

METHODIST MISSION AND ECUMENICAL

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical highlighted in 2014 “To be church is to be missionary; to be Methodist is to be ecumenical”. The work of Mission and Ecumenical Board for 2015 focused on two New Testament words: Koinonia and Diakonia. These two words adequately encapsulate our work in the two areas. Our work in the area of mission involves a diaconal ministry of caring for the people particularly in the Solomon Islands and in Papua New Guinea.



Koinonia

Koinonia simply means fellowship (Acts 2:42 & 1 Corinthians 1:9). Our work in the area of ecumenism is to build Koinonia. We work towards the fellowship of Christians in the churches and the effect has circles widening to the extent of fellowship with people of other religions and ideologies. The Unity statement from the World Council of Churches 10th General Assembly in Busan stated: “The unity of the Church, the unity of the human community and the unity of the whole creation are interconnected. Christ who makes us one calls us to live in justice and peace and impels us to work together for justice and peace in God’s world.” The first general assembly in 1948 declared “We intend to stay together.” The tenth general assembly affirmed “We intend to move together.” Christians all over the world are invited to join the pilgrimage of justice and peace. The tenth assembly stated further “...we challenge all people of good will to engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions. This assembly calls you to join us in pilgrimage ... Christ who makes us one calls us to live in justice and peace and impels us to work together for justice and peace in God’s world.”

The unity we envisage is described “We will no longer wait to agree on all details pertaining to our unity in theological statements and formulations before we start journeying together. Rather, we will discover our unity while walking side by side, with one another, doing and witnessing to the kingdom that is to come and to its signs manifested as a foretaste already here and now” [Fr. Ion Sauca – Ecumenical Review]. The journey towards unity needs to be undertaken even though we have our differences and we are challenged to discover unity as we move together.

ECUMENICAL ENGAGEMENT – NATIONAL

(a) National Dialogue for Christian Unity

The first meeting for 2015 was held on 2 March in Wellington. Though the hope was to establish the NDCU as an incorporated society, the plan got delayed due to Cardinal John Dew’s unexpected hospitalisation that morning and the Archbishop of the Anglican Church not being present. The meeting decided to postpone the decision to set dates for the inauguration part to September 2015. The outcome will be reported to Conference 2015.

(b) Winter School on Ecumenism

Winter School on Ecumenism was held from 13 to 17 July 2015. The director in consultation with the Chairperson cancelled the ecumenical symposium on 18 July 2015 due to only 3 participants registering. The winter school on ecumenism “Towards a Common Vision” received 13 applications and only 11 attended with two being sick that week. One of the Methodist ministers registered and then withdrew due to Trinity College running a block course overlapping the school of ecumenism. The dates were negotiated with Trinity College and St. John’s College in October 2014.

The content of the course and the practical arrangements were highly commended by the participants. The evaluation forms showed ‘very high’ and ‘high’ rating for the course content. The comments are quite encouraging and appreciative of the opportunity to learn about the ecumenical journey. One has stated that it was the missing link in his/her ministry that is now found.

The three tutors from Charles Sturt University Canberra and the tutors from New Zealand did outstanding presentations. One of the tutors Dr. Dagmar Heller did her input from Geneva over Skype on the Faith and Order Paper 215 ‘Moral Discernments in the Churches’. This brought the students most up to date with the international Faith and Order conversations. The school of ecumenism 2015 has been another successful programme.

(c) Anglican Methodist Dialogue

This part is covered in the Faith and Order report.

(d) Wider ecumenism – Interfaith initiatives

A new initiative is in place to form a national inter-faith institute as a resource centre. The initial conversation brought together over 20 participants from various religions in New Zealand. A working committee was formed with one representative from each of the religions which comes to eight. The working committee is already drafting the terms of reference. Mission and Ecumenical Board also made a financial contribution.

ECUMENICAL – INTERNATIONAL

(a) World Council of Churches

Biennial meeting of the ecumenical officers of the member churches of World Council of Churches was held from 27 April to 2 May 2015 in Bossey, Switzerland. Member church relationships executive Natasha Klukach brought together 42 officers belonging to Anglican, Methodist, Orthodox, Lutheran and various Reformed Church traditions with one identifying as from a Pentecostal Church. Besides there were staff of the WCC in attendance for various inputs and discussions on programme areas. In addition to director Mission and Ecumenical Board Prince Devanandan, for the first time Rev. John Douglas, President of the New Zealand Baptist Union, and Rev. Michael Hughes, general secretary of the Anglican General Synod Aotearoa joined the meeting.

Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

Prince was invited by the organiser Natasha Klukach to moderate the first session. The input was made by Rev. Dr. Martin Robra, special adviser to the General Secretary. Martin explored the theology and conceptual thoughts of such a pilgrimage. He also highlighted the pilgrimage of justice and peace within the context of the history of World Council of Churches and then called on the ecumenical officers to commit to the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

The pilgrimage of justice and peace is a defining vision of the ecumenical movement following the Busan Assembly. The theme of the assembly “God of life, lead us to justice and peace” generated the pilgrimage of justice and peace for the next seven years of the ecumenical movement. In the first assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948 Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury declared “we intend to stay together.” In 2013 the general assembly declared “we intend to move together.”

The invitation to move together was declared by the 10th Assembly of World Council of Churches in Busan in 2013:

“We intend to move together. Challenged by our experiences in Busan, we challenge all people of good will to engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions. This Assembly calls you to join us in pilgrimage. May the churches be communities of healing and compassion, and may we see the Good News so that justice will grow and God’s deep peace rest on the world.” – [Message of the 10th Assembly]

Out of the discussions and planning, the message for the churches and the wider community is *Participating in God’s gift of unity and God’s mission of justice and peace (missio Dei), we intend to respond to God’s will for this world by becoming communities of justice and peace and celebrating the fellowship of such communities.*

The mission of the church needs to be looked at in a practical way to work towards peace through justice. The steps towards achieving this peace is a challenge for every Christian. The call of the 10th assembly is

“Challenged by our experiences in Busan, we call all people – young and old, women and men, differently abled, people of different faiths – to engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions, together. We call first of all on the member churches and partners to walk together in a common quest, renewing our vocation of the church through collaborative engagement with the most important issues of justice and peace, healing a world filled with conflict, injustice and pain.”

In the light of this call the goal of the pilgrimage of justice is:

- a. To live in justice and peace
- b. Participate in God's movement of life, justice and peace – the signs of God's reign to come

These require the people of God to visit the wounded and treat the wounds [Good Samaritan] and to transform the injustices to justice. These become the goal and objective of our own mission wherever we are placed in God's world.

World Council of Churches involves itself in two ways in this pilgrimage of justice and peace:

1. Through the involvement in the world wide ecumenical movement
2. Through the programmatic work – e.g. programme to combat racism, decade to overcome violence, rights of the children and many other programmes initiated by the programme desks in the World Council of Churches.

The ecumenical officers were informed that the World Council of Churches is involved in a facilitating role. These are:

- **Strengthening the fellowship:** while walking and working together in the pilgrimage member churches and ecumenical partners experience the gift of unity;
- **Witnessing together:** while moving together churches and ecumenical partners are able to advocate together for justice and peace;
- **Encouraging spirituality, reflection and formation:** while witnessing together the fellowship is strengthened through building spirituality;
- **Building trust and understanding:** while working together for justice and peace, partnering with all 'people of good will' is needed;
- **Inspiring and innovative communication:** while journeying, witnessing, learning, and partnering, inspiring and innovative communication is needed to become visibly effective.

These overall objectives of the Council's engagement in the pilgrimage of justice and peace express themselves through its programmatic work. As a seven-year programme emphasis, the pilgrimage of justice and peace will combine community-based initiatives and national and international advocacy for **Just Peace**, focusing on

- life-affirming economies
- climate change
- nonviolent peace-building and reconciliation
- human dignity

With on-going analysis, study and reflection on what it means to be on a pilgrimage of justice and peace for the churches in today's world.

World Council of Churches is committed to strengthening *koinonia* among churches and people of other faiths where relevant in its programme.

YATRA 2015

Youth in Asia Training for Religious Amity – the annual programme was held in Siam Reap, Cambodia from 7 to 20 June 2015. Ruth Fa'afuata and Tumema Faioso attended the programme from Methodist Church of New Zealand. Both were grateful for the opportunity given to them for their learning and experiencing a 'different world' with diverse religious traditions. The living in experiences have given them a challenge to think about life in an Asian context.

YATRA will be an ongoing programme and the Mission and Ecumenical Board is keen to send at least two youth from Methodist Church of New Zealand each year to attend this programme.

(b) Christian Conference of Asia

The 14th assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia was held from 21 to 26 May 2015 in Ancol, Jakarta, Indonesia. From New Zealand – the Methodist participants were Prince Devanandan – voting delegate, Rex Nathan, Kalo Kaisa, Alison Ranui, Keita Hotere and Diana

Tana- voting delegate for Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga I Nga Haahi o Aotearoa; Anglican participants were Bishop Kito Pikahu, Anne Mills and Neil Ballantyne; Presbyterians were Andrew Norton and Kyoung Gyun Han. In addition Casey Lita from Vahefonua Tonga attended the Asia Ecumenical Course while Aleyshia Lawson from Dunedin Anglican Church served as a steward.

The extraordinary assembly was held on the first day. Prince as the Aotearoa New Zealand representative serving in the general committee was elected to the Constitution and Structural Review Committee together with 5 others. Mission and Ecumenical Board from time to time sent responses to the proposed changes by discussing parts of the new constitution in a subcommittee. The work on a new constitution began in 2011. Extensive work was put in to restructuring the CCA and its operations. It turned out to be a challenging task to shift the current functionality of CCA from country representative committees to a skill based committees. The rationale for this shift is to:

1. Have good governance with required expertise
2. Utilize the reducing financial resources responsibly and cut costs of travel of large groups
3. To have a relevant structure that will deliver the Ecumenical mission to promote unity among the churches in Asia

The committee made a commitment unanimously to achieve these objectives. The committee worked hard to bring the new constitution to the extraordinary assembly. The committee placed the task of presenting the new constitution to the assembly on Prince Devanandan and for Terrance Corkin of Uniting Church Australia to second it. Though it was a difficult task to introduce the new constitution and to debate its credentials, in the end the draft constitution was approved without any amendments with 129 out of 140 voting in favour.

The General Assembly started with an opening service after the extra ordinary assembly. The highlight of this service was the introduction of the newly elected general secretary Dr. Matthews George. The service was with a mixture of indigenous liturgical settings of Indonesia while the music from Asia enriched it. The theme of the assembly was *“Living together in the household of God”* based on Ephesians chapter 2: 22. Some 437 participants representing the member churches and partners of the Christian Conference of Asia coming from 28 countries gathered for the 14th General Assembly in Jakarta, Indonesia. The six-day assembly reviewed the work of CCA, determined program directions, amended its constitution and elected new members of the assembly committees. The assembly was also a venue for “Sarasehan”, an Indonesian word for dialogue, in order to engage the participants in discussions on emerging Asian issues that are relevant to the witness of the church.

There were two pre assembly forums. One for women and gender justice and the other for youth. They deliberated the issues in the regions and brought reports to the assembly which were adopted to follow up over the next five years. The issues were considered under three areas with their corresponding sub themes.

(1) The Suffering of People

1. Human Trafficking
2. Forced Migration
3. The Marketing of Motherhood
4. Organ Trafficking
5. Violence Against Women, Youth, Children and Gender Minorities
6. Armenian Genocide
7. Refugees and Displaced people across the Asia-Pacific region
8. Nepal Earthquake

(2) Peace and Security in the Asia-Pacific

1. Militarization North and Southeast Asia
2. Peace and Justice in Myanmar
3. Peace and Human Rights for West Papuans
4. The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism and Violence

(3) Commitment to Climate justice

It was an enriching experience for those who attended to be part of this assembly and to learn and contemplate on their own church's mission.

Prince's Reflection: The journey from assemblies 2010 to 2015 with CCA has been hard work for me. In addition to being a member of the general committee, my role in the Constitution and Structural Review Committee added to my work load. Besides I was elected to chair the search committee for the new general secretary. I had to work through the entire process in advertising, calling for applications, interviewing and chairing the selection process. In all these I see God's hand working through all those who committed to various roles to promote unity and mission in Asia. I am happy to conclude my roles on a successful note as we achieved what we intended to with the change of the constitution and to elect a suitable person as new general secretary. My nomination by the Methodist Church and the election into committees helped me to work with a wide range of people. I value very much the commitment and the leadership of these people. The opportunity I received to learn and get experienced is something that will enrich my ministry further not only in the Methodist Church of New Zealand but also in the global ecumenical ground.

Diakonia

Diakonia means service. It is rendering service to those in need. The biblical basis of selecting the servants to serve is in Acts 6:1-6. Further St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians (2:4 – 7) wrote Jesus Christ was the image of God, but He humiliated Himself by taking the nature of a servant, by "being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man", by "becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross". Diakonia cannot overlook issues of justice and only care to deliver service. The concept of Christian service is to model oneself on Christ and be obedient unto God. It is not only to visit the wounded and treat the wounds [Good Samaritan] but also to transform the injustices to justice.

Diakonia in the Pacific

(1) Helena Goldie Hospital

The hospital is managed by the administrative staff and the nurses since November 2014. Doctors Graham and Jenny Longbottom left after their time in Solomon Islands concluded. M&E continues to pay out the nurse's salary of Helena Goldie Hospital and has committed to do so till the end of 2017. In the absence of doctors, it is the nurses who do the healthcare for both out patients and in patients. The attempts to find doctors who are willing to go to Solomon Islands is continuing.

SEA AMBULANCE PROJECT – There has been an unexpected surprise in this area of our funding partnership. Dr. Graham Longbottom wrote to the director M&E on 21 July saying "the canoe and engine will be ordered as soon as the "H.S.S.P." grant is received by the hospital. I will follow this up when I am in Honiara on 3rd & 4th August. I will also try to meet the Australian Mark Davies who has been asked to install the "tie-in" solar power system that will be paid for by the grant from Taiwan which the hospital received last year. I will also try to meet the Swiss doctors (husband and wife) who may be able to work at H.G.H. next year."

When the director received this email, it was understood that some clarification is needed in regard to the purchase of the sea ambulance. The director wrote back to Dr. Graham Longbottom. His reply stated that the HSSP funding from Australia is a grant of Solomon Dollars 1Million and it was now received into the hospital account. Part of this funding will cover the cost of the purchase of a new sea ambulance.

The question for Mission and Ecumenical Board is, what we must do with the \$ 42,000 raised for the sea ambulance.

(2) Sasamuqa Hospital

Lyn Scott from Christchurch attended the 3rd National Seminar of The United Church Women's Fellowship from June 1st to 8th at the village of Sasamuqa on the island of Choiseul. Her reflection was "It is hard to know where to start in sharing with you the joy of 2793 Solomon Island women (as well as some children and men) celebrating their faith." Lyn has written the

details of her experience in Touchstone. She also passed some information on the solar power project at the hospital. The photo Lyn sent to M&E shows the installation of the solar batteries at the hospital and that power generated for the use of the hospital. The rest of its function is something the director M&E will assess during his visit in 2016.

(3) Helena Goldie College of Nursing

The good news is that the three students have passed their first year. The not so good news is that Grace Bea developing tuberculosis. The hope is that she will recover and continue her studies. The fees for the second year of studies to be paid. Mission and Ecumenical Board has already received a donation to pay for the third year for the three to complete their training.

(4) Tabaka Rural Training Institute

Since the launching of the Annual Appeal 2015, the amount collected to date stands around \$ 25,500. Our target is \$ 40,000. The Board wish to state that the fund raising in 2015 has been quite slow compared to the past. The Board is rethinking about fund raising for the future with a question of whether Mission and Ecumenical Board will be able to sustain the support for specific projects.

(5) United Church – Papua New Guinea

Director's Reflections: The visit to Papua New Guinea gives a different experience each time I visit. This time I was asked to visit two places where I have never connected before – the New Ireland Region and the Papuan Gulf Region.

New Ireland region has connections with New Zealand Methodist Church with teachers going to teach in the primary and secondary schools. The bishop and the secretary of the regional synod were very happy to receive me from the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. The region is growing rapidly due to the two gold mines already in operation and the third one to be opened shortly which will be an undersea operation. The United Church in the region is estimating a membership of 86,000 within its 34 circuits. The way ministry is planned and organised shows the commitment of the people and their stronger belief in the Triune God. Having seen the life of the church in this part of the world it is hard to agree that faith is irrelevant in the contemporary world. The church is still in need of not financial assistance but human resources particularly in teaching ministry.

Most of the information could be shared by way of emails or reports being forwarded electronically. But the problem of communication continues to be a barrier. Moreover, the visit gives an opportunity to experience church life in these remote places and to share knowledge and experience in mission. What I value very much is the human relations and the experience of God's love in practice in these places. The growth of the church is a sign of hard work of the people in the church. All of the above I can say as someone who has been in the context and experienced the church life.

Our partnership in mission with the United Church Papua New Guinea is valued at every level. The leaders look forward for this partnership to continue. The hospitality and local support for mission partnership is outstanding. The United Church covered most of the accommodation cost for me during this visit for which I am thankful to the church.

(6) Rarongo School of Theology and Mission

Rarongo School is going through a period of transition. After the director of education Api Maha left, Rev. Arua Morea is appointed. It was pointed out that the school is having a dearth of teaching staff. M&E was asked to help by way of finding at least visiting tutors who could stay for a semester or two or to visit the school regularly to teach. The principal is still in an acting role since 2013. There is no qualified person to be appointed as principal. The possibility is to look for visiting teachers from India to come for a semester or two to teach. To train local tutors in higher education is also growingly becoming difficult due to the cost involved in sending them out of PNG and to find scholarships. This needs further exploring to help the school. Rev. Koloma Markewin has been identified as a potential teacher to go for a PhD programme. The moderator and secretary are looking for possibilities overseas for Koloma.

(7) Bougainville Mission

The centenary of the arrival of the gospel in Bougainville will be celebrated from 20 to 26 of September 2016. The arrangements are in place. The moderator will be sending formal invitations to the leaders of the partner churches to attend the celebration and then to attend the general assembly of the UCPNG from 1 October 2016.

LOOKING INTO 2016

A grant over the next three years from PAC is an assurance that Mission and Ecumenical Board can continue its work over the next three to five years. The Board will carry on the work in the areas of Koinonia and Diakonia. Mission and Ecumenical Board appreciates the affirmation from the wider church.

The work for unity among Christians and the involvement in the pilgrimage of justice and peace will be a priority in relation to ecumenical work.

The assistance for the church and the institutions in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea will continue with the available resources. This work will get strengthened further with the support received from the people in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa.

Mission and Ecumenical Board STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 to 2018

To be church is to be missional; to be Methodist is to be ecumenical

Vision

1. Diakonia

Promote the overseas mission of the Methodist Church of New Zealand providing for human need, working for justice and help in disaster relief.

2. Koinonia

Promote the ecumenical relationships of the Methodist Church of New Zealand "That all may be one so that the world may believe that God sent Christ."

Be involved in the Pilgrimage of Justice and peace locally and globally.

STRATEGIES – Long Term

1. Maintain mission partnership with the United Church of Solomon Islands and United Church of Papua New Guinea and such other partners as and when identified.
2. Continue to work for the promotion of Christian unity as spelt out in the Mission statement.

STRATEGIES – Short Term

Overseas Mission

1. Support the ongoing work with Tabaka Rural Training Institute.
2. Assistance to Helena Goldie Hospital
3. Assistance to Helena Goldie College of Nursing
4. Scholarships to student nurses at Helena Goldie College of Nursing
5. Assistance to Goldie College
6. Assistance to Sasamuqa Hospital
7. Assistance to Rarongo School of Theology and Mission
8. Partnership in mission with Bougainville Regional Synod
9. Partnership in mission with the United Church of Papua New Guinea

Ecumenical

1. Continue to promote the National Dialogue for Christian Unity.
2. Together with the Faith and Order Commission support the ongoing bilateral dialogues with Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.
3. Promote ecumenism through school of ecumenism and ecumenical symposium.
4. Work with World Council of Churches on its Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and promote participation of Methodists from New Zealand
5. Work with Christian Conference of Asia on the programmes by providing leadership and promote participation of Methodists from New Zealand.

6. Work with World Methodist Council in its mission and ecumenical partnerships by promoting participation of Methodists from New Zealand.
7. Promote Interfaith Relations and develop ways of working together on common issues.

Resourced by

- a. Fund raising for specific overseas mission projects, grants and bequests
- b. Utilise the designated funds for the specific purposes of overseas mission.
- c. Grants through Connexional budget and PAC and income from investment towards stipend, administration and operational expenditures.

Carried out by

Governance – Mission and Ecumenical Board members
 Service delivery – Director

Time Frame

The work of Mission and Ecumenical Board to be reviewed in 2018.
 Review will assess the work and measure the achievement of the goals.

Endorsed by the Mission and Ecumenical Board
 On 28 August 2015

Suggested decisions:

1. The report is received

United Churches in the Solomon Islands and in Papua New Guinea

2. Conference affirms the significant relationships with the United Church in the Solomon Islands, and the United Church in Papua New Guinea.
3. Conference calls the people called Methodist to continue to support the overseas mission of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa to provide assistance to the United Church Solomon Islands and United Church Papua New Guinea through Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Board.

Ecumenical

4. Conference affirms the discussion and work to date and the ongoing dialogue toward the formation of National Dialogue for Christian Unity in Aotearoa New Zealand.
5. Conference affirms that Rev. John Roberts and Rev. Prince Devanandan be the representatives of Methodist Church of New Zealand in the National Dialogue for Christian Unity.
6. Conference affirms the ecumenical education through School of Ecumenism with Centre for Ecumenical Studies of Charles Sturt University, Canberra and Trinity Theological College.
7. Conference thanks Hugh Dyson for his commitment and service to Mission and Ecumenical for over 15 years.
8. Conference thanks Rev. Kalo Kaisa for her role in the Mission and Ecumenical Board.

Membership of the Mission and Ecumenical Board

9. The Mission and Ecumenical Board membership for 2016 be: Rev. Terry Wall (Chairperson), Linda Hall, Poulima Salima, TeRito Peyroux, Rev. Uesifili Unasa, Lisi'eli Samiu, Jackie McGeorge, Te Aroha Rountree, Prince Devanandan (Ex officio), one to be named by Te Taha Maori and one other to be named by the President.

CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE

This year has been marked by global emergencies. Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu in March, earthquakes rocked Nepal in April and growing numbers of refugees sought safety from war and persecution. In September the United Nations endorsed a fifteen year Sustainable Development agenda. The first goal is to end poverty. We are preparing to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the first Christmas Appeal with lectures by Rod Oram in Auckland and Christchurch.



Our partners have found it more challenging to respond to community needs. Although climate change, conflict and the lack of resources have made their work harder, they have the expertise and networks to improve people's lives and livelihoods. CWS is grateful for the support of the Methodist Church that provides core funding to our work.

Your contributions to the Vanuatu Appeal helped ACT (Action by Churches Together) Alliance meet the almost US\$1 million appeal to provide emergency relief. The very generous donation from Vahefouna Tonga was especially appreciated. CWS worked closely with ACT for Peace our Australian counterparts and the Vanuatu Christian Council, participating in the Vanuatu government disaster management arrangements. The majority of the assistance went to 14 communities on Tongoa Island.

On April 25 we launched an appeal after a magnitude M7.8 earthquake hit Nepal. Immediately after it struck Nepal, ACT Alliance started work distributing hot meals, food items, and non-food items like cooking utensils, blankets, water, sanitation, tarpaulins and medical care. Later on they distributed corrugated iron and other materials to protect people in more isolated areas ahead of the monsoon rains. CWS initiated an agency request to the NZ government asking them to support immediate debt relief through the Asian Development Bank, IMF and World Bank.

CWS appreciated the generous response from supporters, including the Methodist Church to these appeals. CWS was able to launch these appeals quickly because we have your email addresses. Being a member of the ACT Alliance meant that we were able to ensure funds raised would be deployed well even though we did not have direct partnerships in Nepal or Vanuatu. The ACT Alliance is the third largest aid and development agency in the World and has considerable funding and expertise to save lives and helping communities prepare in case of disaster.

Ebola – West Africa

CWS launched an appeal to help the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone respond to the spread of Ebola. Churches helped with community awareness and assisted families in quarantine as well as survivors.

Refugees

In my speech to last year's conference I quoted Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has warned, "The world's humanitarian community has "reached its limit" and is no longer able to cope with a massive rise in the number of refugees being forced out of their homes by global conflict." Today, the situation is even worse

In July this year the United Nations Human Commissioner for Refugees [released](#) figures showing record numbers of refugees in 2014. In total a staggering 59.5 million people had fled their homes, up 8.3 million from 2013. One in every 122 persons on the planet is a refugee, internally displaced or seeking asylum.

CWS has supported the campaign to double the number of refugees accepted under the quota system – currently 750. New Zealand churches played a leading role in settling refugees over many decades and CWS appreciated the way they spoke out in this campaign. We are ranked 90th in the world for our help to refugees on a per capita basis

The need for more humanitarian aid to refugees particularly in the first countries of refuge is urgent. With no sign of an end to conflicts from which they flee, the international community needs to be more generous in its support to them.

Our partners are providing vital aid to Syrian, Iraqi and Palestinian refugees in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine as well as other places.

In June worship resources for Refugee Sunday featured a reflection by retired Bishop John Bluck entitled 'Their only security is us'. It was printed in the Christchurch Press. CWS produces resources for Refugee Sunday and Peace Sunday for parish use. They are available on our website.

Our Christmas Appeal materials this year feature a young Sudanese girl from the Nuba Mountains who has found shelter in a refugee camp in South Sudan.

Ration Challenge

CWS is preparing to launch a new fundraising initiative next year. The challenge is to get

sponsorship to live on the same rations as a Syrian refugee from 14-20 June 2016 and raise money for refugees. It is modelled on a successful campaign run by our Australian counterparts, Act for Peace the challenge has already been enthusiastically received by youth groups and church schools. We are aiming to have 100 participants in the first year and raise \$40,000.

Climate Change

CWS has continued to remind people of the urgency of action on climate change, especially in the lead up to the Paris summit in December. We are encouraging people to sign the ACT Alliance [petition](#) for climate justice.

Community Development

CWS continues to support the work of 19 partners in 16 countries. Income generation and food production are high priorities for many of our partners. Planning for disasters has become a high priority. A number of our partners are helping people develop the skills needed to deal with violence in their communities and campaigning for fairer treatment of women and girls.

This work is greatly helped through contributions from the William Walters Trust and the Prince Albert Trust, the Special Project of the Methodist Women's Fellowship, the World Day of Prayer and the Connexional contribution.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Last year I spoke about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), built on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that expire this year. The first of the 17 goals is to eliminate poverty by 2030. There are seventeen goals that provide a road-map that aims to improve the lives of the poorest people. The government has been reluctant to discuss the SDGs in New Zealand, but they are universal. They recognise the need to address the structural drivers of poverty. It is an opportunity to promote sustainable development across the board including tackling poverty within New Zealand.

We hope that next year there will be some public discussions involving all the actors to map New Zealand's response to the SDGs.

70th anniversary

This year's Christmas Appeal is our 70th. The first was for war-torn Greece in 1945. Seventy years later we are continuing to respond to people displaced by conflict. The theme for this year's appeal, 'Help Rebuild Lives' could have been the first. Please give it your full support.

Moreover, to celebrate 70 years of working together to make change happen across the world, we have launched a new logo and tagline: Justice in Action. The new logo allows us to cobrand with the ACT Alliance.

Supporters' Council

As part of CWS's commitment to greater accountability, the first Supporters' Council was held in Christchurch last September in conjunction with the AGM. It was very well attended. Trish Murray, International Programmes Coordinator spoke about her recent trip to the Middle East which provoked some lively discussion and dissent. This year's Supporters' Council will be held in Wellington on Saturday 21 November and will provide an opportunity to respond on our work.

Thanks

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Rev Prince Devanandan as the Methodist representative on the CWS Board and to the Methodist Women's Fellowship who with Presbyterian Women have raised \$20 402, for our partner Neythal in South India. I would also like to express our thanks to World Day of Prayer (Methodist representatives Leatrice McIntyre and Roz Wilkie) who contributed \$19,000 to our partner in Haiti. I would also like to express my thanks to Rev David Bush, the staff of the Connexional office and in particular Elaine Knecht who is responsible for our finances. Thanks to Paul Titus for the regular space in Touchstone.

Finally as always to our most loyal and active supporters the members of the Methodist Church of New Zealand our grateful thanks for your support over the past 70 years. I look forward to meeting you at Conference and discussing the issues raised in this report.

Suggested decisions:

1. The report is received
2. **Refugees:** That the Methodist Church writes to the New Zealand government asking it to increase the annual quota for refugees and support for agencies providing humanitarian assistance to refugee communities.
3. That the Methodist Church encourages parishes to mark Refugee Sunday with prayer and appropriate action and encourage people to take part in the Ration Challenge.
4. **SDGs:** That the Methodist Church encourages parishes to consider the Sustainable Development Goals and find ways to advocate for wider debate in New Zealand society.
5. **Christmas Appeal:** That the Methodist Church encourages all parishes to promote this year's Christmas Appeal, Help Rebuild Lives.