

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

April 2015

Towards a Common Vision A Six-day Winter School on Ecumenism In the 21st Century – 13 to 17 July 2015

The Biennial winter school on ecumenism will be held from Monday 13 July to Friday 17 July 2015 followed by an open Symposium on Saturday 18 July 2015 at St. John's College, Meadowbank Auckland.

The programme is jointly organised by

- ❖ Centre for Ecumenical Studies, Charles Sturt University Canberra Australia
- ❖ Mission and Ecumenical - Methodist Church of New Zealand
- ❖ St. John's College, Meadowbank Auckland
- ❖ Trinity Methodist Theological College, Meadowbank Auckland
- ❖ Auckland Catholic Diocesan Commission for Ecumenism

Tutors from Centre for Ecumenical Studies of Charles Sturt University Canberra include Rev. Prof. Robert Gribben (Uniting Church), Rt. Rev. Prof. Steven Pickard (Anglican Diocese of Canberra – Goulburn) and Rev. Dr. Ray Williamson. In addition there will be tutors within New Zealand to bring about the aspects of ecumenism within New Zealand.

Those who wish to attend please register before 31 May 2015 by getting a brochure by email from prnced@methodist.nz

FEES (INCLUDES GST, LUNCH, MORNING AND AFTERNOON TEA)

Undergraduate students	\$ 300
Audits	\$ 175*
Symposium (Saturday only)	\$ 35*

**No assignments required*

celebrating Holy Week. Reports indicate that 147 students and university personnel lost their lives, while hundreds more were injured or evacuated. The Islamist militant group Al-Shabab took credit for the shootings which took place early in the morning on 2 April, 2015. Many of the students ruthlessly targeted were Christians. The attackers stormed dormitories, lecture halls, and even attacked a group attending a prayer service.

In a statement Friday, World Methodist Council General Secretary Ivan Abrahams called on all people of goodwill to unite against religious extremism. "My sincere condolences to the bereaved families. May all find hope and consolation during these holiest days of the Christian calendar as we commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The World Methodist Council strongly condemns this attack and urges its member churches to pray for those affected by this terrible tragedy. More information at

<http://us5.campaign-archive1.com/?u=3e7df35a86b311233c99b98c5&id=7e829ddb09&e=03bf8465cb>

METHODISTS AND ANGLICANS 'CLOSE ENOUGH FOR UNITY' - "NOT YET IN AOTEAROA"

The dialogue in Aotearoa between the Anglican and Methodist church representatives continue in the light of the covenant signed in 2008 with insights from the AMICUM report. The waiting is for the Anglican General Synod to give the final decision in 2016 while the Methodists look at the aspects of historical episcopacy. At the international level the talks have progressed well.

WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES TO FAMILIES OF GARISSA MASSACRE VICTIMS - 4 APRIL 2015



News of the deadly massacre at Garissa University in northeast Kenya gripped the world late last week at a time when many Christians were



Questions for debate: the World Methodist Vice-president, Gillian Kingston and the Archbishop of Canterbury launch the report, at Downpatrick, on Tuesday. The Archbishop was in Northern Ireland for a St Patrick's Day pilgrimage

The report below by [Madeleine Davies](#) **Posted on 20 Mar 2015** give details of the work done with the publishing of the report **"Into All The World: Being And Becoming Apostolic Churches"**

ANGLICANS and Methodists know enough about each other, and need to stop timidly "watching every careful step", seeking "impossible perfection" before agreeing to unity. This is the message of a report by the Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission (AMICUM), launched by the World Methodist Vice-President, Gillian Kingston, and the Archbishop of Canterbury on Tuesday.

Into All The World: Being and becoming Apostolic Churches, a report to the Anglican Consultative Council and the World Methodist Council, is the outcome of 20 years of work. It hints at an impatience also noted in last year's report by the Joint Implementation Commission, which warned of "frustration and even boredom" with the Anglican-Methodist Covenant ([News, 23 May 2014](#)).

The Anglican co-chair of AMICUM, the Rt Revd Harold Miller, and the Methodist co-chair, the Revd Professor Robert Gribben, write: "We have surely reached the point where we know enough about each other. Those who know Anglicans and Methodists from the outside truly wonder what prevents us from taking the next steps. . . "If we are honest, we are often willing to be friendly as long as nothing changes. If we do act ecumenically, we do it minimally, watching every careful step. Or, in our unity discussions we ask of each other an impossible perfection. . . The Churches themselves are in need of repentance and conversion, of *metanoia*, which means a willingness to turn from our own self-absorbing, restricting concerns, to Christ alone."

The report argues that "there are no church-dividing differences between us in faith, in ordered ministry, in the succession of such ministries, and in the value of episcopacy." The only remaining barrier to union is, it suggests, "for Methodists and Anglicans to come together under the sign of the historic episcopate, "for that represents the larger history of transmission of which Methodist Churches are already a part".

Into All The World provides examples from around the globe of where unity is already a reality, including united Churches in the Indian sub-continent, and places where bilateral agreements have been developed. Union must be "full" and "visible", the report says. It argues that

there is an "inseparable biblical connection between mission and unity", and points to missional challenges, particularly declining congregations in the West. The Commission's chairmen call on local churches to take on the work. "You must decide whether we have given evidence enough of our unity in Christ to enable you to move forward." The report's appendix contains "toolkits" with questions for debate at national and local level; and it recommends the creation of a new committee "to oversee and foster relationships". It notes: "It is very important that each party in a bilateral relationship be honest with themselves, and before God, about any attitude of superiority which they may have about their Church. . . There can be factors of race, wealth, size, style, or culture which lead to a subconscious and unspoken sense of dominating or being dominated. These need to be handled sensitively."

There is also a reference to the need to face "painful things" that have happened in the past rather than avoid them. Other matters to be explored include worship styles ("the danger, if there is no conversation about this, is that the stronger wins"), discipline and authority, and disparity of stipends.

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/20-march/news/uk/methodists-and-anglicans-close-enough-for-unity>

WCC CONDEMNS BOMB ATTACKS ON LAHORE CHURCHES

17 March 2015

Following bomb attacks on two churches in Lahore, Pakistan, the World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit has condemned the violence against people and communities on the basis of their religious identity, and has called upon the Pakistani government to act swiftly in bringing the perpetrators to justice.

The suicide bomb attacks on 15 March left at least 15 people dead and more than 70 injured, according to early media reports.

"The tragic loss of life from these deplorable acts of violence targeting the Christian community in Pakistan reveals once again the tremendous challenges and heavy sacrifice Christians bear as they strive to remain faithful to the gospel values of life, justice and peace," said the WCC general secretary in his letter sent to the WCC member churches in the country.

“Further, these attacks demonstrate the worsening situation for religious freedom, human rights and dignity in Pakistan,” he added.

Tveit went on to say that while the attacks themselves did not target a congregation from the Church of Pakistan (WCC member church) – the continued violence against Christians in Pakistan is a cause of concern as they are targeted through many similar attacks, including the suicide bombing in a church in Peshawar in 2013.

Tveit called upon the government to put in place more robust measures to protect the Christian and other minority communities in Pakistan, to prevent similar acts of violence in the future, and to ensure freedom of religion and all fundamental human rights for all people in Pakistan.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-condemns-bomb-attacks-on-lahore-churches>

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

17 May 2015 to 24 May 2015

At least once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus’ prayer for his disciples that “they may be one so that the world may believe” (see John 17.21). Hearts are touched and Christians come together to pray for their unity. Congregations and parishes all over the world exchange preachers or arrange special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The event that touches off this special experience is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Traditionally the week of prayer is celebrated between 18-25 January, between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul. In the southern hemisphere, where January is a vacation time, churches often find other days to celebrate it, for example around Pentecost, which is also a symbolic date for unity.

The theme for the week of prayer in 2015 comes from the gospel of John: "Jesus said to her: 'Give me to drink'". It was proposed by a group of Brazilian Christians called together by the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC). The biblical gesture of offering water to whomever arrives, as a way of welcoming and sharing, is something that is repeated in all regions of Brazil. The proposed study and meditation on the story of Jesus meeting a Samaritan woman at the well is to help people and communities to realize the dialogical dimension of the project of Jesus, which we call the Kingdom of God. More information about this event...

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity>

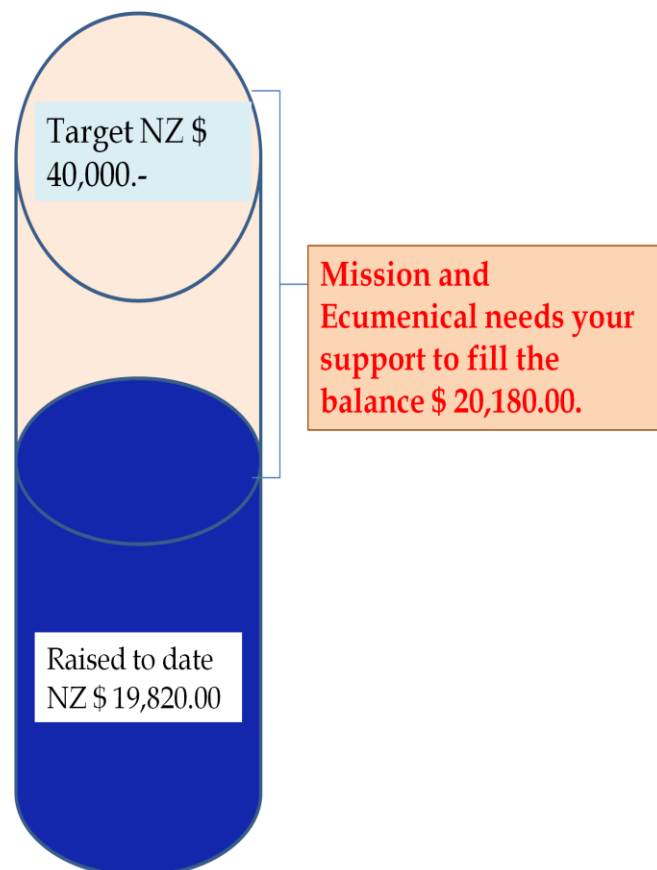
ASIA SUNDAY 24 May 2015

Asia Sunday 2015 will be observed on Sunday 24 May 2015. Asia Sunday Liturgy is available for download from

http://cca.org.hk/home/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ASIAN_SUNDAY_FINAL_HighRes1.pdf

If you are unable download please contact the director Mission and Ecumenical for a copy of PDF version.

Light up the young lives - Tabaka Solar Power Fund



We thank all those who are continuing to support our assistance to Solomon Islands. We look forward to your contribution to complete the Tabaka project as well. ***

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