



NEW ZEALAND METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

"We Are God's Hands, Reach Out"

President's Letter

December, 2016

Talofa lava and warm Greetings my sisters in Christ!

As my term as President has now officially ended, I would like to welcome our new President Dianne Cloughton and her lovely Executive, from the city of quakes and shakes, Christchurch, who were commissioned at our National Convention that was held in Hastings the Hawkes Bay, also known as the Fruit-bowl of New Zealand last month.

It has been a great journey for the last two years and we must glorify God's Almighty name as God promises to keep us in the palm of His hand, with or without our awareness. We are now a few days away from celebrating our Saviour Jesus Christ's birthday, the most precious and most expensive present we have ever received.

With this life we have had our happy times and our sad times, and we have been saddened by the loss of some of our dear members who had a vision and paved the way. We remember them with much love, gratitude and appreciation and we pay special tribute to all our members who have gone before us. We pray for the Spirit of love to come as our comforter and consoler, so all who grieve may be consoled by the power of God's love and grace. When we are sad, Jesus cares for us, and when we are happy He shares with us.

NZMWF Membership:

This year our membership dropped in numbers as some of our local fellowships decided to go into recess due to different reasons. Although it is sad that this is happening, it is great that we have one new fellowship that started and joined the NZMWF this year and that is the Bainbridge Methodist Church in Rotorua. There is an increase in number of young women who are members of NZMWF. I welcome you all to our NZMWF family, it is really encouraging to know that women of the MWF are committed to serve God's mission through the New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship. As I said at Convention, ageing is the main concern with our members but honestly there is no age to the spirit.

I am aware that some fellowships have been and still are going through some changes especially in the Union congregations. We continue to pray that they may draw strength from our Christ, so they may continue to follow the True Light of the World.

Thank you so much for all your ongoing commitment and passion to serve Christ and be His hands in this world.

Special Projects/Missions:

Isn't it amazing that before this section of my letter I talked about the decrease in our membership this year, but I am so very proud to say that we had raised \$30,100.00 for our Special Projects, thank you for sharing God's wealth with those in need. The two recipients were:

- Presented to the Christian World Service: International Special Project for the Post Typhoon Haiyan in the Phillipines they were given a cheque of \$9,030.03. This is 30% of the total amount that was raised.
- The Young New Zealand Foundation: National Special Project for the printing of the "GEMSTONE Two" which is a book that helps the teacher to support the vulnerable students who are at risk of suicide. They were given \$21,070.07 which is 70% of total funds raised.

These were distributed during our last National Convention official opening.

The theme of our Special Projects for this year **2016 – 2017** is "**Let God's Light Shine**" to those who are in need of God's Grace.

National Special Project: Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder CAN, supporting parents and caregivers of the victims of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD is a term that describes adverse development that can occur when a baby is exposed to alcohol whilst in the womb. These effects include mental, behavioural and learning difficulties and in small number of exposed children physical damage can also occur. FASD is a hidden, serious disability that is lifelong. Most of these children as they get older, they end up in jail due to being misdiagnosed. We encourage our Parishes, Congregations and our Te Haahi o Weteriana whanau to be involved in these projects, to have more understanding so we may be able to help those in need and support the families/caregivers who could be a neighbour or a friend. Doctors are now calling this condition a tsunami that's how serious it is and the number of children affected is increasing.

International Special Project: is for Nicaragua, this is to help prevent gender based violence around the Pacific Rim. Women are concerned that the femicide (the deliberate killing of women because they are female) is rising.

- **Other funds raised:-**

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| Stamp funds = | \$2,105.07 |
| Medical & Education funds = | \$2,414.75 |
| World Federation Nominee support fund = | \$ 480.00 |

Total = \$5,000.00 was gifted to the Solomon Islands Uniting Church Women Unit to purchase a Data Projector & computer as requested.

- **Helena Goldie Hospital** = \$1024.00 this money was reallocated to help fund the Solar Water system project in the Solomon Islands as recommended by President Rev Prince Devanandan.

- Gift from Adele Forrester’s Estate of \$1000.00 was also donated to the same project, as agreed to by members of Convention.

Total amount of \$2,024.00 to fund the Solar Water system Project in the Solomon Islands.

- During Convention we had a donation box for the Haiti Appeal and also a sales table which raised \$484.20 plus one mobile phone fine of \$5.00. A total of \$489.20 was given to the Haiti Appeal.

13th World Assembly, Houston, Texas 2016:

It was a fantastic and inspirational experience and I personally enjoyed the Assembly especially the bible studies and sharing God’s many wealth with our extended Methodist family from all parts of the world. It was a privilege to represent our NZMWF unit at the business sessions which was really interesting, and I’m sure all of us who attended the WA enjoyed it and have learnt a lot from being there. At the Assembly the immediate past President of the WFMUCW informed the Assembly of the organization money that has gone missing/mismanaged by the World Officers before they went into office, and so their work was not easy and it has had an impact on the organization programmes, the World Officers and Executive Committee including the World Assembly planning.

The New Zealand unit have been helping other units and areas of the World Federation who have been affected by natural disasters and war, so that they can maintain their financial membership. I met some of the leaders and they were very grateful and appreciative of your financial support.

New leadership for the next Quinquennium 2016 – 2021

Lynne Scott from our New Zealand unit has completed her term in office as the President of the South Pacific Area. We thanked Lynne for her commitment and her leadership in leading the South Pacific Area as President. The new officers for the next five years were elected at the World Assembly and they are Joy Jino as President from the Solomon Islands Unit and the Vice President is Illaisa’ane Kapani from the Kingdom of Tonga Unit. We wish them all the best as they lead our South Pacific Area for this quinquennium.

For the World Federation of the Methodist & Uniting Church Women new Officers

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| President | Alison Judd | Britain & Ireland Area |
| Vice President | Matilda Johnson | West Africa Area |
| Secretary | Itamua Mataiva Robertson | New Zealand Unit, South Pacific Area |
| Treasurer | Leu Pupulu | New Zealand Unit, South Pacific Area |

Mrs Leu Pupulu has made history as she has been re-elected to the position of the World Treasurer. To God be the glory, for great things He has done. Please uphold them in our prayers that they will draw strength and wisdom from God to equip, empower and enable them to serve Him through WFMUCW. Go well tamaitai, do your very best and God as

always, will do the rest. Congratulations Itamua Mataiva Robertson and Leu Pupulu both from the NZMWF Unit.

National Council of Women (NCW)

Earlier this year Rosa and I attended our local NCW branch meeting where we met the Vice President of the NCW. It was encouraging to hear her speak about some of the changes that the organization are proposing to promote the work of the NCW and also recruiting more membership. She also talked about the upcoming conference celebrating 120 years of the organisation. Cassandra Feanati a young member of the Samoan District from New Plymouth who is residing in Wellington due to work, represented the NZMWF at the NCW Conference that was held at Te Papa, in Wellington. The theme of the Conference was "Gender Equality". Cassandra gave a detailed and a very informative report and gave recommendation as food for thought for us to look into, to raise awareness of these important issues and be able to actively participate/contribute to the mission and vision of NCW which we are very much a part of as the NCW family. Cassandra was inspired by the speakers at Conference and she is now a member of the Wellington NCW branch.

Pacific Women's Watch:- This is one of organizations that NZMWF are a member of and Leu Pupulu and Fumi Schaaf have been representing the NZMWF. At Convention Fumi officially resigned from this committee and was reluctantly accepted by members of Convention. Fumi's commitment in representing our organisation on the PWW was acknowledged with much appreciation at Convention. Lunisi Haunga was elected to be the second representative on the PWW. Leu Pupulu has been appointed as treasurer for the PWW. Sinaifaleu Pupulu is one of our young women who is a member of the PWW, she will be attending the 61st meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women(CSW61) which will be held at the United Nations headquarters in New York, in March 2017. We wish Sina all the best and God's blessings as she prepares for the meeting and safe travels.

Convention 2016: Hastings, Hawkes Bay.

About 80 plus women of all ages attended our NZMWF Biannual National Convention that was held in the beautiful Hastings, Hawkes Bay on the 10th – 13th of November this year. It was a great time of fellowshiping and sharing in the precious name of our God.

Lynne McKenzie the Chief Executive of the National Council of Women New Zealand was our guest speaker. She is the global President of the Zonta International. She said that the NCWNZ has played a significant role in shaping New Zealand society from securing women the right to vote, free education for children, improvements in maternal health, enabling women to serve in Police and the Defence force and leadership roles to matrimonial property.

Three points she talked about:- Strengthen positive changes on gender culture; secondly, Learn to make the case for gender equality and lastly, Advocate build a movement for change.

It was a great pleasure to have our Methodist Church of Aotearoa leaders present and take part at our Convention. President Rev Prince Devanandan preached at the Convention official opening service on Thursday night. His theme challenged the members of Convention and all those who were present. Let's attempt to do great things for God and we will receive great things from God. He said Christ went to the people He did not wait for the people to come to Him, church, members of the NZMWF have to go out to the people, be God's Hands, reaching out to those in need of His Grace.

Vice President Viv Whimster provided an inspirational and energising bible study on Hands, and great materials were given out so each woman can continue the bible study homework on her own time at home. On Sunday Vice President Viv shared an empowering sermon with the congregation.

There were three workshops that took place and they were on the histories and information of Smethurst, Kurahuna and Friendship Scholarship funds. All the history of each of the three grant funds will be collated, recorded and distributed to all Districts and will be on the MCNZ website.

Decisions of Convention 2016

- That a letter be sent to Waterview Women's group, welcoming them and encouraging them to take an active part within the life of the NZMWF.
- Convention agrees that the MTA President elect funds account 11-020 be combined with the General long term investment 08-017.
- That the funds that was donated to assist our nominee's expenses to the World Assembly in Houston, be gifted to the Solomon Islands for an overhead projector and computer and towards Helena Goldie Hospital.
- That all local and district Treasurers must be compliant with the new regulated accounting system to meet Charities Service accountability requirements.
- Convention agreed that the bequest of \$1000.00 given to the NZMWF from Adele Forrester's estate, go towards the Solomon Islands Solar system Water project via the Methodist Mission and Ecumenical.
- That a greeting be sent to Sina Pupulu who will be attending the 61st meeting of the United Nation Commission on the Status of Women(CSW61) which will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in March, 2017.
- Iunisi Haunga was affirmed as the second representatives of NZMWF to the Pacific Women Watch.
- Convention affirmed that Leumalealofa Leao (Samoan District); Sofia Nurminen(Fijian District) and Siniva Vaitohi (Tongan District) to be members of the Kurahuna committee.

- Convention agreed that the money that was allocated for the Helena Goldie hospital be reallocated to help fund the Solar System Water supply project in the Solomon Islands, as suggested by President Rev Prince Devanandan.
- Convention agreed that the new National Executive Committee be responsible for collating and publishing of the history and valuable information on Smethurst Trust funds, Friendship Scholarship fund and Kurahuna fund and to be completed by National Council 2017.
- Convention agrees to send a recommendation to the South Pacific Area President Joy Jino and Vice President Illaisa'ane Kapani, to review the current nomination and election processes of the WFMUCW Officers.
- **Recommendation:-** That the voting representatives should not be used as scrutineers due to conflict of interest.
- That the election of officers for the South Pacific Area must take place at the South Pacific Area Seminars.
- That these recommendations be sent to all unit leaders of all the South Pacific Area units for their support.

So long, Farewell

As the year draws closer to the end, I would like to sincerely thank all our members for your love, patience and support for me and my team throughout our term in office. It has been a real privilege to serve as your National President, it has been a fantastic experience that I will treasure as I continue on my faith journey. It has been an inspirational journey that has fed me spiritually.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts, ideas and for your contribution in so many different ways, that encouraged, empowered, enriched and challenged us during our term in office. I sincerely appreciate all your time and commitment to NZMWF.

Thank you to my great team for their commitment and passion in serving God through NZMWF.

I pray for the Holy Spirit to come like the wind, swirling among us and fill us with enthusiasm, to energise us to do God's work and His Will. As we grow in faith and love and hope and wisdom, help us to understand that we are always travelling to a new tomorrow, going forward into a future that cannot be planned.

I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and may the light of the Christmas star guide us safely to a blessed and refreshing New Year.

Soifua

Olive A. Tanielu

Past NZMWF President