

## **Pray and Fast for the Climate - 1 December 2014**

The next day of prayer and fasting for climate justice takes place on Monday 1 December. This is timely as the next international climate summit is being held in Lima this December. Some thoughts on why we should fast can be seen at our blog which also has a prayer which you may find useful if you are following the campaign.

Please visit the Pray and Fast for the Climate website for details of local events.

The campaign kicked off on 1 November, which was the first of 14 'fasts' on the first day of every month until December 2015. Statements on why the campaign is important within our Churches are available on the Methodist, Baptist and URC websites.

### ***A Prayer of Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430AD)***

Grant to us, O Lord, purity of heart and strength of purpose  
that no passion may hinder us from doing your will,  
and no weakness from doing it;  
that in your light we may see light clearly,  
and in Your service find perfect freedom;  
through Christ our Lord,  
Amen

*News from the Methodist Church is compiled by  
Rev Andy Fyall.*

News from

**The Methodist Church** 

December 2014

## ***Saving Refugees in the Mediterranean Sea***

The UK Government last week stated that it will withdraw support from search and rescue missions established by the Italian Government to save boats of refugees from Africa from sinking. At least 2,000 people in the last year have died crossing the Mediterranean Sea. The UK will support instead a new and more limited EU coastal patrol that will not have the capacity to search and rescue refugees from the deep ocean. The Foreign Office has said that the rescue missions encourages more people to make the dangerous journey. Instead they want to concentrate on measures to prevent traffickers from profiting from refugees, placing their lives in danger. The Italian Government wants to continue its search and rescue mission to save lives until prevention measures have become effective.

The UK Government's withdrawal of support attracted strong condemnation from various quarters including Church Leaders. Revd Ken Howcroft, who prior to appointment as the President of the Methodist Church was Minister in Charge of Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church in Rome, was one of the church leaders who signed a petition arranged by the Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE). JCORE delivered the petition to Downing Street on Monday 17 November.

## ***Pornography, trafficking and transgender issues debated at Methodist Children and Youth Assembly***

### ***Warm welcome for women bishops***

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The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference have welcomed the General Synod's vote to adopt legislation to ordain women as bishops. The vote means that the Church of England's first female bishops could be ordained next year.

The Revd Kenneth Howcroft and Ms Gill Dascombe welcomed news of the vote, issuing the following statement:

"We thank God that the General Synod has taken the final step in the process towards admitting women to the episcopate. We look forward to the appointment of women as bishops in the near future and pray that their ministry within and beyond the Church of England will be richly blessed.

"We are very pleased that, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the General Synod of the Church of England has been able to reach the point of opening its episcopate to women. We recognise that this has been a long and difficult process. It has been an important sign of the Covenant between our two churches that the Methodist people have, throughout, held their sisters and brothers of the Church of England in their prayers."

Young Methodists tackled political issues and elected Craig Gaffneayas the Church Youth President for 2015/16 during the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, 3Generate.

In his manifesto for Youth President, Craig Gaffney, a Methodist youth worker who spent nine months volunteering as a missionary in Sierra Leone and at a Christian orphanage in India, said: "I'm passionate about inspiring and nurturing young people, watching them develop on their spiritual journey. The Church needn't be boring; it has the most exciting story of hope and change. I have experienced this hope first-hand, having struggled through the daily challenges of being a teenage Christian. It's my calling now, to empower similar young people to bring hope, to give a voice and see the growth of God's kingdom."

This year's 3Generate took place at the Pioneer Centre, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire. Around 250 young Methodists aged 8-23 gathered over the weekend of 14-16 November to make important decisions which will affect the life of the Church. The Rhema Theatre Company performed a piece called "The It's Not Fair" while storyteller Bob Hartman, comedian Tony Vino and science magician, Matt Prichard, used creative ways of listening to encourage the voice of children and young people. New additions to this year's event included 3Generate TV, the 3Generate Big Weekender and the 3Generate Journal.

The Children and Youth Assembly was divided into three age streams. Over the weekend of worship, friendship, art, dance and crafts, the oldest age group, aged 18 to 23, explored issues such as human trafficking, pornography, gender identity and Islamophobia. Some of the questions included: How can we encourage respect for the different sexes? How should the Church respond to questions of gender identity? And what should the Christian response to the "war on terror" be?

Well done to the Young People of Methodism. How can we support them and respond to the issues they have raised