



Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

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Dear General Secretary and Moderator,

Greetings from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I write to express the deep heartfelt thanks of our recent Assembly (15-19 November 2016) for the receipt of your letter expressing concern, thoughts and prayers concerning the recent earthquake. Knowing that our sisters and brothers in other places are aware of such events and express their solidarity and prayerful support is both reassuring and humbling.

Our long and highly valued relationship with The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was surely strengthened by your expression of concern.

As you state, it is early days, but it is very clear there has been considerable damage and destruction. The town of Kaikoura has been cut off – and once known for whale watching and other tourism – faces many difficult months ahead. Tourists were required to be evacuated by air and sea as all road links were cut. One of our ministers in Kaikoura has been to the fore in assist quake refugees and in providing hospitality, pastoral support and spiritual care.

Other inland communities and our congregations in places like Cheviot, Hawarden and Wairau have also been impacted. Our ministers and lay people are to the fore in assisting others and joining other volunteers in helping to co-ordinate a response. I know from being in contact with them – they value very much the prayers of others and know the road ahead will be long and not be easy. While buildings have been damaged and some loss of life, we acknowledge that it could have been much worse.

We would value your on-going concern and prayer as we work alongside others to support people and also for civil defence and regional and national bodies who have difficult decisions impacting the lives and futures of many in the days ahead.

As you wrote – may the Lord be both our comfort and strength now, and in the days ahead.

Again, on behalf our new Moderator Right Rev Richard Dawson and our whole church – thank you; thank you; thank you.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Wayne Matheson