

COUNCIL OF CONFERENCE

Theological Reflections

Our meetings in 2015 reflected on the Presidential theme “time to sow, time to grow”. In April the links between the Presidential themes of 2013 – 2014 and this Presidential term were addressed and then we considered the growth of our church through the metaphor of a Maori whare.

The four pou or corner posts of the whare we considered as places where growth might be nurtured. There was prophetic growth, theological growth, spiritual and numerical growth. The floor of the whare was based on the teachings of John Wesley, the walls our bi-cultural journey, and overall the roof represented the Holy Trinity.

In September the Presidential team talked of what they have observed in their travels around the connection and noted various signs of growth in the parishes. We were then asked to identify signs of growth in our own parishes and rohe and from there began the shift in this year's focus to address “time to Re-Grow, time to Re-Sow”. In doing that we were challenged to look at what is working, what needs upgrading, what can be discarded because it is outdated, or no longer serves the church.

Succession planning is an extremely important part of our church's growth in order to future proof our church and hence the need to discern how best to expend our energies and our resources. Again, what's most important to focus on for growth?

Two Yearly Conference

The idea of adopting a two yearly Conference has been talked about for some time. In the last 2-3 years, Council of Conference has robustly discussed this idea through the Presidential team's visioning sessions. There were wide and varied points of view and opinions voiced amongst the Council for both sides of the argument.

The Council has come to a consensus that Conference should trial the two yearly Conference. The Council understands that there will be some anxieties but encourages Conference to be courageous and take the next step. In preparation for taking this step, Council have developed an implementation plan to mitigate some anxieties during this trial period. One of the most debated topics is the timing for the ordination service and the significance of this for the Ordinands. This also has been considered by Council and is reflected in the implementation plan (*see Appendix – page 17*).

Council acknowledges that there will be valuable learnings from the trial period which will inevitably influence Conference's decision to adopt two yearly Conference permanently or not.

As a Connexion, we will not be able to fully appreciate the pros and cons of a two yearly Conference until we have the courage to take the leap of faith and put it into action.

Let the Children Live: Support of the ‘Feed the Children Bill’, Raising the Age of Children in Foster Care

Council of Conference affirms our 10 year commitment to ‘Let the Children Live, tukuna nga mokopuna kia puaura’.

At our recent April meeting, major concerns were voiced regarding the dismissal by Parliament of the ‘Feed the Children's Bill’. In response a statement was sent to Parliament on behalf of the whole MCNZ and also to the supporting political parties, i.e. Labour, NZ First, Green and Mana. We await responses.

At the September Council of Conference meeting, Council of Conference was privileged to adopt a new initiative from Lifewise, ‘We Don't Stop Caring’. This is a petition to raise the age of leaving foster care from 17 to 21. Children are vulnerable and have physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs. They need preparation toward the transition step to build confidence of choice to independency for life.

We strongly recommend our parishes and rohe continue to support local initiatives in their area. We invite them to consider 101 ideas/activities put forward by Council of Conference.

Social Principles

Statement of Social Principles

A strong ethos of Methodism both in New Zealand and in overseas conferences is a Statement of Social Principles that is a call to a prayerful and studied dialogue of word and deed.

Council of Conference received a Memorial in 2011 suggesting the review and revision of the Statement of Social Principles. The existing Statement was adopted by Conference in 1952. Since then Conference has twice requested that the statement be reprinted in the Minutes (1967 and 1976). When adopted, it was commended to be “read from pulpits on the Sunday nearest Labour Day and to be the subject of occasional preaching.” In 1967 the Conference report of the Public Questions Committee also commended summary statements of “Social Concerns” at regular intervals pertaining to topical issues, to supplement the core Creed.

As the core ‘Creed’ remains as per the 1952 version which was largely reflecting the 1908 original version that was developed in the United States, therefore a review was well overdue. Both the language, and changing social and justice issues, have continued to evolve and emerge since then. The existing statement predates both the Bi-cultural journey of MCNZ, as well as contextual issues pertaining to Aotearoa-New Zealand such as our relationship to the Treaty of Waitangi and Maoritanga, and our world community today such as ecological concerns.

The drafting of the revised document was led by Tony Franklin-Ross, and after some feedback and suggestion, the revised document was favourably received by Council of Conference in September 2015 and commended to Conference for adoption.

The Statement offers an expanded preamble to highlight the inherited ethos of John Wesley and the early Methodist movement; as well as contextually grounding the Principles in the particular experience of the people called Methodist in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

The Statement is commended for the basis of developing study resources that reflect biblical and theological backgrounds, in conversation with the current challenges; as well as liturgical material to allow further engagement within the church at our flax-roots.

In affirming this new Statement Te Haahi reminds her people that Christian ethics cannot be maintained without Christian faith. The engaged life of the Christian and faith in Christ are inseparable.

Some Social Principles of the Methodist Church and People Who Are Associated With the Methodist Tradition Including Ecumenical and Co-Operative Ventures

- (A) *John Wesley* wrote in 1743 (An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion): "We see, on every side, either men of no religion at all, or men of a lifeless, formal religion. We ... should greatly rejoice if by any means we might convince some that there is a better religion to be attained, a religion worthy of God that give it. And this we conceive to be no other than love; the love of God and of all mankind, the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on the earth as his own soul." For Wesley, Christianity is essentially both a personal and a social religion.
- (B) *The Methodist Movement* has held that the ethical and social ideal is that of essential Christianity. Wesley was aware of the enormous social changes brought about by the rapid industrialisation of England. Methodism’s impact on the life of the eighteenth century was due in some degree to the rediscovery of a social message. Because there was “no other holiness, but social holiness”, Methodism always combined the personal quest for holiness (promoted through worship and sacraments, Bible study, prayer, Class and Band meetings) with social holiness – work for the common good of society. Renewed individuals were

empowered towards the renewal of society; personal holiness was for changing the world, not just the individual.

- (C) *As a nation Aotearoa-New Zealand* is made up of peoples from many parts of the world; all are bound together in covenant relationship with the original people of the land – te tangata whenua. For all who have come to live in New Zealand since 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi guarantees the right to be here, a right which carries with it responsibilities to be a people of the Treaty – te tangata tiriti. Thus, we are linked together by relationship, a partnership founded on mutual assurances and obligations between those signing.

The people called Methodist accept the challenge this gives us to make sure that we are working in a way that honours the Treaty, and respects the rights and obligations it guarantees. This includes an acknowledgement of the status of the tangata whenua, and of tino rangatiratanga. We celebrate such things as the sharing of power and resources, the investigation of land-holdings, the rapid settlement of just claims and the use of Maori language.

The Methodist Church stands firm in its conviction to honour the covenantal status of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which provides the church a guide to carrying out its mission.

- (D) *As disciples, a movement and as a people, the Methodist Church* affirms that amongst others, God trusts us with the stewardship of creation, and calls us to honour that trust by recognising the interrelatedness and vulnerability of the life and resources of creation.

We recognise God's loving presence among all peoples at all times. We rejoice in the love of God which empowers us in our struggle towards justice and unity. We believe that Christ leads us to affirm the dignity and worth of every human being.

Therefore the core values of the church include Peace, Justice and Healing as various means to end oppression, share resources with the poor and disadvantaged and offer restoration and healing where there is pain and hurt. Care for the integrity of creation is a core value and mission of the church, which is an imperative for ecological custodianship locally and globally.

Values of the church encompass love, and tikanga Māori values of aroha, manaakitanga, tapu and kaitiakitanga. Pacific indigenous concepts of 'ofa, alofa, fa'aloalo, matangi kolo, and loloma convey ethics that encompasses responsibility, responsiveness, hospitality, reciprocity and generosity.

- (E) *We affirm some social principles* as disciples of the One who came "that all may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). The Methodist Church of New Zealand – Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa stands for:

- 1) Wise stewardship of God's good creation.
 - i) The wise use, sustainable management and careful conservation of the world's physical resources for the sake of the whole creation and for future generations.
 - ii) Access to clean air and water; and healthy environments for living, working and recreation.
- 2) The sacredness of human personality and the equal value of all men and women in the sight of God.
 - i) Standing firm for human rights, decrying the violation of human dignity based on race, class, age, sex, culture, faith, sexuality or other identities used for the purpose of creating division rather than affirming diversity.
 - ii) Listening and responding to the needs of the most vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged people in our society and communities.
 - iii) That as people of our many cultures and races we forge a multicultural society where these peoples may live in unity and diversity, maintaining different cultural traditions and languages, yet with a common destiny based on commitment to the ideals of equality, tolerance, justice and compassion.

- 3) Employment and labour relationships based on fairness and dignity.
 - i) Adequate opportunities of employment for all those willing and able to work.
 - ii) The right to a fair living wage for services rendered with equal pay for comparable work, dignity in employment and protection from unsafe working conditions.
 - iii) The rights of workers to organise; and the co-operation of employers and employees for mutual benefit.
 - iv) The condemnation of forced labour and of worker exploitation.

- 4) Communal and individual responsibility for the due care for those vulnerable in our society.
 - i) Dignity and reasonable standards of living for those who because of age, infirmity or family needs are not able to work.
 - ii) The care, nurture and safeguarding of children and youth.
 - iii) The removal of the root causes which perpetuate and compound cycles of poverty, unemployment, abuse and violence.
 - iv) Addressing the widening gap between rich and poor, to uphold economic and social values which move us towards a society of equity and compassion and a sharing of resources for the common good.
 - v) Work for systems of criminal rehabilitation based on restorative justice.

- 5) The opportunity for all to live well and with integrity.
 - i) The rights of all people to equal quality educational opportunities, adequate accessible and universal health care, and affordable healthy housing.
 - ii) The right to freedom of conscience, constitutional liberty, integrity of public life, secrecy of the ballot, rights of each citizen to participate in decision-making in the community, and access to the Courts.
 - iii) Christian influence by lawful means in politics and civic affairs for the correction of injustices wherever they occur.

- 6) The just and fair use of power, technology and strength.
 - i) Equitable and fair global trade that protects local economies, cultures and livelihoods.
 - ii) The use of technology that preserves rather than endangers creation, and human life and dignity.
 - iii) We decry the search for security in military and economic forces that threaten human existence; and the use of unilateral force rather than promoting peace-making.
 - iv) Dialogue for peace and justice among the world's populations, religions and nations.

- 7) The conviction that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ contains the message that will promote effectively the regeneration and reconstruction of society.

(F) *Together* we as individual Christians and churches make the commitment to live out these Social Principles and core values, and invite members of our church, in partnership with fellow Christians and communities of faith to do the same. We make this commitment together as members of Christ's body, led by the One Spirit, trusting in the God who makes all things new.

Current version – adopted by Conference 1952, reprinted in the Minutes of Conference 1967; reaffirmed by Conference 1976.

Social Principles of the Methodist Church

The ethical and social ideal of the Methodist Movement is the ideal of essential Christianity. Methodism's impact on the life of the eighteenth century was due in some degree to the rediscovery of a social message. In 1743 John Wesley wrote (An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion): "We see, on every side, either men of no religion at all, or men of a lifeless, formal religion. We ... should greatly rejoice if by any means we might convince some that there is a better religion to be attained, a religion worthy of God that give it. And this we conceive to be no

other than love; the love of God and of all mankind, the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on the earth as his own soul."

Believing this and recognising that society at present falls far short of the Christian ideal, the Methodist Church stands for:

- 1) The sacredness of human personality and the equal value of all men and women in the sight of God.
- 2) Adequate opportunities of employment for all those willing and able to work, and reasonable standards of living for those, who because of age or infirmity, are not able to work.
- 3) The co-operation of employers and employees for the benefit of the community.
- 4) The duty of all to render conscientious service, the condemnation of scamped work, of sweated labour and of consumer exploitation.
- 5) The right to a just return for services rendered and the right to good housing, and a healthy environment.
- 6) The wise use and careful conservation of the world's physical resources.
- 7) The removal of the root causes of poverty, unemployment and war.
- 8) The promoting of social and industrial reforms by lawful means.
- 9) The right to freedom of conscience, constitutional liberty, secrecy of the ballot and access to the Courts.
- 10) Christian influence in politics and civic affairs.
- 11) The conviction that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ contains the message that will promote effectively the regeneration and reconstruction of society.

The Methodist Church reminds her people that Christian ethics cannot be maintained without Christian faith. The good life of the Christian and faith in Christ are inseparable. Where one fails the other cannot last.

From the Law Book of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. Section 1.V.

Review of Ethical Standards

The marital status of presbyters and candidates for ordination has been a point of further discussion within Council of Conference.

We are aware of unwritten expectations of the marital status of presbyters and candidates and believe that this needs to be clarified.

We have asked the Presidential team to convene a sub-committee of the Council to consider the broad issues of ethics relating to presbyter's conduct. The sub-committee will be made up of members of the Te Taha Maori ten; Te Aroha Rountree and Shirley Rivers and the Taiwi ten; Mataiva Robertson and Susan Thompson.

The committee had an initial meeting in October and will be reporting back to Council of Conference in 2016.

Kahui Wairua

Council of Conference received news of the Royal Appointments of Tumuaki Rev Diana Tana, Dr Arapera Ngaha and Rev Rex Nathan to Kahui Wairua (Religious Council) of His Majesty Kiingi Tuheitia.

Representation on Kahui Wairua involves the following Churches, each with one representative: Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Ratana, Ringatu and Pai Marire. The Methodist Church has three representatives.

The appointments to the Council were made mid-year 2014.

In extending its congratulations on the honour and privilege of this appointment The Council asked the church to pray for Diana, Arapera and Rex as they carry out this responsibility.

WMC – Members

The World Methodist Council is a worldwide association that encourages Methodist unity, ecumenical and inter-religious co-operation in the work of God.

Council of Conference endorses the nominations of Rev David Bush, Rev Susan Thompson, Mrs Mataiva Robertson and Dr Arapera Ngaha as delegates to the World Methodist Council 2016.

Council Membership

The recent passing of Lana Lazarus on 30th September 2015, was a very significant loss for Council of Conference and also the wider Connexion. Lana was a very respected member of Te Taha Maori Caucus for over 17years and also served as a Co Convenor to the Council for 8 years.

Lana had an eye for detail, kept immaculate records, was a great note and minute taker, an excellent communicator and facilitator. Lana presented the Council business to Conference over many years, giving strong clear leadership, while her gifts and memoirs remind Council to give due diligence, in all matters.

The Council of Conference expresses its condolences to Lana's family and also too Te Taha Maori.

Ma te Atua i te Rungarawa hei tiaki, hei manaaki i nga wa katoa.
Amine.

PAC DISTRIBUTION GROUP

The Distribution Group of Keita Hotere, Leu Pupulu, Te Aroha Rountree, Saikolone Taufu, Edna Teo, Ernest Willis, Paula Taumoepeau, Rex Nathan (Ex-President) and David Bush (General Secretary), met in July to consider 68 applications for funding.

Funds available for distribution were:

Endowment	(60%)	\$485,654
Main Fund (within the Church)	(25%)	\$202,356
Main Fund (outside the Church)	(15%)	\$121,413

Council of Conference in April, in response to a paper from the Budget Task Group, agreed to suspend endowments for 2015. Boards and Committees who receive funding from the Connexional Budget who had applied for endowments in earlier years could seek a grant to cover what they may have expected from an endowment over a 3 year period if one had been granted. This is discussed in greater detail later in the report. Conference will be asked to consider a change of policy regarding endowments.

In 2014 it was noted that Community Groups tended to be realistic in the amount of funding which they were seeking. In contrast many of the Church applications seem to expect PAC to fully fund. In several cases the budgets for these projects were just 'guesses' overstating the real need. This is not good enough. PAC funds are a 'helping contribution'. It is expected that Parishes and Boards will be making a serious and significant contribution. Local buy-in and commitment is critical to the success of any programme or project.

It was also noted that there were few new applicants. PAC would prefer to assist all Parishes over a period of time, not to have repeat application from those who have yet another good idea.

'Endowment' Funding

The funds in this category are available as grants to the named groups to be spent over a 3 year period. Amounts in years 2 and 3 will have interest added.

Public Issues Network (3x \$30,000)	\$90,000
Trinity College (3x \$52,333)	\$157,000
Travel and Study (\$15,000, \$10,000, \$10,000)	\$35,000

Mission and Ecumenical (3x \$30,000)	\$90,000
Touchstone (3x \$10,000)	\$30,000

Grants were also made for 2015-16 to:

Connexional Budget	\$63,000
Mission Resourcing (Children and Youth)	\$20,000

Committee Membership

Keita Hotere substituted for Lana Lazarus and concludes her term. Saikolone Taufa, Ernest Willis and Edna Te'o complete their three year term. In 2016 Ex-Vice President Jan Tasker will serve, replacing ex-President Rex Nathan.

We Highlight Stories

Response to Housing Needs

Three applications were related to Social Housing. A Mission, a Parish and a Trust. Provision of housing is important, and topical. It is good to see grass roots initiatives. The Distribution Group is aware however that this is an area of potential compliance and Health and Safety difficulties. Having appropriate checks, balances and protocols are critical.

Ministry in Isolated Rural Communities

Funds were given to Nelson Marlborough West Coast Synod to ensure Ministry resourcing can be maintained on the West Coast in the next year. Members of the Distribution Group who live in other parts of rural New Zealand shared how the issues facing the West Coast were very real in many parts of the Country. The Distribution Group wondered if Mission Resourcing might seek funds at some time in the future to seek to address this need.

Counselling Services

In several communities there are counselling services, some have the Methodist Church as a founding partner. Grants enable heavily subsidised assistance to those who cannot afford the normal fees.

Affirmation of the Community Grants

The gift of 1/7 (15%) of the fund outside the Church makes the Methodist Church of New Zealand a medium level funder. As a Church we are pleased to be able to support a wide range of activities outside the Church. Maybe there are partnerships which can be fostered in your community?

The successful applicants were:

MAIN FUND		
Organisation	Description Request	Grant \$
Scripture Union in NZ Inc	WAY2GO training for children's workers	5,000
Girls Brigade NZ Inc	Faithbox resources for Girls Brigade	3,000
ChatBus	Counselling for children	6,000
Pakuranga Inter-Church Charitable Trust	Subsidised counselling for Pakuranga Counselling Centre	2,000
Wesley College Trust Board	Supporting "Let the Children Live"	20,000
Dargaville Methodist Church	Grow outreach for Christ in local community	10,000
Mangere Central Samoan Parish	Sewing and cooking	3,000
Midway In Northland Day Services Trust	Services to disabled adults in Northland	3,000
The Straight Up Trust/Rock Solid Youth & Family Programmes	Youth development programmes for at-risk young people in lower socio-economic areas in Dunedin	5,000
The Archibald Baxter Memorial Trust	Memorial to conscientious objectors from World War 1	1,000
World Methodist Council	WMC "Achieving the Vision Appeal"	14,000
iconz4girlz	Leaders support for training weekend	2,000

The Boys Brigade in NZ	Volunteer mentoring, resources, training plus salary/operating expenses for Canterbury/Upper South Development Manager	10,000
Tasman Bay Christian School	Purchase musical instruments	1,200
Yaldhurst Guide District	Send 12 Guides & 2 Leaders to 'C Bee 16' International Jamboree	1,000
Home and Family Society Christchurch	Residential parenting programme & counselling service	4,000
Alzheimers Wairarapa Inc	Administration/operating expenses volunteers	2,500
The Sure & Stedfast Development Trust trading as Waipara Adventure Centre	Equipment for climbing, abseiling, flying kiwi activities	1,500
Wesley Community Action	Community driven solutions for high need community	15,000
Birkenhead Methodist Samoan Youth Group	Youth group camp Easter 2016	3,500
The Parenting Place	Toolbox Programme	4,000
Methodist Social Services	The Bicultural Journey continues...	6,000
Christian Social Services Wanganui (The City Mission)	Operation of the Food Bank in Wanganui	7,500
Waimate District Resource Trust Inc	Community Centre Co-ordinator	2,500
Methodist Mission Southern	Independent Advocacy Service	6,000
Interdenominational Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust Board	Christian Mindfulness Course	3,000
Vaimoana Pasifika Charitable Trust	Taranaki Pasifika projects	\$8,000
Tabacakacaka ni Ceva Kei Aotearoa	Establishing new circuits: LNIS Fijian Ministry	10,000
Lower North Island Synod	LNIS youth camp 2015	3,500
Mafutaga Tamaitai Sinoti Samoa	Young women to attend Bi-annual leaders meeting	3,500
St Johns Cooperating Parish/One Double Five Community House	Timatanga Rangimarie - Otangarei Youth	2,000
Petersgate Trust	Petersgate Counselling Centre	6,000
Crossroads Methodist Church, Papakura Parish	Yet another pair of slippers	500
Christchurch Methodist Mission	Social Housing support	25,000
Wanganui Methodist Parish	Temporary/emergency housing	5,000
Waitakere Methodist Samoan Parish	Youth outreach mission - Youth Rally	5,000
Environment and Conservation Organisations	Environmental collaboration beyond organisational borders, i.e. Tieke newsletter	3,000
Te Whatu Manawa Maori-Tanga o Rehua Trust Board	The Story of Rehua Marae	10,000
Hutt City Uniting Congregation	Realising mission and spreading the gospel through music ministry	1,800
The Unity Creative	"Amputation of Personality" Theatre Tour	2,400
Mercury Bay Cooperating Parish	Community ministry in Whitianga	3,000
Miramar Uniting Church	2020 Vision: children and youth	5,000
Tai Tokerau Emergency Housing Charitable Trust	Short-term accommodation, support transition into permanent housing, acquisition of skills to sustain home	5,000
Waiuku and Districts Combined Churches	"Connect" youth leaders training, Ngaruawahia	700
Sinoti Samoa	Sinoti Samoa missions	20,000
1st Kamo Girls Brigade	Development of leadership skills in youth organisation	1,200
The Boys Brigade Canterbury/West Coast Battalion	Promotion, training and administration	2,000
Methodist Mission Northern	"Splice" creating capacity for "mission in the city"	15,000
Christchurch Parents Centre Inc	Contribution towards rent	4,000
Northland Urban Rural Mission	Taitokerau community development and social justice work	3,000

Papatoetoe Samoan Parish	Computer, printer, sewing machines	1,000
Tauwi Strategy Committee	"A Way Forward for Tauwi" project to assist Tauwi progress an answer to the TTM question "would Tauwi accept a Gay or Lesbian Person as President or Vice President"	5,000
Te Aroha Springs Community Trust	Day Camp and community activities	6,000
Saione Tongan Parish, Papatoetoe	Saione youth leadership training camp programme	2,500
Student Christian Movement Aotearoa	Ecumenical lecture series, National Conference, 2015 Programme	7,000
Green Church Aotearoa NZ	Eco-Parish Exemplars	
Coalition of Synods and Green Church Aotearoa NZ/Public Issues	Climate Justice Workshop	3,470
Nelson Marlborough West Coast Synod	Minister at Large on the West Coast	12,500
	TOTAL ALLOCATED	\$323,770

ARCHIVES FUND		
Organisation	Description Request	Grant \$
Methodist Church of NZ - BOA	MCNZ Archives	13,095
	TOTAL ALLOCATED	\$13,095

EDUCATION FUND		
Organisation	Description Request	Grant \$
Trinity Methodist Theological College	Tutor fees for scholars	8,105
	TOTAL ALLOCATED	\$8,105

ENDOWMENT FUND		
Organisation	Description Request	Grant \$
Connexional Budget Task Group	Fund Connexional Budget Allocations for 2015-2016	63,000
Mission Resourcing	Children and Youth Work Coordinator	20,000
Public Issues Network	Public Issues Network funding	90,000
Trinity Methodist Theological College	Programme development and appropriate staffing model (\$170,000 over 3 years)	157,000
Methodist Travel & Study Committee	Professional Development and upskilling of Methodist ministries (\$15,000 in 2015/16 and \$10,000 p/a for 2017 and 2018)	35,000
Mission and Ecumenical	Mission and Ecumenical Ministry of MCNZ (\$30,000 per year for three years)	90,000
Methodist Publishing Board	Touchstone funding (\$10,000 per annum for the next 3 years)	30,000
	TOTAL ALLOCATED	\$485,000

Endowments

Over the last 9 years 60% of the fund has been entrusted to Board and Committees as endowments. This was a means to ensure reliable funding for groups who seek funds from the Connexional Budget, and to reduce pressure on the Connexional Budget.

Since 2008/9 as interest rates have decreased, the earning capacity of the endowments has decreased. In 2014 the equivalent of 7 endowments were sought by groups funded from the Connexional Budget: With one endowment available every year it, would be another 6 years before each group had its funding needs met. Some would not have survived 6 years.

The Budget Task Group in February argued that 'The Endowment' was the \$23 million making up the PAC fund. By setting up many smaller 'endowments' the Church was artificially restricting its present day capacity to engage with new projects. In a time when the investment income on \$500,000 is less than half a stipend, even an endowment does not ensure a ministry or project can be funded.

A discussion paper from Budget Task Group was taken to Council of Conference, who very carefully debated the issue before agreeing that endowments would be suspended for 2015 to allow grants to be made to eligible groups who had sought endowments in 2014 to cover 3 years budgeted shortfall. Council of Conference would be expecting review in 3 years, which would establish if any further funding would be approved. It was also noted that Mission Resourcing – Children and Youth would need additional funding in either 2016 or 2017.

The Budget Task Group and the Council of Conference believe it would be appropriate to maintain a significant proportion of the PAC funds for 'major projects'. Up to 60%. In the next 2 years this could mean some \$950,000 could be available to initiate or fund key work in the Church. This could be both strategic responding to long felt need, and 'new initiatives'.

Part of the process this year was that groups seeking funds from the 'endowment' portion of the funds had their applications critiqued by the Budget Task Group. This was to ensure that asking's were appropriate, and if any adjustments needed to be made to requests that such changes reflected the strategy of the Church. The comments of the Budget Task Group were made available to the Distribution Group who made the final decision.

It has also been suggested by some who have previously received endowments that Conference might want to consider if Boards and Committees who have received endowments in the past might now be able to convert them to 'cash' on some agreed basis e.g. convert no more than 7.5% to 'cash' in any one financial year.

This could provide on-going income and the ability to meet budget requirements without requiring additional funding from PAC for some years, meaning that more funding would be available over the next 10 years for strategic and innovative projects.

More work needs to be done on the longer term implications of being able to spend part of previously endowed funds.

Feedback on this tentative suggestion will be sought with a view to making a decision at Conference 2016.

CONNEXIONAL BUDGET

SECTION A

2014-2015 Connexional Budget

For the Year to 30th June 2015, contributions from parishes toward the wider work of the Church through the Connexional Budget totalled \$649,944– an increase of \$13,646 from the previous year. Additional income of \$60,904 came from the Connexional Banking arrangement with the BNZ. This continues to be a very significant contribution to the budget.

The Task Group 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 report of the Special Account in the Board of Administration report note that since 1998, \$965,088 has been contributed to the Connexional Budget through the Connexional Banking arrangement.

During the year the Budget Task Group granted \$804,650 to 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 2014-2015

	Amount Requested	Net Amount Allocated
Recipients of guaranteed funding	45,441	45,445
Recipients of non-guaranteed funding	871,300	759,205
	916,741	804,650
Fund administration		
Totals	\$916,741	\$804,650

Funded from:

	Net Amount Allocated	Actually Received
Connexional Budget from Parishes & Entities	494,009	475,249
Uniting Congregations in Aotearoa	145,000	150,701
Grants - special account	58,455	60,904
Grant - Te Taha Maori	25,000	25,000
Other Income	49,300	76,294
Totals	\$771,764	\$788,148

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

	Allocations \$	Contribution \$	Percentage %
2014-15	\$679,028	\$625,950	92.2%
2013-14	\$641,658	\$611,288	95.3%
2012-13	\$665,035	\$622,890	93.7%
2011-12	\$594,197	\$603,372	101.5%
2010-11	\$585,725	\$617,602	105.4%
2009-10	\$622,338	\$609,341	97.9%

(ii) Results from Methodist Parishes

(a)

	Fully Paid	Not Fully Paid
2014-15	73	4
2013-14	77	4
2012-13	79	3
2011-12	79	8
2010-11	76	1
2009-10	72	5

(b) Percentage of Budget Allocation reached from Parishes

Year	Allocations	Methodist Contribution	
2014-15	559,028	500,249	89.49%
2013-14	516,300	496,026	96.07%
2012-13	507,035	471,612	93.01%
2011-12	422,197	447,590	106.01%
2010-11	405,725	456,169	112.43%
2009-10	462,338	446,958	96.67%

Year	Allocations	Union Contribution	
2014-15	145,000	150,701	103.93%
2013-14	155,000	140,262	90%
2012-13	158,000	151,278	95.75%
2011-12	145,000	155,782	107.44%
2010-11	155,000	161,433	104.15%
2009-10	160,000	162,383	101.49%

(iii) Payments to Divisions and Committees

	Allocation	Payment
Guaranteed		
World Council of Churches	3,800	4,317
World Methodist Council (incl Member Expenses)	2,480	5,385
Christian Conference of Asia	15,165	4,108
Bio Ethics Committee	3,000	3,000
Travel & Study	20,000	0
	44,445	16,810
Non-Guaranteed		
<u>Partnership & Mission Expenses</u>		
Connexional Expenses	299,220	299,220
Board of Administration	21,972	21,972
Ministry Education	150,000	150,000
Methodist Mission and Ecumenical	20,000	20,000
Touchstone	45,996	45,996
Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand	21,134	21,134
Wasewase	9,996	9,996
Budget Administration	2,021	2,021
Christian World Service Overseas Aid- 2% of parish contributions	12,519	12,519
<u>Tauiti Mission & Expenses</u>		
Mission Resourcing	205,000	205,000
Evangelical Network	2,004	2,004
	789,862	789,862
Grand Total	\$834,307	\$806,672

(iv) Payments to Divisions and Committees:

	Guaranteed	Non Guaranteed	% Paid to Non Guaranteed
2014-15	\$16,810	\$789,862	100.00%
2013-14	\$33,123	\$766,228	100.00%
2012-13	\$30,995	\$835,759	100.00%
2011-12	\$41,185	\$830,580	100.00%
2010-11	\$29,243	\$847,595	100.00%
2009-10	\$40,854	\$877,086	100.00%

SECTION B**2014-15 Year**

This year budget preparation material was sent to Synods in October to try to facilitate discussion with parishes. The Task Group is grateful for the efforts of Synods to engage with parishes, especially at such a busy time of the year.

The Budget, which was adopted by the Council of Conference for the year for the year to 30 June 2016 was:

Contributions from Parishes

Northland	4,475
Auckland	123,578
Manukau	42,082
Waikato – Bay of Plenty	59,370
Lower North Island Synod	72,000
Nelson	12,420
Central South Island	52,443
Otago – Southland	11,172
Vahefonua Tonga	100,000

Wasewase ko Viti Kei Rotuma e Niu Siladi	3,371	
Te Taha Maori	25,000	
Sinoti Samoa & Parishes	31,212	
Uniting Congregations in Aotearoa New Zealand	150,000	687,123
Special Account Grant		60,000
Connexional Legacies and Other		134,000
PAC distribution group		0
Total Income		\$881,123

Allocations to Divisions & Committees

	Amount requested	Amount allocated
	\$	\$
<u>Guaranteed</u>		
World Council of Churches	5,400	5,400
World Methodist Council	3,200	3,200
Christian Conference of Asia	810	810
	<u>\$9,410</u>	<u>\$9,410</u>
	<u>Amount requested</u>	<u>Amount allocated</u>
<u>Non-Guaranteed</u>		
<u>Partnership & Mission Expenses</u>		
Connexional Expenses	368,521	316,186
Board of Administration	51,011	0
Archives	46,346	46,346
Ministry Education	165,000	150,000
Methodist Mission and Ecumenical	45,000	20,000
Touchstone	54,000	46,000
Wasewase ko Viti Kei Rotuma e Niu Siladi	10,000	10,000
Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand	21,556	21,556
Budget Administration	0	0
Christian World Service Overseas Aid- 2% of parish contributions	10,082	10,082
<u>Tauivi Mission & Expenses</u>		
Mission Resourcing	205,000	205,000
Evangelical Network	2,004	2,004
Hospital Chaplaincy	20,000	20,000
Travel & Study	20,000	20,000
Bio Ethics	3,000	3,000
	<u>1,021,520</u>	<u>870,174</u>
Grand Total	\$916,740	\$827,028

The Task Group was saddened to learn of the sudden death of Tony Dale who had been an influential member of the committee. Tony pushed the Task Group to be creative in responding to the needs of the Church. The church expresses its condolences to Carol and family. The Tribute to Tony as a significant Lay Person is recorded in Section L of the Agenda.

The Task Group circulated The Think Tank report early in 2015. It is not meant to be a full and final statement, but something to provoke and prompt. The Think Tank report is discussed in greater depth in another part of the Council of Conference report to Conference.

Connexional Budget Task Group

The Budget Task Group for 2016 will consist of; President, Vice-President (Chair), General Secretary, the Tumuaki of Te Taha Maori, two persons appointed by Taha Maori and David McGeorge, Paula Taumoepeau plus 1 other and with Connexional Staff in attendance.

Think Tank

The Budget Task Group Think Tank report was widely circulated in April. The report made it clear that what is being offered is 'seeds'. One group thought the report didn't go far enough, lacked daring. Seeds can do that – prompt thinking which goes further. One synod has set up their own 'think tank'. Tauivi have received and considered a challenge to plant new churches.

The report did contain two challenges:

1. That we set a goal of having 75% of congregations with an operational small group within two years.
2. To seek professional advice to help share who we are.

Conference is invited to receive the report and to ensure the conversation continues.

The Think Tank report is printed below:

Strategic Conversations – an invitation to the Church

The Budget Task Group was asked by Council of Conference in 2012 to continue the strategic conversations, which had occurred through the work of John Hinchcliffe and others before him. Part of the rationale for asking the Budget Task Group to convene a Think Tank was that the Budget Task Group has developed a strategic overview as part of its ongoing work. It is an existing committee, which could be augmented by additional members to bring perspectives, which might be missing, and it has members who have some skill in strategic thinking.

A Think Tank is not tasked with providing completed solutions, rather its role is to throw up possibilities, to push boundaries, to ask questions, to be the grit in the oyster. There have been times in the past where a strategy group has gone beyond this submitting comprehensive plans for change, plans which have not been adopted as there was too little space for others to be part of the shaping, crafting, buy-in process.

It is the intention of the Think Tank that there will be room for others to shape and mould. If some ideas are tentative, it is not because the Think Tank thinks them unimportant, on the contrary critical issues deserve wide ranging input and the commitment of many.

There are some matters where the Think Tank is proposing definite action. Where some goals are suggested. This doesn't mean that these matters cannot be improved or refined. Rather the Think Tank participants believe that for some matters we can best shape through action and reflection and that we dare not wait till all our conversations are completed before we begin to act.

But unless some suggestions, irritate, frustrate, challenge and even annoy, then the Think Tank has not fulfilled its task. The pearl of great price arises from intense interaction with what at first sight is an unwanted and unwarranted intrusion.

Where to next

The Think Tank believes in hopeful futures. We are in a time of profound change for the Church. Much of what we take for granted is under pressure. We are faced with the temptation to hold and to preserve what we have, rather than risk exploring new options and possibilities. Many books and papers are being produced to discuss 'future church'. The Think Tank wants to state clearly that it believes the Church has a future and the Methodist Church has unique expressions of the Gospel, which add richness to the whole.

The parable of the vine reminds however that pruning is a vital and necessary part of creating a productive and fruitful plant.

Re-discovering our DNA

Organisations/Movements today need to be values focused and values driven.

In the Roman Catholic – Methodist dialogue, our Catholic friends have said they are excited by what they see in Methodism, how much more should we be excited.

The Think Tank has discussed many concepts and ideas to try and unpack 'who we are'.

Trevor Hoggard shared a paper (attached) inviting the formation of a 'Wesleyan Order' a place where values and faith could be honed. A place where people of any faith and none could meet to

be challenged by Wesleyan insights and called to action.

At one level this takes on the form of the Wesleyan Class meeting. Some small congregations whose future as a 'conventional' congregation is uncertain may more helpfully focus on being a class meeting. Larger churches are enriched when members have a place where they can meet with one another and engage with gospel and current issues.

This Think Tank wants to challenge the Methodist Church of New Zealand to set a strategic intent, for every parish/congregation to have a 'class meeting' and 75% to have an operational study group/class meeting within 2 years.

It is proposed that membership cards be re-issued annually and we come to see ourselves as being gathered around a core set of values and principles.

It is proposed that we explore – what is God's purpose for us?

What do we bring to the table the world needs?

To ponder how transformed people – can transform the world.

Sharing who we are

We recognised that many in the Palangi part of the Church see/believe that we are in decline. All too easily it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, it creates a sense of hopelessness.

To discern and delight in our DNA – our values and principles is critical.

The Think Tank also began to grapple with how we share who we are. Our conclusion, mostly we do not.

What would we say about ourselves and the church in an advertising campaign, "May contain nuts?" More seriously the Think Tank found itself coming back to Wesley's challenge "Do all the good you can...".

A good defined by grappling with what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Not passive, but active, creative and embracing all who are our neighbour.

The Think Tank suggests that as a matter of urgency funds are set aside and consultation takes place with professionals to how we might tell the world who we are. Our contention is that a compelling message, which reflects our DNA will call the best out of Methodist people and invite others to walk alongside us.

By seeking to discern what "Do all the good you can" means, and enacting it we will be invited to be focused, creative and willing to embrace others who share similar inspirations to create positive communities.

A challenge to become what we share Instead of sharing what time has caused us to become.

Celebrating diversity

Biological systems are resilient and strong when they have significant diversity? Mono-cultures in contrast can be wiped out by a single pathogen.

The Think Tank wonders if the Methodist Church of New Zealand values and takes advantage of its significant diversity. Our Church provides space for and strongly encourage Pacifica cultures and our structure seeks to honour and live by Bi-cultural partnership, which gives place to the Treaty of Waitangi. The church also encompasses a significant range of worship styles and Methodist people are enriched by a range of theological understandings.

The Think Tank proposes that congregations and Parishes seek to work to their strengths and that we value our diversity. Valuing diversity means that we seek to understand one another and resist the temptation to seek the safety of silos of the like-minded. The fellowship of the combined meeting of the Evangelical Network and the Liberal Society each year at Conference is an

example – we are part of the body of Christ – and we are stronger for looking for links, and working to reach common goals.

Celebrating Diversity challenges the Church to develop and rejoice in multiple options of exercising discipleship enjoying worship and promoting mission.

Becoming connected

Wesley always saw Methodist people belonging together. The Methodist Connexion was his terminology for a people who saw themselves as being rich because they belonged together. No individual, no congregation, no parish or Board stands in isolation or above another. Methodist people belong together.

We live in an age where people are connected in many new and exciting ways. The use of internet based resources to encourage, teach, resource is becoming main stream.

Small congregations, Wesley Classes could be resourced on-line. Any Preacher – Ordained or Lay could be the “preacher of the week” beamed in to enrich and challenge. Christians gathered locally. Scriptures would be read, with times of prayer and reflection, hymns and songs if enough voices, notices, celebrations, cups of tea and coffee – with opportunity to discuss the sermon, which had been preached from Invercargill, or Ashburton or Blenheim or

As fibre internet rolls out – this and much much more will be possible.

Not structure – but possibility

In the past the Church has thought it might renew itself by creating new structures. The Bi-cultural Church and Pacifica Synods are examples of how renewed structure has served us well.

Re-structuring has not brought renewal to the Church as a whole however. There is something in human nature, which holds tightly to the familiar and resists change. The Think Tank is not suggesting further rounds of restructuring, rather we invite consideration of possibilities and opportunities. Of course if any of these are taken up, it is highly likely that the Church will take on a different shape, but this will be through organic growth – growing towards the light.

There is no question however that to grow towards new possibilities, some existing areas of our life may need to be reduced or retired.

In considering the matters in this report the Think Tank would ask:

1. That the matters in this report be treated like seeds, which when nourished and considered by your thoughts and imaginations might grow into diverse outcomes.
2. That you (your congregation/parish) be active in considering your future. Don't passively wait till you have no options – but actively engage.
3. That you move beyond theory/conversation/resolution to action.
4. That you tell your stories. We are not asking for a report so we can discuss it further and better word a resolution, but stories which can inspire, encourage and enrich.
5. That you be willing to challenge and critique, so that as a Methodist movement, in partnership with others, we can find a prophetic edge.

Comments and Feedback received from Tauwi Strategy

- Is 'Class meeting' the right name. What shape and form might these take in Aotearoa in 21stC
- Would need a separate membership Card for Co-operative Ventures.
- Each Synod could have a 'Think Tank' to develop and add to the ideas.
- We have buildings, we need Church planters and to train people in Church planting.
- Not a minimum size for a congregation – but small has exciting possibilities.

SUGGESTED DECISIONS

1. That the report be received.
2. Conference thanks Council of Conference members Aso Samoa Saleupolu, Peni Tikoinaka and Susan Thompson who complete their term of service on the Council.
3. Conference acknowledges the service of Lana Lazarus, 17 years as a member and 8 years as Co-Convenor of Council of Conference and extends its condolences to her whanau.
4. That for a trial period between 2016 and 2020 the Methodist Church of New Zealand meets for Conference every second year. [Conference would meet in 2016, 2018, 2020].
5. Conference asks Law Revision to prepare guidance for the church to operate a two year Conference based on the implementation plan for adoption at Conference 2016. This to be circulated to Synods, Hui Poari, Parishes and Rohe for comment and feedback.
6. That Conference adopts the revised Statement of Social Principles commending it as the basis for study, reflection and practice.

PAC Distribution Group

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the process of establishing new endowments from PAC funds be discontinued, subject to a review in 2018.
3. That up to 60% of the PAC fund for distribution is set aside for significant strategic funding, on the understanding that any funds not distributed in this manner will be added to the 25% of funds available for general distribution to the Church.
4. That Synods, Hui Poari, Parishes and Rohe be consulted on possible conversion of PAC endowments to 'cash', as outlined in the report.
5. The PAC Distribution Group for 2016 is: Leu Pupulu, Paula Taumoepeau, Te Aroha Rountree, Keita Hotere, Alison Ranui, Dorothy Willis, Dick Clayton, Ex-Vice President Jan Tasker, General Secretary David Bush.

Connexional Budget

1. The report is received.
2. The membership of the Budget Task Group for 2016 is: Arapera (Bella) Ngaha (Vice President) (Chair), Tovia Aumua (President), Diana Tana (Tumuaki), Rex Nathan, David McGeorge, Paula Taumoepeau, with Connexional staff in attendance.

APPENDIX

Implementing a Two Yearly Conference

Council of Conference consulted widely with Synods Hui Poari and Parishes in 2013 on moving to a two yearly Conference. Since then the Council has continued to discuss the responses and the issues raised. The Council brings a proposal that for a trial period of 6 years (3 Conferences) the Methodist Church of New Zealand holds its Conference two yearly, recognising that only in using this new way of working will the Church experience the value of the opportunities and discover any unintended consequences.

This paper sets out how a two year Conference could be implemented if Conference 2015 agrees that a two yearly Conference will apply from 2016.

President and Vice President

At Conference 2016 the new President and Vice President would be inducted to serve a two year term.

Selection of President and Vice President Elect

Conference 2016 would also receive the names of the President and Vice President Elect who would take office in 2018. The nominees would serve on the Pastoral Committee and Committee of Advice from the time of their selection. Nominees would have two years to plan for their term of office.

Timing – Clash with Presbyterian Assembly / UCANZ Forum

Assembly meets in 'even' years. UCANZ meets in 'odd' years. As with an annual Conference in

whichever year the two yearly conference was held there would be two possible commitments for Union Parishes, whether it be UCANZ or Assembly.

If it proved problematic having Conference and Assembly in the same year and the church agreed to continue with a two yearly Conference at the end of the trial period a three year Presidential term or a 1 year presidential term and Conferences in two consecutive years could be held alongside moving the two yearly Conference to 'odd' years.

Budget Processes

The Connexional Budget and any adjustment in stipend already takes place 'between Conferences'. Council of Conference would continue to approve the budget and the President any adjustment to stipends.

Stationing

Stationing would continue to be on an annual basis. In the year that Conference was not meeting, the Council of Conference and the President would approve the list of stations for the following year.

The Stationing Committee, including Te Taha Maori members, would meet in conjunction with Council of Conference to finalise the Stationing Sheet.

Appointment of Boards and Committees

Currently members of boards and committees are reappointed annually, with the President approving additional members who are added to replace vacancies.

As there tends to be little movement in Board membership in any two year period, it is proposed that board and committee members be appointed for two years, with the President continuing to appoint members to fill vacancies which arise.

Alternatively Council of Conference and the President could approve appointments in the year Conference does not meet.

Honouring those Who Have Died and Those Retiring

This is important to the church and very significant to the families most closely affected. Synods and Hui Poari would be asked to continue to honour those associated with them who have died or who are retiring as a matter of course. This would be in addition to, and not replacing what would take place at Conference when it meets.

The tributes and records of service and families would be received when Conference meets.

Ordinations

Ordinations would take place at Conference. Ordination assessment would take place leading up to the Conference.

The duration of probation currently ranges from zero to three years. A probationer may have completed their probationary studies programme in the year prior to their assessment and ordination.

When a Decision Needs to be Made

A. The President

The President currently is asked to make rulings or decisions between Conferences. The President may seek advice from and consult with the Legal Advisor, Committee of Advice or Council of Conference.

The President already makes 'routine' decisions between Conferences such as approving supply appointments, continuous stationing and members of committees. These processes would continue.

B. Council of Conference

Council of Conference continues to approve the Connexional Budget and when a 4+4 appointment process is under way, monitors that the proper process is being followed.

The Laws and Regulations provide that Council of Conference can make decisions on behalf of the church. Significant matters arising between Conference are currently referred to the Council of Conference.

In the year when Conference does not meet it is anticipated that Council of Conference may make an additional meeting to receive the Stationing Sheet, Questions 1 – 24 and to approve any changes of membership to Boards and Committees.

C. Boards and Committees

Boards and committees are already entrusted to make key decisions on behalf of the church as they enact policy decisions of the Conference.

The work of Conference

Conference resolutions usually say ‘ .. and report to Conference (next year) ..’ This leaves very limited time to prepare a report, consult and then prepare an updated report. A two year process of work, consultation and reflection will provide time and space for reports to be prepared and work to be done.

It is also likely to reduce pressure on Synods, allowing more time for local focus.

Legal Matters

There is no impediment in Church Law to move to a two yearly Conference. The Model Deed refers to ‘The Methodist Conference from time to time held.’

The Conference is unable to change the doctrines in the Standard sermons, revoke the General Rules of the Societies, to do away with the itinerancy of the Ministry, or do away with the right of trial and appeal of ministers. None of these mentions Conference.

Financial Reports would still be required annually and would be received and considered by the Financial Review/Audit Committee.

The decision to go to a two year Conference would change the requirement from ‘Report annually to Conference’ to ‘report to each meeting of Conference’.

Review Process

In 2020 Council of Conference will be responsible for reviewing the two yearly Conference and reporting to Conference 2020. Synods, Hui Poari, Parishes, Rohe, and Boards and Committees will be invited to participate in the review.