

1. General

1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Cooperative Venture movement in New Zealand began in the 1940's when there was a strong desire for churches to unite. While the move to unite as one national church did not come about, many local churches have come together to share a faith journey and enjoy their various traditions and cultures. Cooperative Ventures have taken many forms of partnership from complete union and cooperation to the sharing of buildings, ministry and/or a mission project.

1.1.1 VISION STATEMENT (2008)

The Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand is a continuing journey of God's people seeking to reflect the essential unity of Christ's Church. This community of Partner Churches and Cooperative Ventures is discovering and living out what it means to be a missional church of Jesus Christ in today's world.

1.1.2 Cooperative Ventures are one ecumenical expression of the Partner Churches and reflect a model of partnership.

1.1.3 Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand continues to encourage the five Partner Churches to seek, wherever possible, to work together to do those things that do not need to be done apart.

1.2 PARTNER CHURCHES

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NATIONAL COURTS

Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia encompasses the area described by its title.

In Maori this is, Te Hahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tireni, Ki Nga Moutere Nui a Kiwa.

The 1992 Constitution of this Church provides for three partners to order their affairs within their own cultural context: Tikanga Maori; Tikanga Pakeha; Tikanga Pasefika.

Within Aotearoa New Zealand, Tikanga Pakeha comprises seven Dioceses, Tikanga Maori comprises five Hui Amorangi, the boundaries of which differ from those of the dioceses. Tikanga Pasefika encompasses Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands and, nominally, all the other nations of Polynesia, and is known as the Diocese of Polynesia.

Christian Churches New Zealand (formerly Associated Churches of Christ)

The Mission of our Movement is intentional and focuses on developing and planting churches which are both healthy and missional in value and practice.

We see Christian Churches New Zealand:

- Strongly emphasising the need for Church Planting
- Becoming a driving force in this country as together we become more proactive in local mission and evangelism throughout New Zealand.
- Touching every sphere of community through the local church.
- Growing churches as well as new churches.
- Recruiting a new generation of ministers and leaders who will minister to their generation in power.
- Providing an active voice in the Nation, influencing all arenas in society including government.
- Growing as a movement of people loving God and loving people.

Congregational Union of New Zealand

What we now know as Congregationalism has its roots in the Reformation in England. Many devout Christians were concerned that the reforms then taking place in the English church were far from thorough. In the 1560's several groups of individuals were meeting together. They saw that the Church did not consist of those living within the Parish bounds of a local building or any other geographic boundaries. The Church consisted of those true believers that met together for worship, prayer, praise, and instruction. Believing in the priesthood of all believers, and recognising that Christ alone was the Head of the Church, they rightly concluded that such groups were independent of any external authority.

Methodist Church of New Zealand – Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

Mission Statement:

Our Church's mission in Aotearoa/New Zealand is to reflect and proclaim the transforming love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and declared in the Scriptures. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve God in the world.

The Treaty of Waitangi is the covenant establishing our nation on the basis of a power-sharing partnership and will guide how we undertake mission.

In seeking to carry out our mission we will work according to these principles: Christian Community, Evangelism, Flexibility, Church Unity, Inclusiveness, Every Member a Minister, Cross-cultural Awareness, Justice, Peace, Healing, and Ecology.

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand believes it is called by God to work with others in making Jesus Christ known through –

- Teaching and nurturing people in Christian faith
- Loving service responding to human need
- Proclaiming the gospel
- Seeking to transform society
- Caring for God's creation

REGIONAL COURTS

Anglican Diocese

There are seven dioceses in Tikanga Pakeha – Auckland, Waikato and Taranaki, Waiapu, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, and Dunedin. Each diocese functions semi-autonomously and they have their own bishop, diocesan manager and procedures.

Christian Churches New Zealand

Regional issues are dealt with by the National Cooperative Ventures liaison person or the National Director.

Congregational Union

Regional issues are dealt with through Assembly/Standing Committee of the Congregational Union of New Zealand.

Methodist Synod

There are eight regional synods and four cultural groups in the Methodist Church – Northland, Auckland, Manukau, Waikato/Waiariki, Lower North Island, Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast, Central South Island, Otago-Southland, Te Taha Maori, Sinoti Samoa, Vahefonua Tonga and Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma (Fijian and Rotuman).

Presbytery

There are a number of Presbyteries and Te Aka Puaho in the Presbyterian Church – Northern, Kaimai, Central, Alpine and Southern.

There is also a Pacific Island Synod and an Asian Advisory Committee.

1.3 WORDS WE USE

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1.3.1 Acronyms

UCANZ: Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand

ACANZP: Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

CUNZ: Congregational Union of New Zealand

CCNZ: Christian Churches New Zealand (formerly Associated Churches of Christ)

MCNZ: Methodist Church of New Zealand – Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

PCANZ: Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

1.3.2 Cooperative Venture

This is an inclusive term that covers the many expressions of partnership existing in our churches. When a Cooperative Venture is acknowledged through UCANZ it falls under these Procedures for Cooperative Ventures.

1.3.2.1 Union/Uniting Parish: One form of a local church where two or more parishes (not Anglican) have united as a single entity.

1.3.2.2 Cooperating Parish: Another form of a local church where two or more parishes (including Anglican) have united as a single entity.

1.3.2.3 Joint Use: An agreement entered into to jointly fund, use and/or maintain a building for worship, community or congregational activities.

1.3.2.4 Shared Ministry: An agreement to share in the provision of paid ministry amongst two or more local churches.

1.3.2.5 Local Ecumenical Project (LEP): A shared project where churches have a covenant or agreement to work together. This may include parties other than the five Partner Churches of UCANZ.

1.3.3 Documents

1.3.3.1 Covenant or Agreement

The document that outlines the commitment of the local churches to work together in a particular manner.

1.3.3.2 Schedules of Record

The details of property and assets that local church partners bring into the formation of the Cooperative Venture. The Schedules of Record are used to establish the Capital Ratio. They should be regularly reviewed and updated.

1.3.4 Partner Church

The term Partner Church refers to each of the five churches that have formed a partnership in UCANZ; Anglican, Congregational Union, Christian Churches, Methodist and Presbyterian.

1.3.5 Local Church

The local church is a group of people committed to live and work in Christ through one or more congregations, fellowships or other groups. Terms such as circuit, parish, pastoral charge, congregation, or church are synonyms. The local church is managed by a church council, appointed by the members.

1.3.5.1 Local Church Council

A management body elected by members of the local church. Terms such as Parish Council, Leaders Meeting, Vestry, Session are synonyms. A local church may formulate a constitution to outline how the local church council functions, but that must be consistent with the Procedures for Cooperative Ventures and must be approved by the Local Church Partners.

1.3.6 Local Church Partners

This refers to the specific partners in a local church.

1.3.6.1 Coordinating Partner

Takes a leading role in coordinating the work of both the local church and the partnership. This normally rotating role is more clearly defined in 2.1 [\[below\]](#).

1.3.6.2 Participating Partner

Shares responsibility for the local church and participates in all aspects of the local church's life. See 2.2 [\[below\]](#)

1.3.6.3 Regional Forum

Regional Forums replace the former Joint Regional Committees or their equivalents. They are a gathering of Cooperative Ventures and regional partners in a particular area. The Partner Churches may delegate certain tasks to a Regional Forum, such as local church reviews and minister reviews. Where they formally exist Regional Forums are consultants to the Partner Churches.

1.3.7 Reciprocal Membership

The five Partner Churches have agreed to receive members in good standing and afford them all the privileges and responsibilities of membership when involved with a local church in a Cooperative Venture.

1.3.8 Ministry

Ministry is a task for all Christians, but the church also speaks of ministry as a profession or vocation. A minister is usually trained, ordained and called or appointed to a position of ministry, but there is opportunity for those who are not ordained to work in ministry. Ordained ministers are also called clergy, pastors, presbyters, vicars, deacons, priests and are granted the honorific title of "the Reverend."

1.3.8.1 Ordination

A minister is ordained by their own denomination through prayer and the laying on of hands. There is a mutual recognition by the churches for the ordinations of others, although there is not yet a total reconciliation of ministry.

1.3.8.2 Induction

A minister is inducted into a specific ministry position by a partner church court. The induction service should fully involve the participating partner(s).

1.3.8.3 Ordination, Membership, Appointment

A minister will have an original church of ordination, a current church of membership, and a church of appointment. For most ministers this will be the same church, but for some there may be differences and these need to be acknowledged. Church of membership changes when a minister is formally received into the membership of another church.

1.3.8.4 Local Shared Ministry

A form of ministry which allows a local team to operate within the regulations of the Partner Churches – although there are differing expressions and ways of functioning. The Coordinating Partner of the local church ensures there is adequate support for such a ministry.

1.3.9 Partner Support Fund (PSF)

A combined fund for local church contributions to the national work of Christian Churches, Congregational Union, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, administered by the UCANZ office (see [Guideline 9.3.2](#)).

1.4 FORMING A COOPERATIVE VENTURE

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There are a number of reasons why a Cooperative Venture may come into being, but for all the concept of partnership must be central.

1.4.1 Exploring the Idea

When two or more congregations begin to explore the possibilities of formal cooperation they should be open-minded, prayerful and patient. As early as possible, representatives from the regional courts of any proposed partners (and any Regional Forum) should be brought together to evaluate the possibilities with the local church councils.

A new congregation may be established within the CV parish by any of the Partner Churches after prior consultation with the other partner(s) in the CV.

1.4.2 Nature of Cooperation

Details about how the local churches and congregations will cooperate should be carefully worked through. Consideration needs to be given to worship, property, finances, regional and national court responsibilities, ministry and reviews. A Cooperative Venture may share ministry, buildings, mission work or become a uniting church/cooperating parish.

Upon the establishment of any new congregation within the CV parish, it shall be determined between the new congregation and the CV parish and Partner Churches (and any Regional Forum) whether the new congregation is joining the CV parish or whether it wishes to stand aside from the CV parish and UCANZ Procedures and remain under the jurisdiction of one Partner Church only.

Any congregation joining the CV parish shall be under the same UCANZ Procedures as other participating congregations. The new congregation shall relate primarily to the regional courts of the Coordinating Partner and its relevant synod/presbytery/tikanga, but shall also remain in contact with the relevant structures of any other Participating Partner.

Where a new congregation opts to stand aside from the existing CV parish and remain under the jurisdiction of one Partner Church only, the congregation will negotiate with the CV parish a suitable rental agreement for use, maintenance and renewal of the property, but shall retain the integrity of its denominational structure to which it is accountable.

Members shall belong either to the CV parish or the stand-alone denominational parish, but not both.

Congregations seeking admittance into an existing CV parish shall confirm their acceptance of Procedures 9.1.2 Statement of Accord (1984) and 9.1.3 The Faith We Affirm Together (1994).

1.4.3 Approvals

When the proposal is finally prepared the executives of the regional courts (who may also refer the matter to the national offices) must give their approval in principle to the document. The proposal should also be referred to the UCANZ office for their consideration and any recommendations. The proposal will then be presented to the local churches or congregations that will form the Cooperative Venture and to the regional courts for final approval.

1.4.4 Schedules of Record

Where the new Cooperative Venture will bring together properties, Schedules of Record that outline the property and financial agreements entered into must be completed.

1.4.4.1 (a) At the time the Cooperative Venture is established the Schedules of Record are used to establish a Capital Ratio which must be accepted by the partners.

1.4.4.1 (b) When a new congregation is admitted to the CV parish the Schedules of Record shall be amended in those cases where the new congregation is bringing new premises or new capital to the CV parish.

1.4.4.2 The Capital Ratio is the agreed figure on which capital will be shared upon dissolution of the agreement.

1.4.5 Inauguration

A service of worship to celebrate the inauguration of the new Cooperative Venture should be planned – led by the initial Coordinating Partner but reflecting the partnership that is being entered into. A simple covenant document should be signed by representatives of all the local church partners and the local church council.

1.5 Legalities

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1.5.1 APPROVAL

The Procedures for Cooperative Ventures have been approved by the Forum of Cooperative Ventures (2011) and the Partner Churches to guide the partnerships in Cooperative Ventures. Irrespective of the date of inauguration, the current Procedures for Cooperative Ventures applies to all Cooperative Ventures acknowledged through UCANZ and replace the Guide to Procedures (2001). The accompanying Documents, Guidelines and Forms are provided to resource the local churches and partners in working out their shared journey. Exceptions for special cases are possible where the local church partners have agreed in writing that specific circumstances exist and are approved by the UCANZ Standing Committee.

1.5.2 AMENDMENTS

Any amendments to the Procedures (sections 2-7) must be approved by the appropriate decision making body of each Partner Church. Amendments to other sections of the Procedures are approved by Standing Committee of UCANZ.

1.5.3 **STATUS OF COOPERATIVE VENTURES**

It is important to note that Cooperative Ventures are not a legal entity in themselves and cannot enter into a formal lease or assume corporate status. Local churches are part of the wider churches to which they affiliate and cannot act independently or contrary to the laws of the Partner Churches.

1.5.4 **COVENANTS, CONSTITUTIONS and AGREEMENTS**

When an acknowledged Cooperative Venture is formed there is a covenant agreement that outlines how the partnership will function. The local church, as a Cooperative Venture, falls under these Procedures for Cooperative Ventures and the law books of the local church's Partner Churches. A local church may develop a constitution which outlines local processes, but these cannot conflict with the Procedures for Cooperative Ventures.