



## **December 2017**

Malo e Lelei, Talofa Lava, Noa'ia e Mauri, Nisa bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kia Ora and Arahamui. We pray that you will have a Blessed and Happy Christmas and a relaxing summer holiday.

Dear Friends,

I have just returned from the Presbyterian Womens' Assembly at Mosgiel which was a spiritually refreshing weekend with the theme "Equip, Encourage and Empower." The business session lasted two hours and our day of speakers included Joy Cowley and Materia Turei. The Bible Study was "Look Who's At The Well?" with references to the woman's understanding of the Torah. Speakers shared news of their United Nations visit, Facebook sharing, church flower arranging, Polynesian Protocols with the Cook Island and Samoan delegates, their many Missions initiatives and I shared MWF news.

It is time to note in your diary that our Convention 2018 will be held at the Gardens Motel Complex, Shirley, Christchurch from 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> October.

Once again I want to remind you to share our theme at your meetings – "Chosen People called to Proclaim". Because the Christmas season is fast approaching let us meditate on Mary, the mother of Jesus and the Magnificat from Luke 1 46 – 55. Her spiritual beauty reaches an emotional peak and she responds from her heart to all God has done for her. She had studied and memorised the Scriptures and her whole joyful being praised God for what He will do for her, the world and for Israel. The humble and lowly would benefit from God's mercy, the powerful and successful are to be brought low, the poor are to be exalted and the hungry are to be fed. This is what God promised. It is good news to all!

Is your life characterised by faith, humility and obedience to the will of God? Celebrate the greatness of God in your life by praising and honouring Him too. Recite this beautiful hymn of praise and thanksgiving! I pray that this Christmas you can magnify His love and goodness and be used in many ways to help others. Let us raise our voices with this significant expression of Christian hope adding your own faith stories!

Mary's faith in God who always keeps his promises achieving great things encourages each of us to share the great things God has done in our lives and in the lives of our MWF sisters this year. Now is a good time to recall this past year together.

Pauline McKay, the CWS Director has visited Nicaragua in late August and writes "I had a meeting with CEPAD staff and visited two projects with a focus on food security. Their horticulturalists have adapted their growing techniques to cope with the changing climate. Multi-cropping, careful water management and organic inputs are central to their conservation farming approach. 57 micro dams have been built in 40 communities. CEPAD has a special focus on women and has set up handcraft businesses like hair decorations, cards and snacks. Young people are being trained to provide counselling especially with young women. Abortion is illegal there and there is a high rate of domestic and sexual violence and unwanted pregnancies causing a high rate of suicide among pregnant young women".

Our Council approved a donation of \$506.20 to the Haiti people who have lost livelihoods in the recent terrible winds and rain. Our partner Institut Culturel Karl Leveque can help small farmers in the hills who have lost banana trees, livestock and food crops. In areas where cholera threatens there are farmer education programmes and water purification tablets distributed. Vulnerable families can replace what they have recently lost.

Clare Gyde, the Chairperson of FASD has written “Thank you for the impressive donation of \$8,617. The face of FASD is not always cute, young and charming. It is often aggressive, difficult and criminal sometimes with addiction and mental health issues into adulthood. These attributes do not tend to tug at people’s heart strings and we struggle to get financial assistance. This year we are offering workshops for parents and professionals Thank you for this generous gift. It will get help to professional workshops in Auckland and Christchurch with an excellent Canadian speaker. We are appreciative of the efforts of your members because now we can help with travel costs for families from outside these regions. Once again, thank you”.

Bill Davey, Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the Young New Zealanders Foundation which we supported last year has written this up-date. “Thank you again for the significant donation for resources for teachers and youth workers on self worth and suicide prevention. Over 600 young people took their lives last year and the new Government has become concerned. We have chosen to hold your donation for Gemstones 2 until the Government consultants review ‘best practice’ and after reviewing Gemstones 1 we will meet the new standards and provide greater flexibility for our teachers, counsellors and parents of the young people they are dealing with”

I attended the NZ World Day of Prayer 2017 annual meeting. About 200 services were held including schools, about 30 denominations took part, \$49,533 was banked and about 8000 were involved. Next year on Friday 2 March we will celebrate our 101<sup>st</sup> service written by the women in Suriname in the north west of South America. Being lesser known than the Philippines this year let us begin advertising our services early to all men and women in your neighbourhood. It is a great blessing to learn about our sisters in a new country. I also heard a report of the International WDP Meeting in Brazil with the theme “Seeking Wisdom to Care for God’s Creation” Pauline McKay, our National President reports that there are a lot of young women on the new International Committee and we are reminded to wear black on Thursdays saying No to Violence. 170 countries are involved in the WDP movement bringing together all women in closer fellowship, understanding and action sharing our hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, opportunities and needs. I encourage you to join your local planning group for informed prayer and prayerful action ecumenically. Four of us are looking forward to meeting with the Tongan District at Willow Park in mid February.

What makes Christmas? Our Creator makes Christmas possible; Friends and family make Christmas beautiful: Music and decorations make Christmas joyous; and Love makes Christmas complete.

May God richly bless you and your loved ones as you plan for Christmas this year and may He keep you safe as you holiday and begin your 2018 journey.

Thankyou for your support and encouragement. May our growing and proclaimed faith bring us all a sense of God’s faith here and everywhere.

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