

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

September 2017

Kokeqolo Water Project

Donations continue to arrive in the office for this special appeal. Some are from individuals and others are from groups within the church such as Women's Fellowships. As reliable sources of water become the subject of debate in managing our resources in this land, water is on the agenda of many nations. Priority is given to the detection and protection of water supplies in a world where climate change is a reality. The church headquarters, school and youth centre at Kokeqolo will benefit from the proposed reactivation of a bore that was sunk by American military personnel during the Second World War. There is still time for you or your group to make a contribution to this exciting project.

Infectious Diseases Ward

Helena Goldie Hospital has embarked upon the building of an infectious diseases ward. They are contributing some funds themselves and other support comes from the Methodist Church of Great Britain. Pitt Street Methodist Parish and Trust (Auckland Central) has, as part of its 150th anniversary project, agreed to provide funding of \$45,000 to take the ward toward completion. It is hoped that when President Prince visits the Solomon Islands he will be accompanied by representatives from Pitt Street. The ward is essential in responding to tropical diseases as they can spread quickly and infect other patients. Isolation is the only way to prevent the spread of many diseases.



United Church of the Solomon Islands

Please remember the United Church of the Solomon Islands in prayer as it faces a number of challenges at the present time in regard to its leadership. Pray that the church may resolve the issues and find healing for those caught up in the dispute.

Commemorating the Reformation

When Luther taught that we are justified by grace through faith he was rediscovering a truth that both St. Thomas Aquinas and Bernard of Clairvaux had affirmed. He not only called for reform of the church, but for constant reform. In face of the angry God often portrayed during his lifetime, Luther rediscovered the merciful God in his Tower Experience between 1518 and 1520.

To demonstrate just how far ecumenical relations have come between Lutherans and Catholics I want to draw attention to a text which comes out of the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue in Australia, entitled, *The Petrine Ministry in a New Situation* (2016). The document is a response to Pope John Paul's encyclical *Ut unum sint*, in which he invited scholars and leaders from other churches to help him "find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation."

The document explores the role of Peter in the New Testament Church at some depth and then goes on to outline the shape that the Papacy has assumed in different periods of history. Harvesting the fruits of ecumenical theology over the last century, the document faces critical questions: The papacy and the centrality of Christ, the issue of Infallibility, and then goes on to make common affirmations.

The document clears the way to state three positive outcomes of the dialogue. 1. Together we affirm that the bishop of Rome has a special role to foster the unity of the church as the People of God. 2. We affirm that the Pope does this though his role as pastor and teacher, exercised in many ways. 3. In a reconciled church we affirm that the Pope might do this by convening and presiding over synods, in order to help the whole Church deliberate on the questions and challenges it faces and seek suitable pastoral responses. There is still further work to be done!

Reports on YATRA

Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity is a programme of the Christian Conference of Asia. It brings together young people from around the region to give them exposure to the reality of diversity and injustice and sets before them a vision of compassion and peace. The theme of the 2017 event held in Jakarta in July was "Passionately Christian and Compassionately Interreligious." Here are extracts from the reports filed by two New Zealand Methodist participants upon their return.

Sharlene Fnone Malaeimi writes:

We were immersed in Indonesian culture and spent many sessions learning about the theology of

interreligious dialogue,, participating in multicultural worship and workshops. We discussed and reflected on the scriptures. Hearing and seeing the interpretations from each member widened my lenses to engage in our lectures and hear them speak openly about their encounters and dialogue with other religious faiths... my knowledge of the Bible is still in progress. I gained an interest in theology as the workshops were stimulating and structured. I am looking into taking a course in theology. Thank you for your support, your time and your encouragement.

Emma Whitla writes:

The conference ran for two weeks with fourteen countries represented. Each day began with worship led by participants in the course. This was followed by lectures from theologians, scholars and social activists, group discussion and excursions... While we were from very diverse backgrounds we quickly became a family. I became friends with an Indian Deacon from the Syrian Orthodox Church. We ended up having fascinating conversations ... I found it interesting how much common ground we actually shared. During the conference we had lectures from Dr Sati Clarke whom I must credit with a large part of my learnings. He helped us see through new lenses, challenging us to step aside from the embedded theology we had grown up with, stand in solidarity with one another via reflective theology and ultimately reshape us so we can embody a theology which is truly empowering for the purposes and contexts we all live in. Ultimately I came away with a new sense of who I am as a Christian, a positive understanding of what it means to be passionately Christian, and yet an ability to see how other religions can provide opportunities to draw me closer to other people and God.

Pastor close to President Trump

On 10 August the *New Zealand Herald* reported that Pastor Robert Jeffress had released a statement in which he said that President Donald Trump had the moral authority to confront the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. "When it comes to how we should deal with evildoers, the Bible in the book of Romans is very clear: God has endowed rulers full power to use whatever means necessary – including war – to stop evil." Does the text really say that? Robert Jeffress is senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas and one of the President's large team of evangelical advisors. He was invited to preach at St John's Episcopal Church in Washington at the time of President Trump's Inauguration. Careful biblical interpretation is required to examine such claims and to offer alternative responses. National security interests can influence our reading of scripture and justify horrendous options. The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse

Tveit said in Wellington recently that we should not abandon the possibility of reconciliation on the Korean peninsula and that the churches had an important role. Other points of entry to the conversation could be found. The general Secretary rejected the option of sanctions as harming the vulnerable in North Korea. He asked how do North Korean Christians perceive the world?

Day of Prayer for Peace

The World Council of Churches reminds us of the World Week of Prayer for Peace in Palestine and Israel 17 – 24 September, 2017. During this week, which includes the International Day of Prayer for Peace on 21 September, church organisations, congregations, and people of faith are encouraged to make a common witness by participating in prayer services, education events and acts of solidarity to support peace and justice for Israel and Palestine.

Ecumenical meeting in Wellington

On Tuesday 8th August the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit paid a pastoral visit to the ecumenical movement in New Zealand. He met with the executive of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity and shared his ecumenical vision. He said that the ecumenical movement goes in waves, but does not stop. The world's need of Christian commitment and the unity of the church, was as great as ever. We are motivated by tremendous truths. We have the power of defining problems from a spiritual perspective. We have the power of defining what truth is. We can be agents of hope. God's future is coming. There is an enormous choir of hope! Working with Pope Francis has opened new possibilities of collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church. He listened to the experience of ecumenism in Aotearoa New Zealand and considered that this nation has the most advanced response to issues related to indigenous people. In addition to that, with members of the executive of National Dialogue for Christian Unity, he visited leading politicians and shared the concerns of the World Council of Churches with Jacinda Ardern, Chris Finlayson and Metiria Turei. Among these were the Paris Accord on climate change, refugees and migrants, North Korea and the conflict between Palestine and Israel.

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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 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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