



Methodist Women's Fellowship

October 2018

Greetings Friends,

It is time for our last communication from this North Canterbury National Executive. We want to take this opportunity to report that we have all felt privileged to have served you in our roles. It has been an exciting, exhilarating, enlightening, enlivening and spiritually enriching experience. Thank you for allowing us to share the past two years with you. Thank you for the many messages and prayers of support and encouragement.

As Siniva Vaitohi and the new Incoming National Executive assume office we assure them, on your behalf, of our prayers, love and continuing support.

Since our last newsletter we have been planning our Convention and we look forward to welcoming our delegates and observers with a programme again based on Chosen People Called to Proclaim. We will hear Tributes of our mentors, Bible Studies and our new Projects as well as our World Federation 2017 study and a report on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women CSW61 in 2017, reports and enjoy fun and fellowship, fitness fun, devotionals and take a bus tour of Christchurch.

In this city we have been involved in many meetings celebrating Suffrage 125 and Kate Sheppard's effective leadership at that time. Founded in 1885 Methodist women were the 'backbone' of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Our churches had a strong tradition of women's involvement and we can all be very proud of our fore-mothers ensuring that the three petitions were signed with 23,991 names finally accepted.

My last chosen person called to proclaim is Annie Jane Schnackenberg, (1835 – 1905) a British-born Methodist teacher involved with Maori families and fluent in their language. She taught Maori children in Kawhia in the 1860s. She married Missioner, Cort Schnackenberg, staying in this troubled district during the land wars where she welcomed King Tawhiao into her house in peace one momentous day!

In 1880, as a widow, she and her children moved to Mt Albert where her leadership skills were harnessed in the women's movements for temperance and the vote. In 1889 she became the Auckland President of the WCTU and Superintendent of its Maori work. She was also on the Board for their publication "The White Ribbon". In 1891 she became the National President for ten years. In 1896 she was a delegate at the first National Council of Women Conference and was appointed one of the Vice Presidents. She, like others with whom she worked, accepted as a sacred trust the public responsibility of striving for the advancement of women and for a better society. We praise God for all of our MWF members who have followed in her footsteps and all of those inspirational leaders in our churches. Be encouraged and inspired to continue her work working on the United Nations Sustainable Goal five: Gender Equity.

I am thrilled to have been accepted into a team of eleven NZ Presbyterians to attend the United Nations 2019 Commission on the Status of Women CSW63 in New York in March working on Gender Equality. I will write my story for Touchstone in May.

My last official trip was to the Association of Anglican Women's National Conference in Wellington with more friendly networking and sharing of our membership concerns. I also spoke at Waiwhetu Church, Lower Hutt, where I was a member as a teenager. Thanks to their MWF and PWANZ for my welcome.

Other meetings I have enjoyed were the Annual General Meeting of Church Women United in Aotearoa NZ meeting friends from NCW, Catholic Women's League, AAW, PWANZ and Baptist Women. The Christchurch Executive links with the Asian Church Women's Conference where Lynne Scott has attended their sixtieth Conference in Bangkok and the Fellowship of the Least Coin. \$5364 has been transferred to the International Bank Account for grants next year. I also attended the World Day of Prayer 2018 Meeting with a Christchurch Executive. \$38,216 was raised at this year's service and next March the service is written by women in Slovenia. Your district service planning group will be contacting your group soon.

I also attended on your behalf our Church Conference Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa with the theme "Weaving Us Together to Proclaim Life" and it is thrilling to see that the word 'proclaim' from our theme has been used! Roz and I attended the workshop "How can Te Hahi Weteriana be Church in the World?" lead by Ex President Prince Devanandan and Rev Susan Thompson. We discussed our Mission Projects in the Solomon Islands, Christian World Service looking at the 2018 Christmas Appeal Advent four week studies and our MWF Report.

We presented the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and all churches are challenged to work on these. MWF will receive materials for Goal 13 Climate Action, Goal 14 Life Below Water and Goal 15 Life on Land from our South Pacific Unit leaders to be passed on to your Parish Councils. Our President Rev Setaita Taumoepeau k Veikune and Vice President Nicola Teague Grundy organised a great week of celebration, revival and praise. Please pray for them both. There were thought provoking Theology sessions lead by Trinity College staff members and the Cultural Dinner and church services were a great mix of cultures and languages, an insight into our church today.

We have an up-date from our last year's project the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Organisation. They have printed educational material and booklets on living with FASD. They are developing a new website www.fasd-can.org.nz and have had a caregiver/parent workshop in Auckland. With shared strength, guidance and wisdom, those with FASD CAN grow and achieve. Another past project was the Young NZ Foundation which has printed Gemstones Two for Intermediate classes. Topics include Our Choices Affect Our Future, Our Anger and Lies Can Trap Us and Positive Thoughts Lead to Positive Actions. Teachers and parents report that this new publication is immensely valuable. Funding is still requested by both these groups.

We are still challenged by declining numbers in our groups and we challenge you to take the best of the past, face the present and plan well for the future. Write MWF news regularly in your church bulletins, share our National Newsletters, visit neighbouring groups, take up national and international themes using the internet, be ecumenical, invite men sometimes, dare to take risks and remember good things happen when women work together. The best is yet to come!

Thankyou Mataiva, Mary and Catherine for nominating me for this amazing role and all of you for your support of my Executive – Lynne Scott (Vice President and World Federation Link), Philomena Petaia (Secretary), Valmai Horlor (Treasurer), Roz Wilkie (Liaison and Cultural Link), Rev Barbara Peddie (Chaplain), Moe Petaia (NCW Link), Ofa Giblin and Una Tikoinaka (Missions Team). Remember we are all precious and chosen to proclaim always, Dianne Cloughton