

# COUNCIL OF CONFERENCE

## Information and Reporting Back

The Council of Conference has met twice this year, during the months of April and September. We met to discuss a range of issues that concern the life of The Methodist Church of New Zealand – Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa.

We gather together for two days at Te Rahui Centre, beside the Waikato River. A venue that enhances our working relationships is constantly referred to during our theology sessions.

The Council sees it as a privilege to do this work on behalf of the Church. We are a diverse group of people, representing Tauwiwi and Te Taha Māori, working in unison in a bicultural manner, to which we are deeply committed.

Our robust conversations are guided by, *“What is the Spirit saying to the Church?”* and *“What more can be done to promote the work of God?”* Our meetings begin with a theological reflection led by the Presidential Team, after which the partners work together on bicultural responses to the agenda items which include the following:

### Theology

Council of Conference incorporates the theological reflections as a major part of its first session each meeting. For the first meeting, the theme was “Transformation and Treaty” – two important concepts embedded in the Church’s Mission Statement, but both felt to be ‘difficult’ words.

Council members reflected on the transforming power of the Easter event, and shared transforming events in their own lives. Using the biblical understanding of Treaty and Covenant, members wrestled with the links between transformation and Treaty, and were left with the following question: *“As leaders/members of Te Haahi, what are we going to do about promoting the links?”*

At the September meeting, we were challenged to reflect on how we see society and church emerging in Aotearoa-New Zealand, what kind of society is emerging, and how well does Te Haahi understand and relate to these trends?

The challenge for members to take away and reflect on was *“How well does the ‘Hinchcliff Report’ help us to position ourselves as Church in response to the needs of our time and culture?”*

We share these questions with the whole church.

### 2007 Conference Resolutions

#### Notice of Motion ‘M’ from Ecology Network:

As we arrive at Te Rahui Centre we are always aware of the deep and wide Waikato awa. At our September meeting, we were also conscious of the significant Treaty decision in the preceding week: announcing the guardianship, in partnership, of Waikato awa.

The place and time then, speak to the affirmation by Council of Conference of the direction arising from the climate change and ecology decisions taken by Conference 2007. But we also recognise the decisions require ongoing consideration by Synods and Rohe, particularly in regard to the time frame set.

Small steps lead to big journeys, and different geographic areas will journey at different paces.

A growing grasp of a theology of creation in Te Haahi is encouraged, with an awareness that as we work together to address environmental concerns, we also build up community.

#### Notice of Motion ‘N’ re Wesley College Special Character:

Conference 2007 asked the Council of Conference to initiate conversations within the Church to clarify what the Wesley College Special Character statement *“direct affiliation with the Methodist Church of New Zealand”* means for the relationship between Wesley College and the Methodist Church of New Zealand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

At its April meeting, Council of Conference established a small Work Group to begin this task. The Work Group met and prepared a report which was presented to the September meeting of Council. The report suggested changes to the Special Character Statement which might make it more relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This report will be circulated to all Synods and Hui Poari for discussion by March 2009 and the outcomes will be presented by the Council to Conference 2009.

### Social Issues Group:

Council of Conference acknowledges the huge concern within the wider church for the ongoing work of Social Issues. The Council acknowledges the prior work of CASI and Public Questions Committee.

The key objectives in the establishment of a Public Questions Network are to educate, advocate, to research and share current social/public issues amongst the linkages in the Church. Council of Conference seeks avenues for financial assistance to further the development of the Public Questions Network.

### **Official Name of the Methodist Church of New Zealand**

The Board of Administration is currently preparing a Private Members' Bill to go to Parliament to enable changes to be made to the purposes of some Charitable Trusts. This is because the purpose for which the money was given no longer exists e.g. orphanages.

In the course of preparing the Bill the legal drafters in Parliament asked, "What is the correct name of the Church?" as they had it listed as 'The Methodist Church of New Zealand'.

The General Secretary undertook research and discovered that Conference has never adopted 'Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa' as an official part of the name. Records show that this translation became common usage in the mid 1980's; however, this was never taken to Conference for adoption.

### **Reception into Full Connexion**

Council of Conference received the names of:

- Ali'itasi Toleafoa, and
- Bob Sidal

who have completed the appropriate process to be received into Full Connexion.

We welcome Ali'itasi who comes into the Methodist family from a Presbyterian tradition who already utilises her teaching and chaplaincy skills within the life of Wesley College. The Council noted that Bob comes out of the Fijian Methodist tradition and brings that background to us.

Both Ali'itasi and Bob offer their particular gifts and skills to enrich and enhance our Church.

### **Council of Elders – Monitoring Bicultural Partnership**

In the year 2008, Council of Conference agreed that in terms of the bicultural partnership, the Council would monitor its own processes. Members of the Council of Conference each took responsibility for the care and consideration of each other in their deliberations. We have found it has worked extremely well. However, Council of Conference re-affirms the role of Council of Elders in continuing to monitor Conference.

In acknowledging budget constraints, the Council of Conference also suggests that membership to Council of Elders be two members from Te Taha Māori and two members from Tauwi.

### **Wesleyan Methodist Church**

Council of Conference received and discussed the progress report contained in a letter from Alan K Webster regarding relationships between The Methodist Church of New Zealand and the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

Council of Conference thanks Alan K Webster for the work done and continues to support him as Evangelical Network Superintendent.

After discussion, Council of Conference suggested the following:

1. We agree to the setting up of an initial meeting between representatives of The Methodist Church of New Zealand and Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.
2. The intention of the meeting is to explore the possibility of finding areas of mutual concern between the two churches.
3. The group to meet with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand representatives to be President Brian Turner, Tumuaki Diana Tana, President-elect Jill van de Geer and Alan K Webster.
4. President Brian Turner to identify a facilitator for the meeting.
5. In preparation for the meeting The Methodist Church of New Zealand representatives will need

to have a clear understanding of guidelines for items to be discussed.

## Looking Forward

In the coming year, Council of Conference will address the following:

- Circulate a report to all Synods and Hui Poari for discussion by March 2009 and the outcomes presented to Conference 2009.
- Consider feedback about the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.
- Seeks avenues for financial assistance to further the development of the Public Questions Network.
- Continue evaluating its life and work.

## Suggested Decisions:

1. The report is received.
2. Conference thanks Kilifi Heimuli, Aroha Houston, Jessie Kerr, Alex Webster and Ruby Winikerei who complete their time on Council of Conference.
3. Conference adopts the official name of the Church to be "The Methodist Church of New Zealand–Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa".
4. Conference:
  - a. implements the proposed Model of Presidency from 2010;
  - b. asks the Administration Division and Law Revision Committee to work on matters of funding and other structural and legal aspects and report to Conference 2009.
5. Conference asks the Council of Conference to circulate a discussion paper on the Wesley College Special Character by March 2009 to Synods and Hui Poari and report the outcomes to Conference 2009.
6. Conference approves the membership of the Council of Elders to be two members from Te Taha Māori and two members from Tauwi.
7. Conference thanks Jill van de Geer for her significant contribution to the life and work of the Council of Conference in her role as General Secretary.
8. The Budget Task Group for 2009 shall be the President, Vice President, General Secretary, Tumuaki, Evelyn Kingi, David McGeorge, Paula Taumoepeau, Pari Waaka, plus one other to be brought to Conference and with Connexional Office Staff in attendance.
9. The two new members for the PAC Distribution Group for 2009 shall be
10. Council of Conference membership for 2009 shall be Te Taha Māori: Lana Lazarus (Co-Convenor), Julie-Anne Barney-Katene, Jim George, Keita Hotere, Gillian Laird, Rex Nathan, Bella Ngaha, Diana Tana, Pari Waaka and one further member to be appointed by the President from the substitute list following the Council of Conference Training Workshop.  
Substitutes: Raiha (Dorta) Cassidy, Christine Kershaw, Sonny Livingstone and Shirley Wiki.  
Tauwi: Tovia Aumua (Co-Convenor), Mary Caygill, Des Cooper, Motekiai Fakatou, Tevita Finau, Jan Fogg, Barbara Peddie, Aso Samoa Saleupolu, Olive Tanielu and Susan Thompson.  
Substitutes: Thelma Efford, Mark Gibson, Derek Holland, Akisi Renner, Susau Strickland, Nigel Hanscamp and Viv Whimster. President Jill van de Geer, Vice President Ron Gibson and General Secretary David Bush will also be in attendance.

## CONNEXIONAL BUDGET

### SECTION A

#### 2007-2008 Connexional Budget

For the Year to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008, contributions from parishes toward the wider work of the Church through the Connexional Budget totalled \$600,313 – an increase of \$11,911 over the previous year. As in prior years amounts requested exceeded this amount and the Budget Task Group made a request to the PAC Distribution Group for a grant of \$80,000 which was necessary to enable the Church to carry out its mission.

During the year the Budget Task Group granted \$756,400 to the various Connexional groups. Despite some parishes responding positively to the call for increased contributions to the Connexional Budget, the askings still exceed the giving. Therefore, some new initiatives are not being funded.

### Budget Requests 2007-2008

	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Net Amount Allocated</b>
Recipients of guaranteed funding	44,620	37,300
Recipients of non-guaranteed funding	<u>861,738</u>	<u>704,055</u>
	906,358	741,355
Fund administration	<u>13,000</u>	<u>13,000</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>\$919,358</u></b>	<b><u>\$754,355</u></b>

### To be funded from:

	<b>Net Amount Allocated</b>	<b>Actually Received</b>
Connexional Budget from Parishes	445,874	440,614
Uniting Congregations in Aotearoa	145,000	159,698
PAC distribution group	80,000	80,000
Grants - special account	50,000	78,971
Other Income	<u>30,000</u>	<u>31,197</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>\$750,874</u></b>	<b><u>\$790,480</u></b>

### (i) Receipts from both Methodist and Union Parishes (not including grants and donations)

	<b>Allocations \$</b>	<b>Contribution \$</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
2007-08	\$590,874	\$600,312	101.6
2006-07	\$589,004	\$573,402	97.4
2005-06	\$588,694	\$575,200	97.7
2004-05	\$594,075	\$598,931	100.8
2003-04	\$568,951	\$584,748	102.8

### (ii) Results from Methodist Parishes

(a)	<b>Fully Paid</b>	<b>Not Fully Paid</b>
2007-07	76	4
2006-07	78	4
2005-06	74	8
2004-05	72	6
2003-04	69	5
2002-03	65	7

### (b) Percentage of Budget Allocation reached from Parishes

	<b>Methodist</b>			<b>Union</b>		
	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>%</b>
2007-08	445,874	440,614	98.8%	145,000	159,698	110.1%
2006-07	440,254	413,391	93.9%	145,000	160,011	110.4%
2005-06	450,094	421,665	93.7%	138,600	153,535	110.8%
2004-05	452,328	440,015	97.3%	125,000	158,916	127.1%
2003-04	443,951	432,823	97.5%	125,000	151,925	121.5%

(iii) **Payments to Divisions and Committees**

	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Payment</b>
<b>Guaranteed</b>		
World Council of Churches	5,200	6,467
World Methodist Council (incl Member Expenses)	4,600	3,388
Christian Conference of Asia	2,500	2,500
WCC Programme to combat racism	1,000	1,000
Bio Ethics Committee	4,000	4,000
Travel & Study	<u>20,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
	37,300	37,355
<b>Non Guaranteed</b>		
<u>Partnership &amp; Mission Expenses</u>		
Connexional Expenses	180,350	180,350
Board of Administration	85,000	85,000
Ministry Education	200,000	200,000
Methodist Mission and Ecumenical	3,000	3,000
Touchstone	46,000	46,000
Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand	14,500	15,710
Budget Administration	13,000	13,462
Christian World Service Overseas Aid- 2% of parish contributions	11,705	12,023
<u>Tauiwi Mission &amp; Expenses</u>		
Mission Resourcing	160,000	160,000
Evangelical Network	<u>3,500</u>	<u>3,500</u>
	<u>717,055</u>	<u>719,045</u>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b><u>\$754,355</u></b>	<b><u>\$746,400</u></b>

(iv) **Payments to Divisions and Committees**

	<b>Guaranteed</b>	<b>Non Guaranteed</b>	<b>% Paid to Non Guaranteed</b>
2007-08	\$37,355	\$719,045	100.0%
2006-07	\$37,118	\$764,110	100.0%
2005-06	\$23,999	\$754,450	100.0%
2004-05	\$22,921	\$729,301	100.0%
2003-04	\$31,817	\$687,327	100.0%

**SECTION B**

**2008-09 Year**

This year the Budget Task Group, as part of the budget preparation process invited major asking groups to make presentations of their strategic priorities. This reinforced the need for some certainty around levels of funding so these key groups in our life can do their work.

The Task Group also realises that there is little opportunity for discussion and dialogue about the budget throughout the church, as budget preparation work currently needs to occur after Conference in November and before the end of January. It would be preferable to enable wider discussion on the proposed budget, but the process of setting the budget cannot be started earlier and the deadline to establish the final budget can not be moved.

To address these ongoing dilemmas the Budget Task Group is suggesting that the church move from the existing practice of funding the budget, in arrears, as money is paid in by parishes, to having a pre-paid budget. This means that amounts allocated would be guaranteed, and that there would be space for the church to consider budget priorities away from the busy end of year period.

To implement this, the Council of Conference is asking Conference to approve a moratorium on PAC Funds to groups outside the Methodist Church of New Zealand for 3 years, commencing in the 2009/10 financial year. During these three years the Connexional Budget would be a priority for the PAC funds as a budget fund of \$900,000 is established.

The Budget Task Group will also contract professional expertise to implement a development plan for both the ongoing budget and the new opportunities which are presenting themselves to the church. Funding for such a consultant was given by PAC 3 years ago.

The Task Group continues to draw attention to the significant contribution which the Connexional banking arrangement makes to the budget and strongly urges any Methodist parishes or other Methodist church groups who operates an account outside of the Bank of New Zealand arrangement to transfer to the banking arrangement that the Church has negotiated with the Bank of New Zealand.

The Budget, which was adopted by the Council of Conference for the year for the year to 30 June 2009, was:

<b>Contributions from Parishes</b>		
Northland	4,200	
Auckland	104,829	
Manukau	38,737	
Waikato – Bay of Plenty	61,004	
Taranaki – Wanganui	16,181	
Hawkes Bay – Manawatu	23,742	
Wellington	22,880	
Nelson	12,220	
Central South Island	59,453	
Otago – Southland	11,500	
Auckland Manukau Tongan Parish	51,000	
Te Taha Maori	25,000	
Sinoti Samoa & parishes	23,540	
Uniting Congregations in Aotearoa New Zealand	<u>140,000</u>	594,286
Special Account Grant		79,705
Connexional Legacies and Other		28,000
PAC distribution group		<u>75,000</u>
<b>Total Income</b>		<b><u>\$776,991</u></b>

<b>Allocations to Divisions &amp; Committees</b>	<b>Amount requested</b>	<b>Amount allocated</b>
<u>Guaranteed</u>	\$	\$
World Council of Churches	4,000	4,000
World Council of Churches Committee Expenses	1,200	1,200
Churches Agency on International Issues	4,600	4,600
World Methodist Council	2,200	2,200
Christian Conference of Asia	1,100	1,100
Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga I Nga Hahi	2,720	0
WCC Programme to combat racism	<u>1,000</u>	<u>1,000</u>
	<b><u>\$ 16,820</u></b>	<b><u>\$14,100</u></b>

<u>Non-Guaranteed</u>	<u>Amount requested</u> \$	<u>Amount allocated</u> \$
<u>Partnership &amp; Mission Expenses</u>		
Connexional Expenses	251,412	230,260
Board of Administration	51,811	40,000
Archives	40,371	40,371
Ministry Education	200,000	170,000
Methodist Mission and Ecumenical	18,000	3,000
Touchstone	48,500	45,000
Wasewase ko Viti Kei Rotuma e Niu Siladi	10,000	8,000
Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand	14,000	14,000
Budget Administration	13,000	
Christian World Service Overseas Aid- 2% of parish contributions	8,781	9,086
<u>Tauiwi Mission &amp; Expenses</u>		
Mission Resourcing	205,000	170,000
Evangelical Network	5,100	4,000
Interchurch Tertiary Chaplaincy	9,350	0
Hospital Chaplaincy	26,000	20,000
Travel & Study	20,000	20,000
Bio Ethics	<u>2,500</u>	<u>2,500</u>
	<u>923,825</u>	<u>776,217</u>
Grand Total	<u>\$940,645</u>	<u>\$790,317</u>

The Task Group has again approached the PAC Distribution Group which has made funding available to meet the shortfall between the anticipated Connexional Budget income and the allocations made from the Budget. The task Group requested \$90,000 and the PAC Fund has generously agreed to fund \$75,000.

#### **Connexional Budget Task Group**

The Budget Task Group for 2008 will consist of; President, Vice-President, General Secretary, three person appointed by Taha Maori and three persons appointed by Tauwiwi. The Tauwiwi Strategy and Stationing Committee are to consider the Tauwiwi members of the Connexional Budget Task Group and will report to Conference.

**Question 25(c):** What are the decisions of Conference relating to the Connexional Budget?

#### **Suggested Decisions:**

1. The report is received.
2. Conference notes and affirms the Budget Task Group and the direction it has outlined regarding the contracting of professional expertise to implement a development plan, noting the moratorium in 3 below. (A PAC Grant is in place to fund this).
3. (a) A moratorium be placed on the PAC Funds from the PAC Distribution Group to outside groups other than MCNZ.  
(b) The moratorium be placed on the PAC funds for a period of up to 3 years commencing 1/7/09.  
(c) A priority for the PAC Funds will be the Connexional Budget for those 3 years.
4. Conference notes the Budget Task Groups intention to contract professional expertise to implement the development plan and that the consultant is to report to Budget Task Group and Council of Conference on the above and also to suggest what relief might be given to Parishes/Rohe during the moratorium.

# COUNCIL OF CONFERENCE FOUR PLUS FOUR RE MODELS OF PRESIDENCY

## Preamble

The Council of Conference four plus four in association with the Faith and Order Committee was charged by Conference 2007 to undertake the following:

1. Research the most appropriate and responsible Model of Presidency to take the Church into the future given its changing nature and size, as well as the understanding that people have of the role of President and Vice President.
2. Investigate the reasons behind the resistance of people to be nominated for the positions.
3. Prepare a discussion paper for June Synods with possible models.
4. Bring a report to Conference 2008.

A discussion paper reflecting on the nature of Presidency, resistance factors to being nominated for the positions of President and Vice President and possible models of Presidency was sent to June Synods and Hui Poari. Responses were received from eight Synods, one parish, one individual and Hui Poari. The Council of Conference four plus four thanks those who replied. Your questions and comments were particularly helpful.

The Council of Conference four plus four in association with the Faith and Order Committee now presents this report for further consideration. We believe the model of Presidency being suggested is the most appropriate for the size and future of the Methodist Church in New Zealand/Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. We expect that a decision to implement the proposed model will be a two-year process.

## Affirmation

The Council of Conference four plus four believes the President is important to the life and well-being of the Church. This was also reflected in the responses received.

We are strongly committed to the bicultural partnership. This partnership is reflected in our Conference, in the responsibilities of the President (one of whose tasks is to sustain the bicultural partnership) and in the selection process for the Presidency.

## The Nature of Presidency

The role of the President is one of **Governance** or 'Headship'. As the representative of the Conference when it is not in session, the President is responsible for maintaining the overall policy and direction setting of the Church.

This includes the following tasks:

- Being a **Leader**: The President is expected to bring gifts of visioning, discernment and guidance to the life of the Church. He or she is a voice for the Church and may speak out to the wider community (after seeking advice) on issues of justice, peace and integrity.
- Being the **Chief Pastor**: The President cares for the life of the Church in all of its parts, and so seeks to maintain justice in the life of the Church. He or she is available to listen, to pray and to be alongside all groups within the Church. He or she may offer personal pastoral care to individuals when required. The President acts as a 'spiritual mentor' to the Church.
- Having a **Ceremonial Role**: The President expresses the life of the whole Church on significant Church and/or community occasions. The role of President carries with it respect and status which is an expression of the Church's confidence in an individual and of the mana of the Body of Christ which is greater than any individual.

## Proposed Model of Presidency

The Council of Conference four plus four offers the following proposed model of Presidency after reflecting on the responses received from the Church and the future needs of Methodism in New Zealand.



(2 years)  
President Elect

(2 years)  
President

(2 years)  
Ex-President

- The President is a full-time position.
- This model does away with the position of Vice-President in favour of a President Elect.
- The office of President is open to all lay and ordained members of the Methodist Church who fulfil the Law Book requirements (7.5.1.6).
- Conference would be held every two years (issues like the time and place of ordinations will need to be explored).
- We believe costs would be similar to as at present.
- The current bicultural partnership selection process would remain in place.
- The first President under this model would be selected in 2010 and would begin as President in 2011. Thereafter Conferences would be held in 2013, 2015 etc.

### **Rationale for the Model**

The Council of Conference four plus four believes the proposed model is the most sustainable given the changing size and nature of the Church.

We believe that it best overcomes some of the factors behind the resistance of people to be nominated for the Presidency.

A two-year full-time Presidency will strengthen the role of President allowing greater continuity and the chance to make a sustained contribution to the Church. The time spent as President Elect will be a valuable opportunity for people to prepare themselves for the task ahead.

The Council of Conference four plus four believes the proposed model continues to affirm the place of lay leadership in the Church, which is a significant part of our heritage.

The model will have ecumenical advantages. The President will have time to get to know and be known by other Church leaders.

The Council of Conference four plus four believes the current selection process best expresses the Methodist Church's commitment to a bicultural partnership.

### **Additional Matters**

The Council of Conference four plus four recognises that a number of issues were raised in Synod responses which remain unresolved. We have not been able to address these within this report but remind the Church of the need to continue to struggle with them in an attitude of prayer and concern for each other.

The Council of Conference four plus four notes:

- Ongoing and serious concerns among some members regarding the bicultural partnership selection process.
- The call for a more adequate resolution process in the event of disagreement over nominations.
- The desire among some parts of the Church for the President to be an ordained person.
- Concern that, while the position of President is open to all lay and ordained people who fulfil the Law Book requirements, debate continues within Tauwiwi over the acceptability of gay and lesbian nominees - at the moment eligibility does not equal acceptability.

### **Suggested Decisions**

1. Conference implements the proposed model from 2010.
2. Conference asks the Administration Division to work on matters of funding and other structural and legal aspects and report to Conference 2009.