

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

February 2018

Infectious Diseases Ward

Good news from Helena Goldie Hospital! It has recently been confirmed that the Infectious Diseases Ward will be completed by the time President Prince makes a pastoral visit to the Solomon Islands in April. This has been made possible by generous funding from the Auckland Central Methodist Parish which made a grant to mark the celebration of their 150th anniversary. It is hoped that some members of the Auckland Methodist Central Parish will accompany Prince when he travels.

Special Appeal 2018 – New Classroom block for College of Nursing

It is ten years since Mission and Ecumenical has had a special focus on Helena Goldie Hospital. After investigating current needs, President Prince has endorsed the design and construction of a new classroom block at the College of Nursing as the 2018 special appeal. The College of Nursing has current facilities for forty students. Due to lack of space every second year the college has had to delay its intake till the next year. Now the College of Nursing is to be integrated into the government health system. The building of another classroom at the college will be a step toward upgrading facilities and the provision of national qualifications. We again appeal to the generosity of individuals, parishes, trusts and MWFs to see how the new classroom will improve facilities and prepare for future development. The details of the project, and the way in which you can give, can be found on the brochure.

Kokeqolo Water Scheme

A big thank you for all those who, over the last two years, have contributed to the appeal for the Kokeqolo Water Scheme. A total of \$65,000, a little short of our target, was received and this will go a long way toward the completion of this creative project. A local company, evidently related to the church, has offered to clean out the bore left by the Americans at the end of the Second World War, without charge. This will help to budget for the project. Without access to reliable supplies of safe water the health of the people remains at risk. Outbreaks of waterborne diseases are not uncommon and they can lead to further medical complications in an under-resourced system. The Kokeqolo Primary School, the youth centre and the office of the United Church of the Solomon Islands will all benefit from this project.

CCA pastoral visit to West Papua

In December a three-member team from Christian Conference of Asia paid a pastoral solidarity visit over four days to the Church in West Papua. In a statement issued soon after their visit, they reported that they had heard “stories of grave human rights violations and repression against the indigenous West Papuans in the own homeland.”

The Indonesian Government has passed laws to suppress freedom of speech and freedom of association. They also observe that impunity for human rights abuses by police and the military is a growing concern.

“Many indigenous West Papuans and being arrested and detained for non-violent expression of their political opinion. West Papuans constantly face discrimination as well as violent attacks. Peaceful demonstrations are often dispersed by force. In many instances, non-violent participants have been arrested, detained and tortured, while others have been killed. Many prisoners and human rights activists have died while in detention. Reports of torture and ill treatment of political detainees have been increasing. Civil, political, social and cultural rights are being violated.”

The pastoral visit allowed the delegation to hear first-hand testimonies of those experiencing colonial rule, permitted the Christian Conference of Asia visitors to express solidarity with those who are suffering, and to raise issues with the authorities. Local people appealed for support from the international community to request that the Indonesian Government stop the abuse of human rights and guard the dignity of the indigenous people.

The Christian Conference of Asia report concluded on a sombre note: “West Papua is a land rich in gold, copper, tropical rain forest and coral reef. However, the majority of indigenous West Papuans continue to suffer as their lands have been confiscated; natural resources have been exploited and non-Papuans settled through government’s transmigration policies over the years. About 80% of the indigenous West Papuans, the original sons and daughters of the land, now live in poverty without access to medical care, safe drinking water or education. They are constantly under attack by security forces.”

Action groups based in New Zealand and around the world work to raise the issues related to West Papua. They deserve our support. Invite a speaker to introduce the situation in West Papua. Pray for the church there which seek to live in a very difficult context.

70th Anniversary of WCC

This year 2018 marks the 70th year since the foundation of the World Council of Churches. The fellowship of Churches was inaugurated at its first Assembly in Amsterdam in August 1948. The World Council of Churches brought together two streams that had existed earlier, Life and Work, and Faith and Order. In 1961 after a revision of the constitution, the Council was described as “A fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. This year will see many commemorations of the establishment of the Council. Many churches around the world have been deeply influenced through their membership of the World Council of Churches.

Coptic Christians attacked in Egypt

The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit has condemned the attack on Coptic Christians in Cairo. Ten people died on 29 December when two gunmen on a motorbike tried to storm the Mar Mina Church, but were intercepted by police. Once again, people going about their daily lives, in celebration of holy days, have suffered violent attack. We must join together, not just to condemn these actions but to strengthen our pursuit of peace, and our resolve not to allow extremist violence to separate us from each other.” Dr Olav assured those in Egypt and around the world that the World Council of Churches fellowship stands with the Coptic Church in prayer, mourning and steadfast hope. “Through prayer, action and unity we can bring a powerful force of love in the wake of terror and violence.” The Guardian reported on 30 January that the grand imam of the mosque of al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed el-Tayeb called on all Egyptians to “participate in the celebration of the birthday of Jesus, peace be upon him.” There were also calls from the church to the government to increase security at places of worship.

Conference on World Mission

From 8 – 13 March a World Conference on Mission and Evangelism will be held in Arusha, Tanzania. The Theme will be “Moving in the Spirit – Called to Transforming Discipleship.” The Methodist Church will be formally represented by President Prince Devanandan. Seminars have been held over the past year to prepare for the conference. With more Christians living in the southern hemisphere than the north, the conference will take note of this very significant shift.

The Theology of Mission

The field of the theology of mission is one of the most dynamic branches of Christian **theology**. New voices are being heard representing different perspectives. Received theologies of mission are being critiqued and vigorous debate is taking place.

The latest substantial statement on mission comes from the World Council of Churches 2013. The text of *Together Towards Life – Mission and Evangelism in Changing Times*, surveys recent reflections on mission and presents an emerging paradigm.

Over the next few months in this column I will provide an outline of this challenging statement. For the February newsletter I will look briefly at the introduction. It deserves careful attention.

The introduction begins with affirmations about God the Holy Trinity who is creator, redeemer, and sustainer of life. “God invites us into the life-giving mission of the Triune God and empowers us to bear witness to the vision of abundant life for all in the new heaven and earth.” Then it asks questions:

- How and where do we discern God’s life-giving work that enables us to participate in God’s mission today?
- From a renewed appreciation of the mission of the Spirit, how do we re-envision God’s mission in a changing and diverse world today?
- How do we reclaim mission as a transformative spirituality which is life-affirming?
- As threats to the future of the planet are evident, what are their implications for our participation in God’s mission?
- If there is a shift of the mission concept from ‘mission *to* the margins’ to ‘mission *from* the margins,’ what then is the distinctive contribution of the people from the margins?
- How can we proclaim God’s love and justice to a generation living in an individualised, secularised, and materialised world?
- What are the ecumenical convictions regarding common witnessing and practicing life-giving mission in a world of many religions and cultures?

These are the questions that the theology of mission is wrestles with and there are no easy answers!

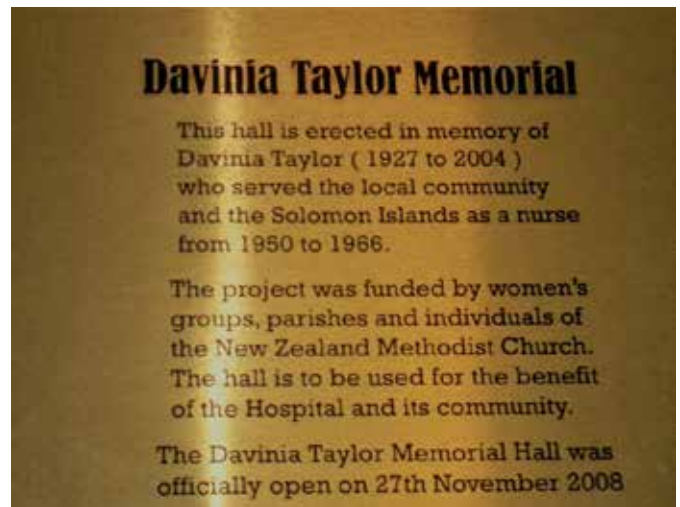
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**Methodist Mission and Ecumenical
Annual Appeal 2018
Classroom Block
For
Helena Goldie College of Nursing**

The Helena Goldie College of Nursing is to be upgraded to a National College in Munda, Solomon Islands. The infra structure needs upgrading. Our contribution to the upgrading will be to build a new classroom block in 2019 at a cost of NZ \$ 50,000.00.

This is possible only with the support of the everyone who contributes through the Methodist Mission and Ecumenical. The building would be built in 2019, but the service from it will be for many years to come.

The last project at the College of Nursing by Methodist Mission and Ecumenical was in 2008.



Methodist Mission and Ecumenical appeals to all to contribute to the

**Helena Goldie College of Nursing
BUILDING FUND
to raise \$ 50,000 in 2018**

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 2018 – HELENA GOLDIE COLLEGE OF NURSING BUILDING FUND

Please send your donation by cheque in favour of

**Mission and Ecumenical Fund
to:
Rev Terry Wall (Acting Director)
Methodist Mission and Ecumenical
Private Bag 11 903
Ellerslie
Auckland 1542**

**You could also make your donation directly into
BNZ Account No. 02-0800-0766004-03**

Amount: \$ _____
Name: _____
Address: _____

Please remember to send this cover slip for a receipt when you make a deposit.