“A violin is a musical instrument that is both sensitive and strong. It is sensitive and strong in that it is affected by the slightest touch, and it is strong because its strings can withstand a good deal of pressure. A violin must be continually and properly tuned to be played well, for if it is not, even the finest violinist cannot call forth beautiful music from it....
When ministers are in tune with themselves, they can touch people in beautiful ways, but when they are out of tune with themselves, not even the Lord can make music with them”.

Michael Cavanagh

“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain” Ps 127:1

The report is not exhaustive, but rather, highlights selected aspects of the work of the World Methodist Council in 2015:

1. **BUILDING RELATIONS IN THE METHODIST FAMILY**

I placed a high priority on visiting member churches, meeting with church leaders, church agencies, sharing in Sunday worship services and special events. I am committed to visiting all the regions by the end of the quinquennium to build, strengthen and deepen relationships.

As always, it was a privilege to share in annual Order of the Flame gathering at Epworth by the Sea (http://goodnewsmag.org/2015/04/order-of-the-flame/). Here all members of the Methodist family in the United States gather annually to focus on equipping ministers for evangelism in the twenty first century. This year the focus was on ministry and liminality.

I attended the Commission of Pan Methodist Cooperation and the 12th Consultation of Methodist Bishops in Atlanta from 20-24 March. The gathering brought together leaders from The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church.
I represented the WMC at the 150th Anniversary of the Korean Methodist Church. The celebration was followed by speaking opportunities, and an Easter celebration in the historic Nam San Church.

In May, I addressed the Texas Annual Conference and expressed our thanks for their gracious invitation to host the WMC in September 2016. We also used this event to promote the Conference, meet with the Conference organisers and sign up volunteers.
In June the Vice President and I attended the Central European Annual Conference in Aarnau, Switzerland. We presented the WMC Peace Award to Hugh and Shirliann Johnson, who weathered a war of independence, ideological shifts and changing attitudes towards churches in Algeria. We celebrated with colleagues, friends and family of the Johnson’s many who had travelled from as far afield as the United States and Algeria.

We participated in the Conference and gave an address on migration. Migration is becoming one of the defining issues of the 21st century. It presents us with amazing missional challenges and opportunities. In the 19th century, Methodism always accompanied migrants settling in the “colonies”. How great will it not be if today Methodists Churches are known as “the church of the stranger”. (see attached document)

In Switzerland, I also had an opportunity to meet with Dr David Field, Coordinator of the Methodist e-Academy - an initiative of Methodist Churches in Europe. The e-Academy exist to equip ordained and lay leadership in effective ministry through the means of distance learning using the Internet and other appropriate computer technology.

Later in June I shared in the Presbyterial Session of the British Annual Conference in Southport, England where I had the opportunity to profile the WMC and our upcoming Conference.

The Free Methodist Church issued an invitation participate in their General Conference in Florida in July. I shared in one of the nine strategy teams and spoke to the theme, Going Global in the Wesleyan Tradition.
The **World Methodist Evangelism Board** met for an excellent two day Strategic Planning Session on 18-19 August in Atlanta.

In October, I stopped at Cape Town to share in a week of mission celebration with a local church. I had the privilege of leading a mission event at the **Goodwood Methodist Church** a decade ago, and it was good to see how the church has grown to include a Korean congregation.

2. **BUILDING TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE**

It is my vision that the World Methodist Conference in Houston, Texas, taking place 31 August – 3 September, will be the most inclusive in the 135 year history of the Council. There is a reason to celebrate. After all, we have come of age; this is the 21st World Methodist Conference and where better to throw a party and invite the Global Methodist family than in Houston, Texas. We will gather to work, pray, plan. To be inspired by great preachers and teachers and listen to each other under the unifying theme “ONE, with subtitles ONE GOD, ONE FAITH, ONE PEOPLE and ONE MISSION.

In many ways, this Eastern part of Texas is a micro-cosmism of the world and lead on many fronts.

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Houston metropolitan area is the most racially and ethnically diverse in the U.S. with over 100 different languages spoken, and no group is a majority.
- According to the Greater Houston Partnership, Houston is home to more Fortune 500 company headquarters than anywhere in The United States except New York. It hosts the world’s largest concentration of healthcare organizations, and the unemployment rate is significantly below the national level.
- This city has more parks than any other top-10 metropolitan area and has a total of 19 museums in a 1.5 mile radius.
The setting of the 2016 Conference underscores our intent to explore, ponder and marvel at the unique yet fundamental principle of the Christian faith, the Trinity. While the three persons of the Trinity are distinctive, they are not distinct. In his sermon “On the Trinity” Wesley claims that, “the Three-One God” is a mystery.

Again, I ask, what better place to explore the Conference theme, “ONE” than in Houston, the home of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

As the World Methodist Council learn how to function better as a body that is unified but not uniform, we constantly look for best practices models. For this reason, that we decided come and learn from those in this Eastern part of Texas.

The Program Committee has been hard at work in the Conference planning. Through prayer, worship, meditation, plenaries, workshop presentations and discussion we will identify future priorities and set a course for the next quinquennium. The Conference theme is; “One” with subthemes One God, One Faith, One People and One Mission.

For the first time, other organisations will co-host events at Conference. The Federation of United and Uniting Church Women will hold their Assembly. The UMC Clergy Women will gather and have their anniversary celebration. The Upper Room International Family and The International Advisory Committee for The Walk to Emmaus will meet, and Perkins will provide workshop tracks for continuing education credit.

Much has been accomplished but more still need to be done. We covet prayers and support as we anticipate a meaningful Spirit-filled Conference.

3. BUILDING AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER CHRISTIAN COMMUNIONS

The Old Catholic Church hosted the annual Conference of Secretaries of the Christian World Communions in Amersfoort, Netherlands in October. It brings together representatives from diverse Christian traditions to discuss their work and fellowship together. As general secretaries, participants are often the global face of a particular Christian theological tradition.

The conference focused on the persecution; suffering and martyrdom. The plight of Christians in Nigeria, Syria, Indonesia and the Middle East were also highlighted. From Asia came reports of the marginalization of Christians in several countries. The Conference received reports of the many bilateral and multilateral dialogues to foster unity and the work of addressing poverty and suffering in the world.

The Salvation Army hosted a meeting of the Christian World Communions at their International Headquarters, London from 19-22 October.
At a ceremony at Downpatrick Methodist Church near Belfast, Ireland the final report of the Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission (AMICUM) "Into All the World", was launched on 17th March 2015. In attendance was the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Vice President of the World Methodist Council, Ms Gillian Kingston.

We have hardcopies of the report as well as a PDF, which can be downloaded at http://worldmethodistcouncil.org/?p=2360. The report is the culmination of two phases of dialogue. The began in the 1990s and produced the report Sharing in the Apostolic Communion received by the 1996 World Methodist Council at Rio de Janeiro. The second in 2009.

Methodists are encouraged to make contact with our Anglican counterparts to explore ways of studying the report together and using the 'toolkits' to implement appropriate means of working together for unity in mission.

We were invited to attend the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council which takes place in Lusaka, Zambia from 5 – 20 April 2016.

The drafting sub-group of the Joint Commission for Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church met for four days 17-20 March at Boston University. They worked on the text for the final plenary meeting of the joint commission in Kuala Lumpur in October 2015.

We received an invitation from His Holiness Pope Francis to take part in the 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome from 4-25 October. The theme was, “The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World”. Dr Tim Macquiban from our Ecumenical Office in Rome represented the WMC.
I travelled to London for the meeting of Secretaries of World Christian Communions. This meeting was very special for General Secretaries to share their experience of giving leadership in major Christian Communions. From Baptists to Pentecostals we all face the same missional and structural challenges as we seek to give faithful witness to Jesus in a post-modern world.

Tirana, Albania will go down as the highlight of the year. It was the first time in modern history that representatives from major Christian Churches, “gathered to listen, to learn from, and stand with discriminated and persecuted Churches and Christians in the world today”.

4. BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE COUNCIL

The World Methodist Museum has gained a new lease of life under the leadership of Mrs. Jackie Bolden. She has been in this post for just over a year. The changes are remarkable, and visitors and locals have been impressed. Jackie continues to use every opportunity to profile this ministry of the WMC through the “Saddlebag Notes” (Museum Newsletters at methodismuseum.org) local and international agencies.

The 60th Anniversary of the museum coincides with the 200th commemoration of the death of Francis Asbury. We are privileged to have a request from the Smithsonian Museum to lend an Asbury artefact for exhibition in Washington. The museum will unveil an acquisition of a piece of Wesley’s furniture on 20 September 2015.

On 21 August, the Museum hosted the Annual Banquet. The Francis Asbury’s trunk resides at the World Methodist Museum at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina (USA). The museum will loan items that belonged to Asbury for a special exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum.
guest speaker was Bishop Woodie White.

Barby Bowers has taken on a dual role as Executive Assistant and Communications Director. The profile and messages of the Council are conveyed primarily through the First Friday Letter and statements on global issues.

During the period under review, there have been too many lamentations and tears as we consoled victims of natural disasters. We condemned religious extremism and cowardly orchestrated attacks on mostly innocent worshipers. We made appeals on behalf of those displaced by war, violence and disasters. We called for peaceful coexistence and harmony for all God’s people (For a full report on statements, see the website, First Friday Letters and Facebook page).

In February, we appointed Susan Gaddy as a part-time administrative assistant.

The Finances of the Council is on an even keel, but we continue to face challenges that will force us to look at new income streams and innovative ways to strengthen our finances besides depending on membership contributions. For the last three years, we have been able to present balanced budgets and clean audits. The proposed 2016 budget has been scaled down. We have had regular meetings and contact with Moses Kumar of the General Board Finance and Administration to strengthen confidence and trust.

The response to Achieving the Vision Campaign has been slow. Currently, the fund stands at US $5,318,630. The ATV Committee has taken on the development task.

There was some major capital expenditure on much needed repairs and updating of necessary equipment in both the museum and WMC headquarters.

We benefitted greatly from the advice and leadership of our treasurer, Kirby Hickey, and bookkeeper, John Johnson. They streamlined our accounting and put a system in place to assure greater accountability.

In June, the first stakeholder meeting of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome (MEOR) was held at Methodist House, London. Those present at the meeting represented the British Methodist Church, United Methodist Church, World Methodist Council, European Methodist Council and the Italian Methodist Church.

Dr Tim Macquiban reported on the work during 2014 and shared how this new office has quickly established a credibility and visibility for the Methodist presence in Rome. It enabled good working relationships to develop, not least with the Pontifical Council for the Promoting Christian Unity, the Anglican Centre in Rome, the various Universities and seminaries and ambassadors of countries to the Holy See.

On 6-7 April 2016 we will hold a follow up Stakeholders Forum Meeting at Ponte Sant’Angelo and officially launch MEOR.

We have resolved the issues regarding ownership, and governance issues of The Epworth Old Rectory. The governance changed from a single registered charity to two bodies - Epworth Old Rectory (Trust) and Epworth Old Rectory (Operations). The Trust and Operations hold in common the following mission: 
“to educate and inspire present and future generations through the interpretation of the life and experiences of the Wesley Family”. With the roles, expectations and the responsibilities clarified, we all go into the future with new confidence.
New relationships forged with other heritage institutions, foundations and charities have helped tremendously. Many American Friends of the Epworth Old Rectory still use the WMC headquarters as a conduit for funding and donations to the rectory. There is a strong Friends Development Team in Doncaster who produced a strategic development plan.

A special thanks to Dr. Beyers, Archbishop Stephens and Dr. Barrett, who represent the WMC well at Trust Meetings. After serving on the Trust for many years, Dr. Bob Williams has retired as General Secretary of the UMC Archives and History. We owe him a special debt of gratitude.

Steering Committee members are encouraged to support the work of Rev Kristen Brown, who coordinates the work of the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem. It is important for the Global Methodist community that we have a Methodists presence in the Holy Land. The British Methodist Church pledged to strengthen the office with personnel support next year.

5. Building for the Future – 2016 and Beyond

This year we will celebrate many milestones in the life and witness of the World Methodist Council. It is 60 years since the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women affiliated with the Council. We celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the World Methodist Museum and the 45th year of the launching of World Methodist Evangelism. It is 30 years since the inauguration of the World Methodist Peace Award and 20 years of gathering young pastors in the Order of the Flame. All these organisations seek to strengthen the Methodist family ties, make disciples and faithfully follow Jesus in the company of the Wesleys.

This year we also commemorate the 200th year since the death of the pioneer bishop of American Methodism. Francis Asbury.

It will be 45 years since the World Methodist Conference gathered in continental United States.

Methodism has a distinct contribution to make in our day and age. We need to more discerning, bolder and perhaps as Wesley claimed become “more vile”. We need to venture beyond the safety and security of our sanctuaries and institutions to speak to the current political, economic and social realities that transform the world that God so loves. If we do not believe that we can make a difference, we have no future.

The Office of the General Secretary continues to offer hospitality to many visitors. We were privileged to host a delegation from the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, who visited the North Western Carolina Annual Conference at Lake Junaluska in June.

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church takes place in Portland, Oregon from 9 - 21 May 2016, and I will preach at the Conference Ecumenical Service on 17 of May 2016.

There are still many Methodists/Wesleyan Churches outside the Council amongst others, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, The Primitive Methodist Church, African Union Frist Colored Methodist Protestant Chur, Methodist Pentecostal Church.
Besides the contact from the headquarters, it is important that Steering Committee members in the regions follow up with these Churches to build lasting relationships.

Besides other invitations that might be in the pipe-line, I will primarily focus on the Conference preparations for Houston in 2016.

After approval from the WMC Steering Committee, I will begin work in 2016 setting up offices in Johannesburg and London in an attempt to make the Council more visible and increase its reach.

6. **BUILDING A HEALTHY COUNCIL: A PROCESS OF RENEWAL**

In this section, I will present some suggestions and recommendations based on experiences and work to date.

Since taking office, my mantra has been that it cannot be business as usual if we want to be transformational leaders in our day and age. The world is an entirely different place that it was a decade ago. Change is messy, but we have to deal with it to remain relevant and efficient.

Since the formation of the Ecumenical Methodist Conference in 1881 we have been building to strengthen our Wesleyan unity and witness. We were a forerunner of today’s Ecumenical Movement. The Methodist layman, Dr John R. Mott was instrumental in calling the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference, which was the forerunner of the World Council of Churches. He believed that the WMC had an important role bringing the Wesleyan family and related bodies together in fellowship and witness. In 1951, the name of our organisation was changed from Ecumenical Methodist Council to the Word Methodist Council.

In a report to the Council in Belfast, 1955 Charles Parlin argued “Of all the World Communions, Methodists have probably the weakest world organisation”. Compared to other World Communions mentioned in this report, after 70 years this observation still holds true. Much of the Council is shaped in response to a bygone world order. Our structures do not relate to the new ecclesial landscape and current realities. This topic has been on the Steering Committee agenda for quite some time. It has become a revolving door discussion without any resolution.

In his pioneering work, *From Time Square to Timbuktu: The Post-Christian West Meets the Non-Western Church*”, Wesley Grandberg-Michaelson makes some interesting observations. Given the seismic shifts of Christianity from the North to the global South and East, he makes some cutting comments on the location of World Communions headquarters;

*The World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and other ecumenical bodies stubbornly cling to their comfortable location at the Ecumenical Centre Geneva, Switzerland. Geneva is the fifth most expensive city for expatriates in the entire world. The World Communion of Reformed Churches was finally forced to move its offices away from Geneva to save money. But made the grave mistake by*
relocating it to Hanover, Germany instead of Johannesburg, South Africa or another location south of the equator. The Baptist World Alliance is located outside Washington, D.C., and the World Methodist Council incredibly enough has its global centre in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina.

This list can go on, underscoring the practical, visible evidence of geographical divisions and the imbalance of power. The church cannot sustain itself when the centre of gravity for global Christianity moves with increasing speed to the global South and East, while the centres of the ecumenical movement and organizations of major evangelical influence remain rooted in the North and the West. (2013:16)

Taking the above into account and having reviewed all the Strategic Planning Committee Reports presented by the late Sarah Davis, I consulted widely with partners and trusted colleagues and made the following recommendations to the Steering Committee

- Bring a Proposal to the World Methodist Council Meeting in 2016 to focus and enhance the way that the Council accomplishes its work, setting up clear goals and systems of accountability.
- That the Council adopts a Consensus model for decision making processes within the Steering Committee and Council.
- Begin a relationship with the British Methodist Church and the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to set up a virtual office of the WMC in these regions.

We have built and continue to build together in the knowledge that we are God’s co-workers, “unless the Lord builds the house, those who build labour in vain.” (Ps 127:1)

7. **CONCLUSION**

I am grateful to all those who have accompanied me on the journey, nurtured my faith and enriched my life and ministry.

I sincerely appreciate the support of colleagues at Lake Junaluska, Nashville, New York and Houston who are the “living stones” of the Conference and Council. Barbara Bowser, Kirby Hickey, Susan Gaddy, Jackie Bolden, Sarah Wilke, Elizabeth Redman, Jeremy Bakker, John Thomas, Jorge Lockward and B.T. Williamson have all been pillars of strength over the past months. We will reap the fruits of their labour at the Houston Conference.

I invite us all to participate and contribute to the life and witness of the Council with renewed vision and firm commitment.

Let’s make music and build together.

Respectfully submitted,

Ivan M. Abrahams
General Secretary
World Methodist Council
Bishop Streiff  
Delegates to Conference  
My Mothers and Fathers  
Sisters and Brothers

It is a singular honour, joy and privilege to bring greetings and best wishes on behalf of the World Methodist Council. Thank you for your kind invitation to offer some thoughts on the very challenging theme; beFREMDet – beFREUNDet – beREICHert - stranger – friend – enriched

As we explore migration that is a feature of the changing global and local context, I am reminded of a Sunday school teacher who asked her class to draw a picture of any Bible story. When she examined the drawings, she was surprised to see one of a plane with what seemed to be some people in it. She called the little boy who drew the picture to explain which Bible story it was. He replied that in the cockpit was Pontius, the pilot and at the back was Jesus and his family taking a flight to Egypt.

It is important to remember that our Lord and Saviour, “became human in every way so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God”. (Hebrews2:17) The reality is that Jesus and the Holy family were refugees in Africa.

Migration has been part of human history since its origins but due to globalization, today more people are migrating than ever before.

People are leaving their homes both voluntary in search of better education and economic opportunities and involuntary because of violence, militarization, wars, human rights violations, environmental degradation, poverty, exploitative economic conditions………the list can go on and on….. It is estimated that more than 4% of the world’s population – nearly 200 million people are living outside their countries of birth.

Migration is a fact of life which cannot be reverse regardless of the policies of nation-states to stem the tide. This movement of people is transforming communities all around the globe and is one of the defining issues of the 21st century.

The 21st century has been referred to by some scholars as “the age of migration” that impacts everybody.

While we have witnessed the unfettered movement of capital and commodities, the mobility of people is severely restricted under neoliberal globalization that can be considered as a modern day form of slavery.

Millions of working people have to seek economic opportunities in foreign lands, and many poor nations rely on “exporting” their people as cheap labor. Countries like Honduras and El Salvador count “remittances” as the primary source of foreign income while in other countries “remittances” have outstripped international aid and in this way the poor shoulders the burden for development.
Migration is a social reality with serious implications, but it is also a way of thinking about God and what it means to be human in the world.

Migrants like all other people are the signet of God’s creation that bears the image and likeness of God. To ignore their human dignity is an affront to God and violates their human rights. Migrants are individuals with dreams, hopes, families and cultural heritage like people all over the world.

The Scriptures has much to say about migrants and the offering of hospitality to strangers and exiles. The foreigner and strangers - ger in Hebrew appears 92 times in the Old Testament. The stranger should not only be treated with respect but also have the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as the people of Israel.

“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien with you shall be to you as a citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:34; Exodus 10: 17).

Furthermore, there is a theme within the Old which identify the foreigner and alien with other vulnerable groups like widows and orphans.

“God protects the stranger who lives in our land: he helps widows and orphans but takes the wicked to their ruin” (Ps 146:9)

“Do not oppress widows, orphans and foreigners who live among you, or anyone else in need.” (Zechariah 9:10)

“The Lord Almighty says; I will appear among you to judge, and I will testify at once against those……….who cheat employees out of their wages, and those who take advantage of widows, orphans, and foreigners – against all who do not respect me” (Malachi 3:5)

In the New Testament, we see that through the incarnation God migrates to the human race into a place of “otherness” as Jesus became the embodiment of the stranger. He fully identified with those on the margins of society and entered into their vulnerable condition.

In the parable of the Last Judgement, Jesus claims that our salvation is dependent on how we respond to strangers; “I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink, a stranger and you took me in and welcomed me into your home.” (Matt 25:35)

In another well know the parable of the Good Samaritan; Jesus defines the neighbour not by place or relationship; but the one whom we approach in love. He further exposed the xenophobia of Jews at that time in history and pointed to the fact that help comes from the culturally and religiously other. This is particularly important as we see growing expressions of xenophobia and racial violence against refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.
Throughout our faith tradition, we are instructed to show hospitality, to care for and to identify with the stranger.

In Paul's letter to the Romans he encourages; “Welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God” and he goes further to say “Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers” (Rom 12:13)

In one of the last Biblical injunctions on strangers we read; “Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:1-2).

In recent months, we have seen a flood of desperate migrants into Europe from across the Mediterranean Sea. It is estimated that 75 thousand have made the crossing to date. The Mediterranean Sea has become a mass grave for thousands more on their journey to find a dignified life in Europe.

As you listen to story after story you realize that many of these migrants, refugees and asylum seekers paid thousands of euros to unscrupulous human traffickers and smugglers because access to regular migration is often difficult or inaccessible to the most vulnerable.

While the World Council of Churches, the World Methodist Council, the Conference of European Churches, General Conference and Synods have issued many statements and held many forums on migration, the discourse is often theoretical and remains within the Conference halls or gathers dust in minutes and does not translate into grass root action.

I do however, give thanks to God for the many signs of hope I see in Methodist Churches around the world for whom welcoming, offering hospitality, refuge and advocacy to “the stranger” is an integral part of their mission.

The Methodist Movement has always been a contextualized expression of God’s love to what Wesley identified as “out cast of men.” Methodist theology is a practical, contextual theology that pursues “scriptural holiness”. David Field describes “holiness” as, “an embodiment of justice compassion and integrity on behalf of and in solidarity with the marginalized, the victims and the vulnerable”. David Hampton argues that Methodism thrived in the 19th and 20th century because its theology was practical. He claims that “it was a movement from below” and was carried primarily by a mobile laity long before the establishment of missionary societies.

Methodism was predominantly a movement of women, and the role of signing in our tradition is a way of doing public theology. It empowers those who cannot read, for instance, to contribute to the theological discourse. Methodism was committed to those on the margins. Is this still true for us today?

In the 19th century, Methodists always accompanied migrants settling in the “colonies” but today the movement is in the opposite direction.

How great will it not be if the 21st Century Methodist churches are known as “the church of the stranger”. That is a label that I would proudly wear.

Migration presents us with some amazing missional challenges and opportunities.
This is a “Kairos Moment” for mission in the 21st century. It is an opportunity for revitalization and renewal that many urban churches have embraced discovering new energy and passion.

As churches welcome and accompany migrant communities in a new paradigm of mission, they have not only been blessed with qualitative and quantitative growth but have been enriched and radically transformed.

Those churches who take their demographics seriously have moved beyond “accommodation” to “full participation”. They are re-imagining the very nature and mission of the Church and have discovered “the world in their parish”.

I am glad to report that the face of many Methodist churches particularly in large cities throughout the world has radically changed because of migration.

If Migration is indeed one of the defining issues of the 21st century, then it offers us an opportunity to ground theological analysis in a specific location sharing the hopes, dreams, tears and challenges of marginalized people.

A comprehensive theology of migration will allow their voices to be heard, highlight the demands of the Christian faith and challenge the church to respond to a system that seek to commodify and commercialize human beings. Such a theology has the potential to enrich, inspire and empower as it addresses the issues faced by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Churches are highly visible and are involved in the daily lives of people. It is a place for disseminating information and is the nexus of social networks, values, solidarity support and advocacy.

The issue of human migration must become a moral imperative for all faith based organisations in the same way that many supported the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade at the turn of the 19th Century and the demise of apartheid as a crime against humanity in the 21st century. Methodists need to become modern day abolitionist.

As a church we are an immense resource, we have a distinctive critical and constructive contribution to make to the civil discourse and our absence will leave the discourse poorer and unsustainable - I often argue with legislators that society is impoverished when religious perspectives of life are excluded and marginalised.

Let us remember that the greatest gift that we can bestow upon this and the future generations is to wrestle together with the challenges of our time to build a more humane and prosperous society.

As contemporary heirs of Wesley, we need to remind ourselves that our roots are firmly planted in the doctrine of sanctification, for this reason, “we were raised up, to spread Scriptural holiness throughout our land(s)’. As we draw on our heritage and again link faith and works, pietism and social action, spirituality and political engagement that a new world of justice and peace will become a reality.

I thank you for your attention.