

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

April 2016

WATER FOR LIFE - THE CHALLENGE MISSION AND ECUMENICAL FACES

World Council of Churches called the churches around the world to focus on water during Lent 2016. The weekly newsletter stated: **The World Council of Churches' (WCC) Seven Weeks for Water Lenten campaign through its ecumenical initiative — Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) — has gained much attention recently, but the campaign is not new.**

It started in 2008 as a gathering of weekly reflections and other resources on water, says Dinesh Suna, EWN coordinator since November 2012. "The primary objective of the Lenten campaign is to engage people on the issue around World Water Day on 22 March, which always falls in Lent," says Suna, a member of India's Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church in Odisha.

"EWN is a strong advocate of water justice, focusing on injustices and situations where people are deprived of access to water," says Suna, who has worked for more than 20 years in ecumenical organizations. [<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/water-justice-campaign-highlights-range-of-issues-focuses-on-palestine-this-year-says-ewn-coordinator>]

A further emphasis stated, **Tonga, surrounded by water, yet can't take it for granted. In Tonga there is lot of water to see, but not necessarily a lot for people to use.**

Mele'ana Puloka, a member of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, is World Council of Churches president for the Pacific, living on the islands that have a population of about 106,000. Space is tight on the 748-square-kilometre (288-square-mile) Pacific Ocean Kingdom of Tonga. Puloka, who heads education for the Methodist Church in Tonga, grew up on the islands with their pristine beaches at a time that the availability of water was taken for granted. Puloka recounted from Bethlehem, where water is also a justice issue. It made me realize, we have to use this precious resource carefully and with prudence," said Puloka. Water distribution can depend on wealth and that is why water justice is a key issue in both Tonga and Palestine, said Puloka, referring to the WCC's Lenten campaign on water.

[<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/tonga-surrounded-by-water-yet-can2019t-take-it-for-granted>]

It is also fact that parts of Solomon Islands facing a similar crisis. They see water on every side, but not

able to use it. What is said about Palestine and Tonga is also the situation for Munda in the Solomon Islands. For Munda, there is no voice to highlight the shortage of water in the world arena.

As a regular visitor to Munda, I have experienced the difficulties of depending on rain water collected in tanks for drinking and cooking. The rain water collected in tanks flow through taps. Together with water sediments of algae, live mosquito larvae and other invisible stuff flows.

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During my last visit in 2014 I discussed the problem with the leaders of United Church Solomon Islands. They came up with the proposal to install a water supply scheme for the village. Having studied the proposal, Mission and Ecumenical accepted the challenge to raise funds to support the proposed project. The "Life Giving Water Project" as the Annual Appeal 2016 is to support the water project for Munda.

I wish to call all who have safe drinking water to contribute towards helping the people of Munda to have a water supply for their day to day needs. – Prince D.

ECUMENISM AND SPIRITUALITY LIVED AND PRACTICED BY YOUNG PEOPLE – Janice Auva'a

From the 23rd to the 29th of November the World Council of Churches hosted a seminar in Salatiga – Central Java, Indonesia based on Ecumenism and Spirituality lived and practiced by young people. The seminar saw over 30 young people from more than 10 different countries come together to share their knowledge, experience and stories about what is happening in their motherland. Each day individuals shared their presentations based on topics about Christian spiritualities and secularization, Spirituality in multi-religious and multi-cultural context then lastly spirituality and social context.

The seminar provided the space for individuals to freely share and debate about current issues surrounding spirituality in the life of young people. This opened a dialogue that challenged many of the participant's current views and beliefs yet allowed ones' faith to be tested then deepened through the diverse beliefs. Each nation faces its own spiritual battle with young people which tends to be dependent on its own surroundings, laws, general teachings, religion, culture and diversity. There tends to be a common struggle for young people's

spirituality to grow and develop due to this; we acknowledged the fact that young people need to broaden their horizons, learn to understand one another and be more willing to develop their own spirituality through ecumenism.



The seminar was a huge eye-opener for me, learning about how many countries have managed to stand united no matter their beliefs and faiths. It brings a heart-warming feeling considering what the world is going through at this present time. It was thought-provoking learning about the many different ways of how spirituality can look, feel and be for each individual. We came to understand that spirituality cannot be learnt within a day, week or two but is an ever-changing understanding depending on your situation, your surroundings, and morals. Throughout the week we were blessed to have Esther Widiasih and Andrew Donaldson help and run devotions where we learnt a number of songs from around the world. Throughout the week we were able to converse with one another about many issues that young people face within individual context regarding growth in Spirituality; the dialogue was very open and of very intellect exchanging of thoughts, ideas and opinions.

It is vital for young people to delve into an ecumenical environment as much as possible to ensure that they are practicing ecumenism on a regular basis. This would help them grow in unity with their family, community and surroundings that they live in which would eventually enhance the relationship between one another no matter the differences.

We continue to live in the digital age where what we see is what we tend to believe true; it is important that young people understand that we must not jump to conclusions, we must not believe everything we see in the media but rather think, understand and research much needed information to form own opinions rather than formulating opinions from one source. This will enable us to think deeply about our own moral

thoughts and allow space for our spirituality to grow and deepen dependant on our own understandings and beliefs.

What now?

Upon my arrival I managed to run three workshops on Ecumenism and Spirituality lived and practiced by young people with my Congregation Youth group in December and two workshops at Auckland University of Technology through the 'Every Nation Christian Club' on campus during the month of March.

All workshops were amazing and were tailored to be interactive and focused on the information I had learnt from Indonesia. I utilized numerous power points that was used at the seminar along with the sharing of information from the various countries that had participated. I also spoke about my personal experiences and ways that we as young people can help the community that we live in continue to grow spiritually or start to grow spiritually.

We as young people living in New Zealand found that we were fortunate to be able to live here where we can practice what we believe in on a day to day basis with no extravagant threats or legal laws bounding us to believe in something different.

During the workshops I stressed how hard it is for some Nations to practice their faith on a daily basis due to the political laws along with the fear of their community. It is important that we as young people living in New Zealand value the freedom that we have and not take for granted what other Nations long for. During the workshops a number of participants were surprised about the stories that I had shared about other countries and I was able to see them start to feel a form of gratitude for the country we live in.

Some of my goals for these workshops were to, one, share everything I had learnt and the difference between New Zealand and the countries that attended the seminar. Two, to let more young people be aware that it is good and perfectly fine to question our moral values and to continue to seek answers about spirituality and ecumenism so that we may continue to grow. Three, to grasp a greater understanding of what our young people think about Ecumenism and Spirituality. Lastly to formulate discussions about how young people can continue to grow spiritually in such an ecumenical community.

Where to now?

From this seminar I believe I gained so much insight and understanding about Ecumenism and

Spirituality lived and practiced by young people on a complete different and deeper level. I plan on continuing to share what I have learnt with the many groups, organisations and councils I affiliate myself with. I feel that the seminar has enriched my understanding about the huge differences of how young people grow spiritually along with the daily battles they fight to continue to grow. I believe that this seminar will help me to continue to grow spiritually along with everyone that I surround myself with. I feel that this seminar has helped with my personal ministry within The Methodist Church of New Zealand and my purpose in life, I also know that it will continue to help in the days to come. ***

Lahore bombing shows vulnerability of Pakistanis - 31 March 2016

A bomb attack by terrorists using the name of religion in Lahore on Easter Sunday marked the third time Christians have been targeted in Pakistan in three years, illustrating the vulnerability of people in the country.

World Council of Churches general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit joined Pope Francis in urging Pakistan's government to ensure its communities are better protected against fanatics. "We are deeply shocked and saddened to receive the news of a suicide bomber killing more than 70 people and injuring more than 300 others at Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Lahore on the Easter Sunday," Mathews George Chunakara, general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), wrote to Pakistan church leaders. "The recent attack on innocent people, affecting mostly children and women, is a heinous crime," he said in a solidarity letter after the attack, noting it followed other atrocities in recent years.

In his statement after the bombing, Tveit underlined, "The principle of freedom of religion and belief for all people must be affirmed and protected in Pakistan, and throughout the world, as a fundamental ethical and legal responsibility of government." In Pakistan, Christians are a tiny minority, accounting for an estimated 1.6 percent of the population, where Muslims make up 96 percent of the population of almost 200 million people. Lahore is the city in the country with the most Christians. "It is unfortunate that sectarian violence and blatant terrorism continuously take place in Pakistani society due to widespread religious hatred," wrote George Chunakara in his letter. "Such cowardly actions in fact destroy the very core of the social fabric and communal harmony in the country. The recent attack on innocent people, affecting mostly children and women, is a heinous crime."

Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a breakaway faction from the Taliban that supports the group calling itself ISIS, or Daesh, claimed responsibility and said it specifically targeted Christians. Most of those killed were Muslims who also had been in the popular park for the holiday, the Catholic Herald newspaper reported. Many women and children were among the victims. The CCA expressed deep concern about the plight of the minority Christians in Pakistan who constantly face deadly attacks "but the perpetrators continue with impunity."

The CCA general secretary wrote, "We are also reminded now of the suicide attacks carried out in 2013 at All Saints Church in Peshawar's Kohati Gate area, killing 80 and wounding hundreds, as well as other suicide bombings at two churches in Youhanabad area in March 2015. "These incidents are clear indications of the vulnerable situations in which Christians in Pakistan are forced to live."

The growing trend of attacks against innocent people in Pakistan raised questions over the security measures by the government to protect the lives of its citizens, said George Chunakara. "It is our sincere appeal to the government of Pakistan not to allow these savage inhuman actions to overrun the lives of people who have every right to live in peace, security and freedom of movement." The UN special investigator on freedom of religion or belief had earlier in March called for the universal repeal of blasphemy laws, saying they restrict freedom of expression and promote hatred of and intolerance toward minority religions. In a report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Heiner Bielefeldt said freedom of religion and freedom of expression are mutually reinforcing, allowing both rights to flourish, but that blasphemy laws weaken such basic rights. He noted that Pakistan is known for its harsh blasphemy laws, some of which carry the death penalty.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/lahore-bombing-shows-vulnerability-of-pakistanis>

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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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