

# Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

## March 2016

### **Birth of New Ecumenical Body in New Zealand**

After a long period of gestation, a new ecumenical body has been born in New Zealand. Representatives of the Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches gathered in Wellington on the 25th February 2016 for the inaugural meeting of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity.

The three churches ratified the constitution, accepted a theological statement on Unity and elected officers of the NDCU. Anglican Archbishop Philip Richardson will be chairperson, Rev. Prince Devanandan secretary and Rev. Rex Nathan treasurer. Pat Lythe (Catholic), Anne Mills (Anglican) and Cornelia Grant (Methodist) were elected representatives of the executive committee. The Presbyterian Church and the Salvation Army, both of which sent observers, have chosen observer status at this stage. Student Christian Movement Aotearoa and Christian World Service have requested observer status. This request is under consideration.



The previous ecumenical entity, the Conference of Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand was disbanded ten years ago following a loss of confidence in its life by some member churches. The Rev. John Roberts who facilitated the meeting, traced recent history, and challenged the NDCU not to repeat mistakes of the past. He said that a failure to hold together faith and order issues with concern for social justice was a fundamental weakness of the previous body.

John Roberts and Prince Devanandan, successive directors of Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Committee, were thanked for their dedication in seeing through the long negotiations that led to the establishment of the new body. A spirit of hope was evident throughout the meeting together with a resolve devote attention to ecclesiology. The meeting was followed by a service of celebration in the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Wellington. The Rev. Dr Kerry

Enright, a past General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church, preached the sermon. Church leaders Cardinal John Dew, Archbishop Philip Richardson and Methodist past President the Rev. John Roberts presided and shared messages from their churches.

The Rev. Dr Mele'ana Puloka of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga represented the World Council of Churches and brought the best wishes of General Secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fyske Tveit. The National Council of Churches of Australia was represented by General Secretary Sr. Elizabeth Delaney sgs who had a message of support and encouragement. [Terry Wall]

**World Council of Churches reported on 26 February 2016:**

### **National Dialogue for Christian Unity holds inaugural meeting in Aotearoa New Zealand**

**Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand are forming an ecumenical entity to pursue closer ties and share understandings. They held an inaugural meeting for the National Dialogue for Christian Unity (NDCU) on 25 February in Wellington.**

Participants said they hope that the NDCU will lead to formal ecumenical collaboration among churches and other groups in society that want to work together on issues concerning all New Zealanders.

In addition to meeting during the day, participants attended a Service of Celebration at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Wellington.

The formal establishment of the NDCU represents a significant and very hopeful development in ecumenical relationships in Aotearoa New Zealand, said Archbishop Philip Richardson, bishop of Taranaki and archbishop of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. "Friendships between churches have been strong, so to give structure and form to these is cause for rejoicing."

The ecumenical initiative is a sign of a new hope, agreed Rev. Prince Devanandan, director, Mission and Ecumenical for the Methodist Church of New Zealand. "Since the conference of churches was abandoned, nearly a decade has passed," he explained. "The churches that are committed to Christian unity — Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic — have continued their dialogue to reach this historical moment." Dr Mele'ana Puloka, World Council of Churches (WCC) president for the Pacific, attended the forum and brought greetings on behalf of the WCC. "Today is a day of celebration. It is a day of hope. It is a day of new beginning. The God of Life is always at work among us; we see this as the

National Dialogue for Christian Unity becomes a reality in this inaugural meeting,” states the greeting. WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit will be visiting WCC’s member churches and others in Aotearoa New Zealand in October.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/national-dialogue-for-christian-unity-holds-inaugural-meeting-in-aotearoa-new-zealand>

**CCA Applauds the New Ecumenical Initiative of Churches in Aotearoa, New Zealand** -2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) applauded the initiative of Aotearoa New Zealand churches to constitute a national ecumenical platform, the National Dialogue for Christian Unity (NDCU) in the country.

Representatives of the Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches assembled in Wellington on 25th February 2016 and established the new national ecumenical body, NDCU. The inaugural meeting of NDCU was held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral followed by a service of celebration. The three churches ratified the constitution of NDCU, and accepted a theological statement on Unity. The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and the Salvation Army have chosen to remain with observer status in NDCU.

In a congratulatory message conveyed to the officers of the newly constituted NDCU, the general secretary of CCA, Dr. Mathews George Chunakara stated that the “Christian Conference of Asia warmly welcomes the new initiative of Aotearoa New Zealand Churches to reactivate the national ecumenical platform where all Christian churches in the country will find their space to be engaged in common Christian witness and action in unity.”

“The churches in Aotearoa New Zealand had played an active role in the Asian and global ecumenical movement for decades, although some churches are rather less enthusiastic in recent times in engaging themselves in wider ecumenical involvements. However, it is our fervent prayer and hope that the newly constituted national ecumenical organization will be instrumental in reactivating the spirit of ecumenism and united witness”, added the CCA General Secretary.

Conference of Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand, the previous national ecumenical organization in the country, was a member of the Christian Conference of Asia, became defunct ten years ago.

Rev. John Roberts, who facilitated the constituent bodies’ meeting, traced the recent history of the ecumenical movement in the country and challenged church leaders with a caution, “not to repeat mistakes of the past”. He said, “failure to hold

together faith and order issues with concern for social justice was a fundamental weakness of the previous ecumenical body which became defunct.”

<http://cca.org.hk/home/news-and-events/cca-applauds-the-new-ecumenical-initiative-of-churches-in-aotearoa-new-zealand/>

**Methodists to commemorate 100 years of legal Conscientious Objection**

**Methodists from across the country will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the right to refuse to fight in war at a special free event held at Englesea Brook Chapel, Crewe, on Sunday 20 March.**

Led by the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal, former President of the Methodist Conference, this unique service will include prayers and reflections around the commemoration and will be broadcast [live online](#) for others to watch around the world.

Dr Jill Barber, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, historian and Director of Englesea Brook Museum explains the relationship between conscientious objection and the Methodist Church: “At the start of the First World War, many Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists were challenged to reconsider their attitude to war and peace. Methodists such as Bert Brocklesby and Jack Foister faced prison, rebuke from their families or church community, and even death, for their principled refusal to take up arms. “As a result of their courageous stance alongside others, Britain became the first nation to enshrine in law the right to Conscientious Objection.”

<http://methodist-news.org.uk/BVI-42D1F-DE6MZ07J35/cr.aspx>

**METHODIST CHURCH IN KENYA CONSECRATES SECOND WOMAN BISHOP**

**The Methodist Church in Kenya, a member**



**church of the World Council of Churches (WCC), consecrated its second woman bishop, Rev. Alice Muthoni Mutuma, on 31 January in Meru, Kenya. The consecration was attended by Christians from the Methodist Church in Kenya, as well as Christians from Uganda and**

**Tanzania. Government leaders also attended the service. In addition to leadership positions in the governing body of the Methodist Church in Kenya,**

Mutuma has served the church in different capacities as a circuit minister, superintendent minister, synod secretary and as a chaplain in Maua Methodist Hospital and Meru University of Science and Technology. She is known as a trainer of church leadership, a counselor and a motivational speaker.

Mutuma, who earned a bachelor of divinity from St. Paul's United Theological College in Limuru, Kenya, also holds a bachelor of arts in social sciences from Egerton University in Kenya and a master of theology from Queen's University in Belfast. Before joining the ministry she was a high school teacher. She is member of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/methodist-church-in-kenya-consecrates-second-woman-bishop>

### **Trans-Tasman Ecumenical Rural Ministry Consultation**

An ecumenical planning group is pleased to invite registrations from anyone with a rural heart to the 9th Trans-Tasman Ecumenical Rural Ministry Consultation, being held in the Wairarapa, New Zealand May 16-20. The theme is "Life, death and resurrection - the future of the rural church for the whole community" and it will be a time to share stories, meet the locals, study scripture together, and find new courage to be effective church in small communities. Registrations close in March. Inquiries to Rev Jenny Dawson <[jenniferdawson@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jenniferdawson@xtra.co.nz)>

### **Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) – VIII 'DOING ASIAN THEOLOGIES IN THE CONTEXT OF GOD'S OIKOS'** Cochin, Kerala, India 18 – 22 April, 2016

*"The time is ripe and propitious, the ground is fertile, the issues are challenging and urgent in order for Asian theologians to come together to share life and work, project together concerns for the future, and help in the renewal and reinvigoration of the life and mission of the Church and of the ecumenical movement in Asia."* (A Call for a Congress of Asian Theologians, May 1997)

The then general secretary of CCA, Dr. Feliciano V. Carino who initiated the launching of the CATS and facilitated the first CATS through CCA, described the Congress as a common platform where the various expressions of ecumenical and theological work would take place:

"We were, in this sense, not only wanting to set up or propose an agenda; we were also wanting to know what the agendas were of people in the various fields of theological work and to see in what way these could be mutually enriched by the sharing and exchange of interest, experience and research. We were not only going to plant 'seeds' for new

theological work; we also wanted to let 'flowers bloom,' to see the 'buds' that may already be in the branches, or to discover and harvest the fruit that may already be on the ground". (CTC Bulletin 1997).

It was envisaged that the CATS to be a movement, which should seek to create a theological community that would bring together various theological movements and associations of theological education, as well as individual theologians for the following aims:

(1) To clarify, promote and enhance the co-operative process of theological studies and reflection among committed Asian theologians who are prepared to deal with critical Asian issues as part of the Asian theological agenda.

(2) To vitalize, facilitate and foster a cross-fertilization of theological insights and studies among Asian theologians from various Asian contexts.

(3) To serve and assist Asian Christian communities and people through theological articulation and engagement.

(4) To witness to the Gospel among intellectual and religious communities through academic studies and existential reflection of theological issues in the Asian context.

(5) To help in deepening the theological foundations of the ecumenical movement in Asia and in developing a new Asian ecumenical vision.

(6) To assist in locating present and future ecumenically committed leaders for Asian churches and in providing ways and means to equip and nurture them.

(7) To participate in the ongoing studies and discussion of the wider international ecumenical theological community and make a distinctive Asian contribution to them.

Ever since it was founded in 1997, CATS continued its journey to fulfill its tasks and brought together Asian theologians under one umbrella through various congresses held in different countries.

<http://cca.org.hk/home/major-event/congress-of-asian-theologians-cats/>

#### 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 <b>Mission and Ecumenical Fund</b></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 <b>BNZ Account No. 02-0800-0766004-03</b></p> <p>Amount: \$ _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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