



Day of prayer to end famine

May 2018

The hungry are of special concern to God for it is on their behalf God will ask us: “Did you feed me when I was hungry?” (Matt 25: 35-40)

The World Council of Churches ran a global day of prayer to end famine last year and are repeating the initiative through all participating churches in the world on 10 June this year.

The idea behind this is to unite ecumenical partners and faith communities all over the world as a prayerful and spiritual movement to:

- Encourage prayer, reflection and action with information and suggestions.
- Bring awareness regarding famine’s impact on the most vulnerable children and families and to help address its root causes.
- Connect with church-related and other humanitarian organisations that are currently working to bring immediate relief and positive long-term change so children and families can live out God’s aspiration for a dignified, peaceful and violence-free future.
- Help communities and congregations to uphold each other in prayer and support, by sharing experiences, challenge and solutions.

I hope we in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa might get behind this effort and give ourselves to this day by organising within our churches, and perhaps even our presbyteries, something to help people become aware of both the need and the possibility. Those interested in participating are invited to register their interest here: <https://goo.gl/forms/sYOPzxlWjLIJKazu1>

Here are some alarming facts about hunger and famine in 2016:

1. Approximately 842 million people suffer from hunger worldwide. That’s almost 12 percent of the world’s population of 7.1 billion people.
2. Ninety-eight percent of those who suffer from hunger live in developing countries. 553 million live in the Asian and Pacific regions, while 227 million live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Latin America and the Caribbean account for 47 million.
3. India has the highest population of hungry people. In 2014, over 190.7 million people were undernourished in India.
4. Approximately nine million people die of hunger each year according to world hunger statistics; more than the death toll for malaria, AIDs and tuberculosis combined in 2012.

5. Over 60 percent of the world's hungry are women, who have limited access to resources because of the patriarchal societies in which they live.
6. Because of the prevalence of hunger in women in developing countries, malnutrition is a leading cause of death for children. Approximately 3.1 million (8500 per day!) children die of hunger each year, and in 2011 poor nutrition accounted for 45 percent of deaths for children under five.

The worst thing about this is that the world produces enough food to feed everyone. Food availability per capita has increased from approximately 2220 kcal per person per day in the 1960s to 2790 kcals per person per day in 2006.

So can I encourage you to do something about this on or around 10 June so that we may be able to answer at least one of God's questions to us – "I was hungry and you fed me..."

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R Dawson' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Dawson
Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand