



Methodist Women's Fellowship



October 2017

Malo o Lelei, Talofa Lava, Noa'ia e Mauri, Nisa bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kia Ora and Happy Springtime greetings from the Garden City in full bloom!

Dear Friends,

Lynne, Moe, Philomena, Roz, Ofa, Una, Valmai, Barbara and I have ended our first remarkable year as your National Executive team and we thank you again for your love, prayers, encouragement and support.

Thirty five members came together for our biennial Council Meeting and we all had a wonderful weekend of fun, fellowship and networking based on our theme "Chosen People Called to Proclaim". Please read my report in the October Touchstone and thanks again to our visiting speakers and devotions teams furthering our thoughts on the theme. We launched our two new projects "Children are our Hope and our Future" and we will learn more about the Pillars Mentoring Programme for children in New Zealand who have a parent in prison and children in South Uganda and their need for water facilities over this next year. We all send our Congratulations and prayers for Siniva Vaitohi from the Tongan District as she chooses her National Executive team for our next Convention in Christchurch in October.

Christian World Service has written acknowledging our donation \$15,447.00 "Thank you for your generous donation to CEPAD. CEPAD is working with rural people in Nicaragua so they have better diets and incomes. By setting up local committees and training them to make plans together they can help them escape the grim reality of poverty. CEPAD trains local leaders to teach them ecological gardening techniques to manage scarce supplies of water and without costly fertilisers. They distribute seeds and plants for new gardens as well as providing support they need to make gardens flourish. Some receive pigs and chickens. In a country facing increasing drought, the combination of technical help and community building is proving life changing. CEPAD is also training peace mentors and local people to provide psychological support especially to young people where there are no services available. Your gift will make a difference, thank you, Pauline McKay, National Director".

Rev. Terry Wall writes: "We are grateful again for this strong support for Mission and Ecumenical Projects from the MWF. The \$1387.65 from your Stamp Fund will make a big contribution as we approach our Kokeqolo Water Project Appeal target in the Solomon Islands. With appreciation, Terry".

Some members will remember our New Zealand Project "The Money Tree" in 1970! \$28,000 was raised then and is still being administered by the Methodist Alliance Aotearoa. Carol Barron, the National Coordinator, has written with the good news that the fund now stands at \$197,800.32! It still provides help to deprived, disadvantaged or gifted children where parents do not have the financial resources to help that child achieve his or her full potential and eligibility is limited to children

sixteen years and under. A grant of up to \$250 per child a year is granted by each of the Methodist Missions in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

Are all of you precious and chosen women still proclaiming in your group meetings? This month I want to share the story of Shanti Solomon from India (1920 – 1998) whose vision began the International Movement The Fellowship of the Least Coin. Shanti means peace and her Christian father died when she was six weeks old at the hands of his Hindu brother. After two years living in an orphanage her mother became a teacher and brought up her three children to treat everyone kindly – whether rich or poor, old or young, Hindu, Christian or Muslim even if they didn't like them! Later she graduated from a Methodist Women's College in Lucknow with a BA, BEd and a gold medal for story telling. She taught for three years in a school under curfew in the late 1940s political unrest and then lectured at a Teacher Training College gaining her MA and meeting her husband Reuben in 1949. In 1956 she became part of a team visiting and ministering in several Asian countries that had suffered during war time seeking forgiveness and reconciliation.

She visited New York then Japan where they were not happy welcoming women from USA then on to the Philippines who were not happy to welcome the Japanese women. The President of India had just agreed with the United Nations to divide North and South Korea so Shanti was not able to travel to Korea. She stayed in the Philippines meditating on how Jesus forgave everyone who hurt him. After sharing her thoughts when the team returned the group pledged that each of them when hurt by another person would kneel and pray for strength to forgive that person. The FLC Movement began with this group and they started a ripple of peace that has spread throughout the world. Every person, rich or poor, could participate because we are all giving the same – our least coins.

Recently New Zealand sent \$7000 to the Geneva Office and these are five Asian projects being supported by our small contributions: Strengthening the Capacity for Healing and Hope among Naga Christian Women in India, Convalescence for Immigrant Women and their Children in Japan, Women's Empowerment through Counselling in Kathmandu, Livelihood Project – Typhoon survivors in Philippines, National Association of Church Women Conference in Sri Lanka and Women Leadership Development in Church and Society in Cambodia. Have you a project that we could recommend from New Zealand? Please write to me.

Thankyou to the South Canterbury District for hosting five of us on our first official visit! We shared the story of Mary Jones a young, chosen Methodist teenager who in 1800 travelled through North Wales to buy a Bible proclaiming to all that she met professing her faith and her love of God's Word. Today we can thank her for Bible Societies in two hundred countries and Bibles printed in over 2000 languages! Our next visit will be in February as guests of the Tongan district, April to Blenheim and June to Hamilton.

I hope that you are working on the relationships with our Trinity Ministry students and Deacons through prayer, visits, emails or phone calls.

I am looking forward to attending the Presbyterian Women of Aotearoa New Zealand Assembly at Mosgiel next month with the theme "Look Who's at the Well" which was my Bible Study theme at Council. I will report back on the AGM, their presentations, workshops, reflections and networking opportunities in our December newsletter.

God is good all the time, all the time God is good. God bless you all richly. Dianne