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

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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.**

<p>Please send your donations by cheque in favour of <b>Mission and Ecumenical Fund</b></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 <b>BNZ Account No. 02-0800-0766004-03</b></p> <p>Amount: \$ _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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