

## **Theology on Development Statement**

A Bible in one hand – a cup of cold water in the other.

PNG Constitution affirms that PNG is a Christian country, and as the participating churches in CPP, we affirm that we function as Christian institutions and act out of God's love for humanity. Our development involvement grows out of the God-given mission of the church to evangelise the nation, is in harmony with Christian values and ethos, and places supreme value on the humanity of all peoples in PNG. We, the Church Leadership Council commit to this partnership so long as the PNG government and AusAid value our involvement.

### **Definition of development**

Song of Hannah: 'He raises the poor from the dust . . . to assign them a seat of honour.' 1 Samuel 2:8

"Development refers to a process of change through which an increasing proportion of a nation's citizens are able to enjoy a higher material standard of living, healthier and longer lives, more education, and greater control and choice over how they live." (Allen Hoben 1995:1007-1021).

### **Theology on Development Statement**

Biblically understood, theology on development is about salvation or fullness of life for a person's total being; body, soul and spirit or holistic human development. Development teaches people how to live in a right relationship God, other human beings, themselves and the world around them.

This theology on development has its basis on seven foundational Christian pillars.

#### **1. The Incarnation of Christ**

The Incarnation is about God in Christ coming in human form, born into a specific cultural situation and assuming a cultural orientation that made his humanity authentic to radically change the situation of humanity for good. In his embodiment of the kingdom of God and its values, Christ lived, ate, drank, slept, mourned and suffered together with those he came to serve. He actively identified with and participated in their struggles. When his followers are empowered by the kingdom values, they in turn become powerful change agents.

#### **2. The Church Living Out the Love of God for Humanity**

God's great love for humanity was revealed in its ultimate form in the Incarnation. The revelation of God's love for the world challenges the world and especially the church to live out that love, to share that love in different forms and activities which in turn brings development to humanity.

#### **3. Respect for the Dignity of Humanity**

Humanity, created in the image of God is of supreme value. The indwelling of the Spirit of God enhances this value. The church is challenged to give and restore hope to humanity; the hope of liberation from spiritual and physical bondage and the hope of deliverance from

forces and systems that seek to exploit the image of God in human beings and the sanctity of human communities.

#### **4. Empowering and Investing in the People**

Created in the image of God gave to humanity a degree of autonomy like God. This autonomy relates to our destiny. Humanity is destined by God not to be beggars, but to be productive and to be contributors or providers to the well-being of our families, our clans, our communities, and our nation of PNG as a whole. Hence development involves the empowerment of individuals to lead productive and worthwhile lives. This productivity cannot be at the expense of nor the exploitation of other individuals in society. Development results in greater self reliance.

#### **5. Humans as Custodians of God's Creation and Stewards of God's Economy for the Common Good**

Humanity was entrusted by God with the care of the world. As responsible custodians of the ecosystem, we are to care for it wisely and develop it in a sustainable way for ourselves and future generations. In God's economy, every society comprises both benefactors and beneficiaries with mutual obligation to the survival of society as a whole. But there can be no violence, slavery, manipulation, exploitation, nor payback in a humane society. Development should focus on the family as being the foundation of a peaceful and just society.

#### **6. Integral Human Development**

Humans were created as both physical and spiritual beings living in social community. Development must take a holistic approach that caters to the physical, spiritual and social dimensions in light of the cultural values of the peoples of Papua New Guinea. Economic development cannot alienate people from their land, their natural resources nor contribute to the destruction of the foundation of societies, namely their culture and spiritual values.

#### **7. Advocate for the Disempowered**

Old Testament prophets and the life and teaching of Jesus advocate defending the rights of the poor, the widows and orphans, and the powerless of society. Development calls for a preferential option for the poor, the weak and the vulnerable - a positive discrimination.