

Standing Committee strategy

Standing Committee met by Zoom in October and November. Prior to that, there were online meetings to discuss future strategy in both August and September. Why all this sudden focus on strategy...?

Executive Officer vacancy

I indicated in July my wish to conclude service with UCANZ at year (since extended to end of February 2022) and delivered a formal letter of resignation prior to the October Standing Committee Meeting. The Personnel Committee has advertised for EO with applications to be received by 31 December. See website under 'Latest News'.

Directory and Procedures

Copies of these have recently been mailed to all local churches as well as to Presbytery Secretaries and Synod Superintendents. Only two were returned (as not delivered) to **UCANZ, PO Box 227, Napier 4140**, so we seem to have local church mailing addresses pretty much up to date.

Covid advice

This week has seen a flurry of activity for the separate denominations getting out their advice. PCANZ were first with a letter and links to doctrinal and legal matters – but churches have to decide for themselves. MCNZ responded to Conference calls for clear guidance and so advocate vaccinated-only events, whilst mandating vaccination of ministers and staff. Anglican Dioceses will make vaccinated events normative, with each Diocese to provide its own advice. UCANZ advice to CVs was sent to churches and ministers on Thursday (25 Nov) afternoon:

UCANZ recognises that Cooperative Ventures may feel conflicted in receiving advice from two or three directions that either mandates (MCNZ) actions or else provides resources for church councils to decide their position (PCANZ). These are summaries:

*"The **Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand** does not have an 'official position' about the vaccination programme nor the government's overall strategy." However, there are considerations of doctrine and the legal obligations relating to health and safety.*

*"As the mandated leadership of the **Methodist Church of New Zealand** [President, Vice-president, and General Secretary] we take our responsibility seriously and therefore share the following:*

- Vaccination, mask wearing, and physical distancing are crucial tools in the efforts against Covid-19. The Church endeavours to be an open church that is welcoming, hospitable, and safe for everyone.
- To offer maximum protection for those who meet with us, all who are in active ministry (lay and ordained) and medically able, must be vaccinated.
- Church members and other groups using church premises will need to verify vaccine passes as a condition of building use.
- Alternative arrangements are encouraged for worship and pastoral care for those people without a valid vaccine pass."

*Since Methodist advice is the more stringent, I believe that CVs with a Methodist component are obliged to follow the vaccinated-only rules. For those resting on legal obligations please note that, **for unmonitored gatherings, 1-metre distancing and 10 and 50 person limits apply at Red and Orange settings respectively.***

Education, education, education...

The University of Otago provides a full range of papers in Theology, both on-campus and through a distance learning programme. Enrolments for Semester 1, 2022 are now open. For details of courses, go to: www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study Note the new Summer School paper (10 January - 18 February 2022): Christian Ministry in Te Ao Maori.

Financial reporting

Many of you have coped with the new online reporting – although we did test you a bit by sending out the link way ahead of time in May, so some churches have (and still are) requesting that link to be sent again.

A reminder that, if we do not have your 'allowable' income and expenditure items recorded, you will likely be assessed on your church's gross income. Members of the Standing Committee have kindly helped to remind and encourage some of you to complete returns.

Friendly contacts

Whether this is my last Newsletter or not, I do thank church contacts for the friendliness of remote and in person encounters. Between you and officials from both national and regional levels of Church, we have *usually* been able to work out difficulties with good humour. Welcome to Murray Overton, new EO at CWS. "Fare well" from me.

Adrian Skelton EO for UCANZ (2016-2022)