

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

December 2016

SUMMER SCHOOL ON ECUMENISM

This programme of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity will be held at the Upper Riccarton Methodist Church in Christchurch from Monday 20th to Friday 24th February. In association with the Centre for Ecumenical Studies, Charles Sturt University, Canberra the school provides an introduction to ecumenical history, spirituality and theology. The theme is *The Church: Toward a Common Vision* which is the title of a recent publication of World Faith and Order. Participants in the school will be given exposure to the impact of the earthquakes in Christchurch and encouraged to listen to the experience of those who endured them. The course may be taken for undergraduate credit (\$300) or simply attended for personal growth (\$175). Registrations are now being received and should be sent as soon as possible. Do not delay! Planning is well advanced. For further information please contact: the Acting Secretary, National Dialogue for Christian Unity, C/o Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Office, Private Bag 11 903 Ellerslie Auckland 1542. Email: mm-e@methodist.org.nz

KOKEQOLO WATER SCHEME FUND

We are able to report that we have now just passed the halfway mark for our appeal of \$40,000. The office has received a number of generous donations since Conference in October from persons and parishes and Women's Fellowships. This suggests that with further support we can reach the target. At present the people of Kokeqolo, the schools and the United Church of the Solomon Islands assembly office are dependent upon rain water. A survey of the area located a bore hole that was used by American forces during the second world war. The United Church has requested our help to redevelop this source of water. Total cost is \$NZ80,000. The United Church is seeking another donor for the other \$40,000.

NEW MODERATOR

The office has recently been informed of the announcement of the Moderator-elect of the United Church of the Solomon Islands. At its November General Assembly of the Church elected the Rev. David Garunu to this ministry. He will take up office in 2017.

INTER-FAITH STATEMENT CALLS ON UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ACT ON THE CRISIS OF ALEPPO

The following statement was signed by Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu faith leaders, including

President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference.

We, UK faith leaders, jointly call on the UK Government to act to support the urgent delivery of aid to those besieged in Aleppo. In eastern Aleppo, it is estimated 250,000 people, including 100,000 children, have been cut off from food and medical supplies since August 2016. The United Nations warns that there will soon be no food left in the besieged part of the city.

This is an ancient city which has been home to people of many faiths. We pray for all those still in the city and call for action to preserve the lives of the people of Aleppo. The situation is now desperate, yet the UN is still being prevented from delivering desperately needed aid to besieged civilians. It seems a very real possibility that the world could stand by whilst 250,000 people are facing starvation.

As faith leaders we bear witness to the suffering of all those in the city of Aleppo. We call on the UK government to take action at an international level, including in the UN General Assembly, and to provide practical support to facilitate the delivery of aid to civilians in the city.

GERMAN PROTESTANT KIRCHENTAG BERLIN – WITTENBERG 2017

An invitation has been received to attend the German Protestant Kirchentag in Berlin in 2017. This event will be one among many which will mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. This huge gathering will take place from the 24th till the 28th May in Berlin and in the town of Martin Luther – Wittenberg. Based on the theme "You see me" (Genesis 16:13) Kirchentag offers over 2,000 events ranging from biblical studies to all kinds of services, various cultural activities, concerts and political discussions. The organisers says that Kirchentag is an opportunity to meet Christians from all over the world and deepen ecumenical ties. Essentially a lay movement within the Protestant churches of Germany this Kirchentag is especially looking for the registration of women and lay people.

Mission and Ecumenical would be happy to receive expressions of interest. More information available from consulting the following website <https://www.kirchentag.de/english.html>.

ASIA MISSION CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED

The Christian Conference of Asia has announced that the next Asia Mission Conference theme will be "Journey Together: Prophetic witness to the Truth

and Light, in Asia.” It will be held in Yangon, Myanmar from 11 to 17 October 2017. It is significant that the conference is being held in a nation which has had a closed door policy for the last half century. Associated with the conference will be the celebration of the Christian Conference of Asia’s Diamond Jubilee. Originally the East Asia Christian Conference established in 1957, the institution changed its name to the Christian Conference of Asia to include all of Asia. It is expected that 400 representatives of mission agencies, scholars, evangelists and others will participate in the conference. Much creative theological work has been done by theologians in Asia as the church there reflects of witness to Christ as a minority religion.

Expression of interest to attend the conference must be forwarded to the Acting Director of Mission and Ecumenical by 30 April 2017.

CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA HOLDS INSTITUTE

The Asia Ecumenical Institute is a new initiative aimed at the ecumenical formation and leadership development of prospective ecumenical leaders in Asia. The month long November event had as its theme ‘Shaping a Paradigm for Wider Ecumenism’. Michael Lemanu and Abhishek Solomon represented the Methodist Church of New Zealand and contributed strongly to the Institute which was made up of seventeen members. Abhishek in a press release was quoted as saying the following:

“The Asian Ecumenical Institute has provided me with a wonderful opportunity to enhance my understanding of ecumenism. It has enriched my knowledge regarding the struggles and challenges of people in Asia and beyond. I have gained fresh insights which will help me see the contemporary challenges in Aotearoa New Zealand in a new light. I am deeply grateful to Christian Conference of Asia for bringing together the diverse group of people. This convergence has enabled a diverse number of voices to tell their stories and successes. Without CCA’s commitment to empowerment this might not have been possible.”

2017 WILL MARK 500 YEARS SINCE THE REFORMATION

Next year there will be a focus on the Reformation in Europe and beyond. All of our churches in one way or another were affected by the challenge that Martin Luther put before the church. He placed an emphasis on God’s grace, on reading scripture in the vernacular, on the priority of the freedom of each person before God. We came to learn that the church has never reached a state of perfection and that it needs always to commit itself to on-going reformation. Huge progress has been made in bi-

lateral dialogues which seek to reconcile differences between different traditions. In 1988 Lutherans and Catholics signed a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, and the World Methodist Council affirmed it in 2006. Commenting on this agreement Cardinal Walter Kasper said, “In Augsburg, the relationship between Catholics and Lutherans reached a new quality and intensity. We held out our hands to each other as Churches, and we do not wish to let go ever again.” The grace of God can help us to find a way through the most confusing and deep seated differences. What is required of us is openness to receive treasures and insight from others, and a willingness to share our gifts and faith.

MISSION AND INCARNATION

The festival of Christmas celebrates the way in which the love of God is found among us. Embedded in the stories of the birth of Christ we discover God’s way of being and acting and healing. This birth in a manger in a minor part of the Roman empire was missed by many. It is often missed today. This birth took place in the context of danger. The world remains dangerous today. The birth was welcomed in a family that was weak and vulnerable. It is welcomed by the weak and vulnerable today. God took a risk to be present within the human community. God continues to risk the divine presence in neighbourhoods that struggle. Incarnation speaks to us of God hidden and free to be where there is suffering. The word becomes flesh in places where there is pain and brings hope of transformation. The stories beckon us to meet the risk-taking God who comes into the darkness to bring the light of joy and love. The stories show us the way of the divine in the face of empire. All parts of the church seek to be open to the word becoming flesh in our ways of being and acting. Methodist Mission and Ecumenical thanks you for supporting the mission of God this Christmas.

God of love, you take the risk
Of sharing our life and our struggles:
You are one with the homeless and refugee.
Come among us in tenderness,
Draw us toward your way of being and acting
That is compassionate, liberating and healing
So that your new creation might be born. Amen
Terry Wall – acting director.

MISSION AND ECUMENICAL BOARD
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**Methodist Mission and Ecumenical
Annual Appeal 2016
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 2016**

... 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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