

Bridgebuilders International

Auckland, New Zealand

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New Zealand

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# Greetings from the President



Within the diversity of cultures making up the membership of Bridgebuilders International, the birth of the Baby Jesus, Saviour of the World, will be celebrated in many different ways. But wherever we are, let us reach out to people with the Good News of God’s love, grace, mercy, joy and peace. We hope you will find many opportunities during this Christmas season to reach out to family, friends and neighbours to celebrate the Good News of Jesus. May you and all of your families be richly blessed as you come together to celebrate Christmas.

The New Zealand Bridgebuilders International Executive is moving ahead with the

arrangements for the Seventh Consultation to be held in Auckland in early April 2014.

Details are set out in this Newsletter. It will be a great joy and privilege to welcome you all to Auckland. Please start making your plans to attend as we mark 18 years since Bridgebuilders began.

We include in this Newsletter extracts from the Report written by Marie Ropeti, the Bridgebuilders International representative at the 90th anniversary celebrations of the Women’s Ministry Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in September. Congratulations to the PTC Women’s Ministry Committee on their 90 years of work and witness.

A highlight of the Seventh Bridgebuilders Consultation in 2014 will be the reporting of programmes and projects to uplift the goals of the Action Plan for 2011-2014 which were agreed on in Samoa. The theme is Sharing Communication to Build Healthy Families and Healthy Communities.

Communication between church women in the Pacific Basin has underpinned our bridge building since we were established as a network in 1996.

The theme for this triennium takes us forward positively wherever we are, giving an opportunity for action which is local or national.

We look forward to hearing your success stories in building up your churches through communication and sharing..

Blessings and peace

Jane.



***STOP PRESS***

***We send our prayers and love to the people of Samoa and Fiji and to all our Bridgebuilders families in Samoa and Fiji that have suffered through Cyclone Evan.***

From the Editor

I have recently read Philip Yancey’s book, “What Good is Grace”. Writing of a time when he visited South Africa, Yancey wrote “In South Africa increasingly the Church is forced to turn outward, to address needs beyond its walls.” As a church, “we should be more like a hospital than a hotel; - as Christians we need to be shapers of culture - city on a hill, light in darkness, a sprinkling of salt on meat, all of which points to our effect on the world around us.”

As Bridgebuilders these are our hopes; our goals; our reason for being. We work to make a positive difference in the lives of the people in our communities; on the world around us. Our action plan for 2011 - 2014 reflects this with its working with families, its building up the self-esteem in women, its empowering of women to have their voice heard in the courts of our churches, its working to prevent violence against women, its development of healthy lifestyles, and its working for all children to get a good education.

These are all very worthy goals, goals that require much work and dedication. I hope and pray that you have been able to make some headway on at least one of these very challenging and important goals; goals that will need to be maintained far past 2014. Please let us have your stories of where you have been able to make a positive difference to the lives of others - stories like the Samoan Women’s fellowship raising funds for water tanks for villages, wheelchairs for the disabled and contributing money for dialysis treatment.

Hopefully many of you will be able to attend our seventh Consultation in Auckland, New Zealand in April 2014 where we can help and encourage each other in our work as light in darkness; in our work to bring hope, healing, and growth in the lives of those around us.

Again from Philip Yancey “For whatever reason, God chooses to make himself known primarily through ordinary people like us. God is already present in each situation. We just have to make him visible. We are the ones called to demonstrate a faith that matters to a watching world.”

May the love, hope and peace of Christmas be with you throughout 2013.

Janice Purdie

Editor Janice Purdie - editor Janice Purdie - editor

**From the Secretary**

Once again we arrive at the end of another year 2012! Let us all remember the spirit that is Christmas by showing our love for God, our families, friends and neighbours.

It’s a time to celebrate the birth of baby Jesus and all the wonders and miracles we believe as Christians. That Jesus came and lived as a “Bridgebuilder” between God and humankind. His life was the example of the qualities we all need to be guided by for us to be successful builders of bridges in 2013.

I would like to say thank you to all our supporters and members for being with us through 2012. I wish you all a safe and relaxing time over the holiday season.

Peace to you all.

Rose Tauetule



Reports

Presbyterian Church of Taiwan Women’s Ministry Committee 90th Anniversary Celebration 2-10 September 2012

Report from Rev. Marie Ropeti, New Zealand, Bridgebuilders International Representative

At the celebration I was part of a 30-person international delegation of women from churches around the world that are a partner with the PCT. Bridgebuilders is one of those partners.

My time in Taiwan was filled with gratitude and joy for the blessing of being part of the Taiwanese women’s celebration. It was a blessed opportunity to reconsider my participation in the ministry of women. Throughout the ten-day trip, the international delegates received a generous hospitality of the Presbyterian Church wherever we went. There was always a trying out of new dishes in every meal mainly in the restaurants. We were hosted one night with a meal by the Aboriginal women in their small church in the middle of their busy centre. This reminded me very much about women in New Zealand. The joy they shared in providing us a meal, their singing and dancing really made me feel at home in this faraway place.

The anniversary celebration brought together more than 800 women for worship, workshops, learning, fellowship, and diverse presentations of Taiwanese culture and history. If you are interested in experiencing Taiwan through the PCT, they have a home-stay program where they host visitors in members' homes. As international delegates we were asked to present two items. Splitting ourselves into two groups I found myself in a group of Asian Pacific women. In between local groups items our group was number three in the programme of 12 groups. The local groups were so exciting with the costumes and all. It was our turn and we were not sure how this will turn out. Singing Hokey Tokey unaccompanied with my Australian sister while the others following the actions. As it turned out we had the whole 800 people dancing with great enthusiasm. I felt as if I was in New Zealand with Presbyterial and Pacific women whenever we gather. The connection was so overwhelming that there was no barrier when we act together as a body in this dance. It was the highlight of my trip.

The women’s ministry in Taiwan is so advanced that we can learn from them. The PCT's women's ministry office publishes a magazine every two months. They have an office with three full-time and one part-time staff members, and a large team of volunteers from churches across the country. They work in: advocacy surrounding gender equality; women in leadership, both clergy and lay; and training, resourcing, and equipping women in Bible study, social justice, and mission.

They even face the big challenges that are facing many of our women's ministries: how to engage young women in women's ministry and how to unite generations of women. There is much that we can learn and work on together.

The PCT is a denomination of 1,200 churches with 250,000 members, and they will celebrate 150 years of ministry in 2015. They take their involvement in Taiwanese society very seriously, running hospitals, schools, and Taiwan's first newspaper. They speak out for justice for the Taiwanese people and nation, even at the cost of jail time for some of their current denominational staff. They do relief work, especially in the mountainous area hit by earthquake and the coastal area hit by a typhoon.

Their general secretary, Andrew Chang, shared over dinner that the PCT's vision is that every one of their members would share Christ with one person! Their goals are absolutely astonishing (and humbling):

1. To grow by 15,000 members each year leading up their anniversary.

2. To plant 150 new churches before their anniversary.

3. To send 15 missionaries to other nations to share the gospel.

These, are the goals of our partner in the gospel, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. We have much to learn from our brothers and sisters around the world. As we are in a season of discerning God's future for the Bridgebuilders, I pray that our future, like the PCT's, is a declaration of our God's power and of our trust in him.

If you are a traveller, I encourage you to visit our sisters in other parts of the world. Bring back to us what you learn from them. It was a good opportunity for us who were in Taiwan to make connections and quality conversation. Dancing the Hokey Tokey with many other women and meeting up with them later broke the barriers and opened communication in a unique way when they moved and said that they remembered. I will use my experience to influence the way we do mission with women from church and society in our own surroundings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In Taiwan I had the most blessed time of my life being surrounded by positive people with positive attitude to life I found peace. Thank you Bridge Builders for the opportunity I had to go to Taiwan.

**Payments**

**Thank you to the member organizations that have sent their membership fees for the years 2011 to 2014.**

**Calling all Bridgebuilders International members. If you have not yet paid your annual membership fee for 2012, please send NZD200 or USD100 or full payment covering 2012 to 2014 for NZD300 or USD300, to assist with cost of newsletter distribution, administration and communication by Executive officers. Please note that when making payment the name of the banking account is: - BRIDGEBUILDERS INTERNATIONAL**

**ASB BANK, BLOCKHOUSE BAY BRANCH, 519 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD, BLACKHOUSE BAY, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND**

**ACCOUNT NO: 12-3049-0300526-01**

**REFERENCE: (please use your country name)**



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***COMING EVENTS***

***BRIDGEBUILERS INTL***

***SEVENTH CONSULTATION***

***TO BE HELD IN***

***AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND***

***DATE: 4 APRIL 2014 – 8 APRIL 2014***

***Further details in the next Newsletter early 2013***