

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

July 2017

Kokeqolo Water Project

A big thank you to those who have contributed to this project over the last month. Your generosity will make a big difference to the quality of life for those who live in Kokeqolo. The offices of the United Church of the Solomon Islands are located there, along with a primary school and youth centre. Water borne diseases are common in the Solomon Islands and the provision of good water transforms communities. Prince is currently negotiating with a partner for funding the ambitious project.

Commemorating the Reformation

The visit of Vice President Viv Whimster to the Kirchentag in Germany is well covered in July *Touchstone*. The 500th anniversary of the Reformation was naturally to the fore. Jim Stuart's article in the same issue provides food for thought on the paradoxical nature of Luther's writings. It is worth reflecting on the words of Catholic theologian Walter Cardinal Kasper who wrote, "The question at issue was not: justification by grace or by good works. Rather, it was whether and to what extent God's action enables and stimulates the co-operation of the human person. The Council of Trent ended up by saying that we can cooperate in our justification, not by our own strength but animated and empowered by grace..."

The doctrine of justification wants to say to us that we neither can nor should "make" our life or its fulfilment by our own efforts. Our value as persons does not depend on our good or bad achievements. Before anything we do ourselves, we have been accepted and affirmed. Our life is ruled by a merciful God who through everything and despite everything, holds us in his hands. We are able to live by God's mercy. So we also should be gracious and merciful towards our fellowmen and women. Thus, justification implies justice and work for justice and human rights. It has not only a private and personal dimension but also a social and political one. When God is merciful to us without any discrimination, we should behave in a similar manner."

From an essay in *Our Pilgrimage in Hope*

News from Sasamuqa

Mission and Ecumenical has learnt recently that one of our scholarship holders, Lucy Jajo, has graduated with a Diploma in Nursing. During her studies she had been supported by Mission and Ecumenical. We have been informed that Lucy will begin her probationary programme in July 2017.

Refugees – a call to double the quota

For a third year in a row, refugee numbers have increased. Numbers released by UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency, reveal that there are 65.6 million refugees in the world today.

"Christian World Service and church leaders are supporting the call to increase the number of refugees resettled in Aotearoa New Zealand. People suffering conflict, war or persecution have a right to protection under international law and while most stay close to home, many need to find a new home. Refugees have made a significant contribution to our country and we can and should do more to help in this global crisis.

Last year government announced an increase from 750 people a year to 1000 by 2018 plus an additional 600 Syrian refugees over two years. To offer hospitality to the refugee and stranger is part of our Christian heritage. We encourage you to write to your local newspapers, your MP and political candidates to speak out in support of increasing the quota of refugees, providing a place to call home."

CWS Newsletter June.

Asia Mission Conference

This major conference with the theme "Journey Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light in Asia" will be held in Yangon, Myanmar from 11th till the 17th October 2017. Associated with the conference will be a celebration of the Christian Conference of Asia's diamond jubilee. It is expected that over 400 church leaders, scholars and pastors, missiologists and theologians will attend the week-long event. The conference handbook reflects on the mission of the Church in Asia.

"The Mission of the Church in emerging Asian contexts is becoming more significant. The re-definition of Mission and re-formulation of its agenda, on the basis of a profound re-understanding of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ relevant and meaningful in the Asian context, should be the prime agenda of the Church in Asia. While engaging in mission, Asia's pluralistic contexts of religions and cultures should be a matter of high priority for the Church in Asia.

As a new human family, by becoming a symbol and servant of God's Reign, the task of the Church is to ultimately lead humankind and the cosmos into God's Reign. The Mission of the Church is to enter into the process of partnering in the Reign of God and furthering its movement towards the end-time community."

Global Day of Prayer to End Famine

Recently a letter was received from the four sponsoring organisations – World Council of Churches, World Vision, All Africa Conference of Churches and ACT Alliance – expressing thanks for the many people around the world, perhaps one billion, who prayed for an end to famine. They wrote, “In prayer we stand together, invoking God’s grace and blessing to overcome the famine... In action, through the on-going work of Churches and agencies in responding to drought and famine, we see people acting as God’s hands in the world, alleviating suffering and advocating for justice...” The World Council of Churches commits to providing updates on famine and liturgical resources on a monthly basis. A regional conference was planned for Nairobi at the end of June “Mobilisation of faith communities for overcoming hunger and sustaining justice and peace in the Horn of Africa.”

National Dialogue on Christian Unity

At the May 17 meeting of the executive of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity at Tuia, the Anglican General Synod Office at St. John’s College, Meadowbank, the chair Anglican Archbishop Philip Richardson, welcomed representatives from the Centre for Religious Diversity. Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Christian participants were present. Jocelyn Armstrong, chairperson of the Religious Diversity Trust established in 2016 and launched at Parliament by patron Helen Clark, spoke of the objectives of the Trust. There followed reflection on the increasing multi-faith diversity of our country. Consideration was given to ways in which there could be respectful dialogue leading to appreciation and collaboration on some of our society’s challenges. In such conversation it was agreed that both National Dialogue for Christian Unity and the Religious Diversity Centre work together.

Book Review

I Shall Not Hate by Izzeldin Abuelaish
Pub. by Bloomsbury 2011, pbk. pp 234

If you want to learn what it means to live as a Palestinian in the Gaza strip under Israeli control, this would be a good place to begin. Abuelaish has written in clear and down to earth English, so it is an accessible read. However, the book is not an easy read for the narrative that he shares is deeply disturbing.

We meet the young Izzeldin growing up as a refugee in Gaza, the most densely populated strip of land in the world. Deprived of the resources for a normal life, he spends time that should be devoted to education seeking additional income for his impoverished family. He demonstrates how

restrictions, shortages, curfews and regulations imposed on dispossessed Palestinians lead to frustration and desperation, anger and violence. By a miracle young Izzeldin receives a scholarship to study medicine in Cairo. He excels as a student.

We learn of the author’s life as a medical professional working in both Palestine and Israel. He sees medicine as providing a bridge, refusing to be shaped by narrow ethnic or religious divisions. As he tells his personal story the writer weaves in the story of his people – their 1948 *Nakba* or catastrophe and 1987 *Intifada*. He works with Israeli doctors and is welcomed into their teams. He specialises in issues related to obstetrics and gynaecology. Moving parts of the book focus on his reflections related to the beginning of life. The “hospital is a place where humanity can be discovered, where people are treated without racism and as equals.” (p.92)

He goes on to ask unsettling questions: “How is it that we can look at one life and say it is more valuable than another? Look at the infants in the delivery room: they are innocent children who have a right to grow up to be educated adults with opportunities in life. Then we fill them with stories that promote hatred and fear.” (p.121)

As the narrative unfolds we learn of the death of his wife and then, under attack from Israel on 12 December 2008, the death of three of his daughters. As I read I sensed the anguish behind the words. The loss of such beautiful daughters shook Izzeldin Abuelaish to the core. However, in spite of his deep suffering and grief, informed by his faith as a devout Muslim, he still insists that human beings, if they respect and listen to each other, have the capacity to resolve conflict.

His refusal to hate and determination to lend all his energies both for health care in the Gaza Strip and in the search for a just settlement saw him nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. This is an inspiring book by an articulate health professional who has hope that peace is possible, that people can move beyond hard line ideological positions that infect families, societies and relationships with neighbours. Comparing himself to Job, Abuelaish is a witness to the human spirit being rising above the captivities that are imposed from without.

Terry Wall.

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**Methodist Mission and Ecumenical
Annual Appeal 2017
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 2017**

... 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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