



---

## Preface

---

Presbytery members should note that there are significant amendments to this Assembly paper from the draft that was distributed to presbyteries earlier in 2008. The amendments are in response to the feedback received from presbyteries.

---

## Report

---

### 1 Introduction

The 2006 General Assembly resolved “*That the Council of Assembly give priority to addressing the effectiveness of presbyteries in their role of supporting congregations in mission and ensuring the strategic use of resources (people, property and finances) within their region.*”

This reinforced the decision of the Council of Assembly to establish a Task Group to review the focus, form and function of presbyteries and to develop possible models for the future.

In its work the Task Group has maintained a focus on the concern of the General Assembly that presbyteries be strengthened in their role of supporting congregations in mission and that resources be better utilised in this task, especially that of people resources. Consideration of the operation of presbyteries has been continuing for some time and the Task Group has built on the work of “Strengthening Presbyteries” presented to the General Assembly 2002, and perspectives from throughout the Church of the “Focus on the Future” consultation during 2005.

In its work since the 2006 Assembly the Task Group has engaged with presbyteries in the review process; seeking information through a short questionnaire at the end of 2006, a major Consultation Paper in mid 2007, and the earlier version of this paper in early 2008. Responses to both papers were substantial and the Task Group appreciated the convictions, insights and possibilities shared by presbytery members, and have incorporated and developed many of the ideas suggested.

The Task Group has accessed the experience of other churches in their review of presbyteries, and in particular that of parts of the Uniting Church in Australia. It has also accessed the services and insights of people experienced in the whole range of functional issues in the corporate world, and their knowledge of structures and processes of large organisations, both healthy and failing.

### 2 Presbyteries in History

Presbyteries have been part of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand from the beginning, and have played a crucial role in the history of the Church here. Presbyteries reflect a characteristic expression of Presbyterian Churches around the world expressing that theological imperative of the Reformed Faith of corporate government, of “rule by elders”. That is, clergy and lay elders sharing together in the presbytery’s episcopal role of providing pastoral care, resourcing and governance to congregations within the bounds. While the particulars of structure may vary, presbyteries should embody that imperative and in practice enable the Church to serve the mission of God well.

The present arrangement of presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church is a result of the early growth of the church in New Zealand, and was significantly influenced by constraints of geography, transport, means of communication, and population distribution. Changes in transport, communication and demographics have significantly altered the context in which Presbyteries now find themselves.

Ecumenical relationships have introduced a new development in recent decades. The many Uniting Congregations of the Church relate to more than one denominational body, and three of the presbytery areas are, variously named, Union District Councils (Northland, Wairarapa, West Coast).

Te Aka Puaho was formed in the 1950s and was granted presbytery powers. While technically it is one of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church, it oversees its pastorates across Aotearoa as a whole. This paper and the proposed model for the Reform of Presbyteries assume Te Aka Puaho continuing in its present form.

### 3 Presbyteries Today

It is very clear from research data, and from widespread and continuing anecdotal comment and feedback to reports that the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church are in urgent need of reform. In brief, while the requirements and expectations of presbyteries are growing, their capacity to do so is shrinking. Further, the configuration and sometimes the culture of presbyteries often hinder effective operations.

Within the present situation across New Zealand, many ministers and elders are currently investing significant resources of time, talents, energy and heart in the operation of presbyteries. These people, individually and together, have helped presbyteries adjust to current realities such as declining personnel resources, have reviewed priorities, have sought to foster caring relationships and have thus managed to keep the Church going. While there are many very significant challenges to be addressed, the goodwill and service of these people is warmly acknowledged and affirmed.

The following factors indicate the need for significant change in order for the church to both use its resources more efficiently and become more effective in supporting congregations in mission.

- 3.1 Currently the Presbyterian Church has 22 Presbyteries; 11 in the North Island and 11 in the South Island.

A present and growing inequity is illustrated in the following.

<u>North Island Presbyteries</u>	- 11	<u>South Island Presbyteries</u>	- 11
Number of parishes	- 253	Number of parishes	- 150
Number of parish ministers	- 189	Number of parish ministers	- 101
Presbyterian membership	- 17197	Presbyterian membership	- 11255
Adults at worship	- 17490	Adults at worship	- 10584

(Source: 2006 Statistics and 2007 Yearbook)

- 3.2 Some presbyteries have a very small number of parishes comprising their membership. One presbytery has four parishes, another six, three have seven, and one has eight. With presbytery commissioners being the minister and an elder from each parish, these small presbyteries have very limited resources for the same range of responsibilities as larger presbyteries.

#### Some Comparisons

Presbyterian Church USA has:

- 11,000 congregations, 171 presbyteries, 2,270,000 members
- Average: 64 congregations and 13,300 members per presbytery.
- Range: Coastal Carolina Presbytery – 189 congregations and 30,426 members
- Charlotte Presbytery – 133 congregations and 40,957 members
- Alaska – 15 congregations and 1067 members.

Uniting Church in Australia has:

- 2800 congregations, 51 presbyteries, 300,000 members
- Average: 55 congregations and 5880 members per presbytery.
- South Australia: has just 1 Presbytery with 350 congregations.
- 13 Mission Resourcing Networks

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has:

- 403 congregations, 22 presbyteries, 28452 members
- Average: 18 congregations and 1290 members per presbytery.

- 3.3 Presbytery replies to a questionnaire from the Task Group research named “lack of personnel to do the work of presbytery” as the greatest challenge facing presbyteries. This related to both clergy and lay people, and an overall absence of younger generations. Many presbyteries are increasingly struggling to fill key positions. There is also an increasing dependence on the service of retired people that may hinder appropriate decision-making for the Church of following generations, and certainly reduces the number of people gaining leadership experience.

This shortage of people resources is seen as a consequence of a declining and aging Church, and the effects for example of amalgamation of congregations and the increasing number of congregations that are no longer able to afford ordained ministry. In some presbyteries, it is compounded by the need and choice of some ministers and elders to invest their resources in Pacific or Asian bodies, and by ministers of some Uniting Congregations investing their resources in their own denomination.

Personnel in the Assembly Office have also reported a significant increase in work asked of them that relates to the growing shortage of experienced people in presbyteries to deal with local issues: e.g. sensitive and difficult relational matters, growing compliance complexities, and the rigorous oversight and decision making required when considering the future of specific congregations. Experience attests to the significant costs incurred when tasks are not done well initially. Much of this presbytery work is outside the brief of Assembly staff, and exists alongside a reluctance by the Church to further fund Assembly Office functions.

- 3.4 As resources have declined, the range of responsibilities placed on presbyteries has increased. Currently the Book of Order lists 20 Specific Presbytery Functions [8.4(1)], as well as the Primary Function of Presbytery [8.3] 'to facilitate and resource the life, worship, spiritual nurture and mission of the congregations for which it has responsibility'. The primary function is then expanded [8.4(3) to (6)] with a further 12 tasks. Other tasks are detailed throughout the Book of Order and other expectations have grown within the life of presbyteries (e.g. regarding the Charities Commission).

**Appendix One** gives an overview of all the functions expected of presbyteries.

Given the declining personnel resources it has, in the words of one person, increasingly become an "impossible ask!"

This decline in personnel has serious implications for the governance and mission functions of the Church. Many presbyteries are able to achieve little more than governance that has to be done; prioritising these functions, and operating in a primarily reactive mode. Few or no resources are being directed toward facilitating and supporting the life and mission of local congregations, let alone addressing the need for planting new congregations or developing new models in mission.

- 3.5 It was also clear from presbytery replies to the Task Group Questionnaire that there is an increasing unwillingness to commit to and be involved in the life and work of presbytery. Again it related to both clergy and lay people, and especially to many of the younger generations who have no inclination to be involved in the institutional structures of the Church. While collegial support is appreciated and accountability important, many have attitudes toward Presbytery that are summed up in words such as irrelevant, dull, bureaucratic, ineffective, and draining on parishes.
- 3.6 The culture of presbyteries is also often marked by low levels of trust. This partly relates to being a Church diverse in theology, but also to the post World War II history of the Church. During recent decades a number of issues have been part of our life and progress, but have come at a cost: challenging and eroding unity and trust. These issues have included: the Geering Controversy, women in leadership, the administration of communion and baptism, Church Union, Charismatic Renewal, Assembly Assessment, and sexuality and leadership. Low levels of trust are slowing and impeding effective work by presbyteries.
- 3.7 The Task Group also experienced a growing conviction that the vesting of both governance and collegial functions in one body was compromising both and impeding missional action. For example, hard and wise decisions concerning parishes and ministers are left, or left too late, because of the relationships within the presbytery. Or where new mission initiatives are met with a "you can't do that" response from a primarily governance oriented presbytery.

#### **4 Some Convictions for the Future**

From a national perspective, it is clear that presbyteries are in need of significant reform. The situation varies of course across the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church, but in the work of reform the Task Group believes the Church should act out of its Presbyterian theology and values and address the situation nationally rather than regionally in a piecemeal fashion. The Task

Group would also contend that the trends are both clear and continuing, and that the Church of today should respond to them, and with a sense of urgency, rather than leave the task for a subsequent time.

The need for change implies no criticism of the past. The context of that day determined the configuration of presbyteries. The new context of today calls for a new configuration.

As the Task Group continued to explore future possibilities for presbyteries, and kept in mind that the primary function of presbyteries is 'to facilitate and resource the life, worship, spiritual nurture and mission of the congregations for which it has responsibility', several convictions were identified to guide in the task.

1. Purpose. That under the mandate of its primary function a presbytery should fulfil the following two major purposes for ministers and congregations:
  - a. Resourcing: Relational support, and equipping and encouragement in mission.
  - b. Governance: Proper and effective oversight, accountability and compliance.The experiencing of these purposes beyond the local congregation is crucial.
2. Leadership. That corporate government should be maintained at all levels of the Church, and maintain a mix of clergy and laity. Note however that the Book of Order requirement that there be an equal number of elders and ministers on presbytery [8.9 (1)] may not be sustainable in some areas of the Church and some flexibility in the ratio should be considered.
3. Trust. That there should be a renewed commitment to trust throughout the Church, as a foundational Christian and operational quality for effective oversight and leadership.
4. Effectiveness. That structures should reflect the practical realities of the Church today, and be as simple and functional as possible. Structures should also be flexible to allow for the varied contexts across New Zealand.
5. Constitution. That if constitutional change is required for future effectiveness then such change is imperative, for structures are to serve people and mission rather than vice versa.

## 5 Proposed Model for the Reform of Presbyteries

Given the critical situation facing presbyteries and need to enhance the support of congregations, the Task Group explored a number of models that might enable the Church to better carry out its resourcing and governance functions. After consultation with presbyteries, the Task Group recommends the adoption of the following model for the Reform of presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The model is based around the following major changes:

- a. Establishing resourcing groups, and separating structurally the governance and resourcing functions of presbytery (5.1)

- b. Separating the governance functions of presbyteries into core and discretionary functions, and vesting some functions in national bodies (5.2)
- c. Reconfiguring presbyteries into larger bodies for effectiveness in governance, and to increase personnel and diversity for resourcing functions (5.3)

The model prioritises resourcing over governance, a reversal of the current situation, where feedback has made clear that the 'default' mode of most presbyteries is in governance. This change is not to devalue governance functions but to invest our best time and energy in what supports congregations in mission; a more strategic use of people resources. The model also reduces the governance functions of presbyteries.

The model is also a balance between the need for a clear framework for the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church as a whole but to allow for significant variation regionally to take account of particular contextual realities such as demography or geography. Presbytery feedback emphasised the importance of both.

5.1 **Resourcing** – The primary task: relational support, and equipping and encouragement in mission.

The model provides for each presbytery to establish a variety of resourcing groups. These groups would provide the primary context for resourcing: relational support and facilitating mission.

**Functions:** Tasks of these groups would include:

- Personal encouragement, support and pastoral care, ongoing consultation.
- Sharing resources for mission in local congregations.
- Accessing new resources or skills from outside sources.
- Exploring new models of mission and ministry.
- Identifying and supporting new growth opportunities.
- Responding to minor crises in ministry and parishes.

Groups might also ask the full Presbytery to oversee the provision of major training events.

**Separation:** These resourcing groups would be structurally separate from the governance structure and work of the presbytery in order to prioritise and strengthen these functions. This will enable the groups to better engage with their local context, offer greater support within the relationships of the smaller group, and experience some greater measures of freedom as effective mission is explored in today's world.

The governance role of presbytery is not compromised by this separation as relationally the connections remain; for those involved in the governance functions of presbytery are also part of its resourcing groups and in local mission and ministry. There is a two-fold need here: good governance requires things to be done 'decently and in order' whereas mission needs to embrace experimentation and change.

**Structure and Context:** The formation and ongoing life of these Groups would be overseen by the presbytery. But each group would develop its own goals (lodging these with the presbytery), leadership and mode of operation. The

Groups would be established by presbytery in a configuration that suits their mission context. They might be geographically based (regional), or according to mission context (e.g. rural, small town, urban), or style of church culture or ministry, and reflect the diversity of the presbytery in whatever way is appropriate. This would also allow for the voice of various sub-groups to be heard in the context of larger presbyteries.

It is suggested that the ideal minimum for these groups be six parishes and 12 people. These groups would meet regularly, at a minimum of bi-monthly.

**Membership:** Membership would be required of presbytery ministers and elders, but would be open to the participation of other personnel of presbytery and congregations where appropriate in order to enhance local mission. Some movement in membership between groups would be possible over time.

**Advantages:** in the above resourcing proposals include

- A specific structure that is focused on mission resourcing in local congregations, unhindered by governance functions.
- A specific structure that is relationally focused; fostering trust, enabling personal support and encouragement of ministers and elders, unhindered by governance functions that currently claim priority. Structuring the Church smaller to foster strong relationships.
- Flexibility in structure and operation to allow for the varied contexts across New Zealand.
- Maintains involvement of ministers and elders, but allows for wider participation.
- A mission and personal focus that will encourage involvement and leadership from those with little inclination to be involved in the governance of the Church and who currently find presbytery irrelevant, dull and bureaucratic.
- Increase the number of Presbytery personnel who have ongoing understanding of local congregations.

## 5.2 **Governance:** oversight, accountability and compliance for ministers and parishes

The model provides for an overall reduction in governance functions for presbyteries, an increasing use of modern communication technology, and thereby a reduction in the number of meetings. [Note: The Book of Order requires a minimum of only one meeting per year; in 8.13(2).]

The reduction in governance functions is consequent to such functions being separated into required core functions and discretionary functions, and some other current functions be vested in the national Church.

### **Required Core Functions of Presbytery:**

- Handling the employment of ministers (NOM, LOM), Local Ministry teams, and lay appointments and celebrants.
  - Initial processing of applications of students for the ministry, and licensing.
  - Processing calls, terms of call, inductions / ordinations
  - Overseeing minister appraisals, professional development, study leave, and supervision
- Conducting Parish Mission Appraisals / Parish Reviews.
- Forming, amalgamating and dissolving congregations.



- Liaison with Te Aka Puaho, the Pacific Island Synod and the Council of Asian Congregations as appropriate.
- Budgets and parish levies for presbytery work, and the Charities Commission.
- Providing personnel for key positions (e.g. Moderator, Clerk) and groups (e.g. Task Groups, Settlement Boards), and commissioners to the General Assembly.

**Discretionary Functions:** It is proposed that all other functions, other than those vested in the national Church, be discretionary. This is not to de-value these functions, but to allow presbyteries to make the most strategic response to a particular situation or in an initiative to enhance mission effectiveness.

Examples of discretionary functions would include:

- Links with Church schools or local chaplaincies, depending for example on whether any exist within Presbytery bounds, or on whether there is capacity for support.
- Appointing an Interim Moderator [There is already some discretion, in 10.3(1)]

**Structure:** To fulfil its governance functions each presbytery would be free to structure itself in a way appropriate to its context and size. Even within the reconfigured larger presbyteries (5.3) the reduced governance functions may only require a Business Committee/Executive, with the use of short term task groups or perhaps a Standing Committee. The particular composition and operation of such committees would be decided by each presbytery, but would include both clergy and lay people and would be granted appropriate power to act within the regulations, policies and practices of the Church. A number of presbyteries already operate in such a way. The right of appeal remains.

**National Functions:** It is proposed that some functions be vested in national bodies of the Presbyterian Church. Currently many of these functions are processed both regionally and nationally and this transfer eliminates duplication as well as reducing presbytery functions. Liaison with local leaders, congregations and presbyteries as appropriate would be required by these work groups to ensure 'local knowledge' is gained before decision making.

These functions would be handled by work groups of the General Assembly (i.e. not the National Service Team), with personnel selected from throughout New Zealand. It is acknowledged that enlisting personnel for national groups is sometimes difficult but at the very least the pool of people and expertise would be considerably larger. Some national groups already exist with responsibility in these areas.

**Functions to be vested in National Church Work Groups:**

- a) All processes, other than initial processing of applications, regarding students for the ministry, and licentiates. (As currently, through the National Assessment Workgroup and the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.)
- b) Reception of ministers from other denominations. (As currently, through the Personnel Workgroup)
- c) Gathering annual statistical data. Under the oversight of the Assembly Office.
- d) Processing requests regarding land, building projects, and borrowing. Groups and operational protocols would be under the oversight of the Church Property Trustees, noting that the need to consult with presbyteries

mentioned above is required under the CPT Act. Any costs may be covered by a fee with the lodging of the request. Requests from the area of the Synod of Otago and Southland would be handled by that body as at present.

- e) Processing applications to The Presbyterian Foundation. Currently handled by the Presbyterian Foundation Grants Committee. Any costs may be covered by a fee with the lodging of the application.
- f) Handling appeals, major complaints, and disciplinary processes.
- g) Overseeing all processes regarding Assembly Assessment. Under the oversight of the Resource Sub-Committee of the Council of Assembly and the Assembly Office.

It is proposed that the Council of Assembly oversee the implementation of these work groups. A period of experimentation is expected as these work groups seek to implement effective and efficient ways of operating within the reformed presbytery structures.

**Advantages:** in the above governance proposals include

- Reduced functions recognising reduced personnel and capacity in presbyteries.
- Discretion with regard to some functions in order to respond appropriately in the varied presbytery contexts.
- Reduced functions allowing for a reduced number of presbytery meetings with savings in travel, time and costs.
- Allowance for flexibility of structure in the varied presbytery contexts.
- Reduces duplication of tasks among presbyteries and over the levels of the Church.
- Maintains corporate government of ministers and elders but, as is practiced now, entrusts operations to sub-groups within presbytery.
- Most importantly, freeing up ministers and elders, and time for resourcing purposes.

### 5.3 **Reconfigured and Larger Presbyteries**

The model proposes a rationalisation/reduction in the number of presbyteries to ensure that all are large enough to have the capacity to carry out both resourcing and governance functions. The Task Group noted that the 2002 General Assembly accepted the proposals of the “Strengthening Presbyteries” report as guidelines, encouraging presbyteries to function differently. “Enlarging regional capacity” was one strong recommendation but since that time only Gisborne and Hawkes Bay, and Manawatu and Wanganui have combined, with Dunedin and North Otago also working together.

This model for the Reform of presbyteries proposes a re-drawing of presbytery boundaries, beyond the simple amalgamations of existing presbyteries, although that may be the outcome in some areas. Intentional and expeditious action is required before the declining capacity of some Presbyteries makes it very difficult to achieve.

It is appreciated that reconfiguring presbyteries raises issues of trust, and fears about loss of power or voice or theological position. The Task Group believes the task can be faced confidently with good processes and in the grace of Jesus Christ.

**Advantages:** in larger reconfigured presbyteries include:

- Provide a greater pool of people with appropriate skills and experience to carry out governance tasks. This larger context also enhances the equipping of new leaders. Structuring the Church larger for greater order, efficiency and cost saving.
- Reducing duplication across the country and associated costs, freeing up resources for mission.
- In many smaller presbyteries significantly broadening the mission context and increasing the range of people available for resourcing functions.
- Providing a greater resource base for paid positions and specialist ministries; e.g. a skilled clerk for the administration of presbytery, or a mission enabler to foster mission development and growth in the presbytery area.
- Providing some greater distance from personal relationships to enable the hard and wise decisions concerning congregations and ministers to be made.

## 6 Process and Leadership

The implementation of the model will require decisive action by all presbyteries. It is proposed that each presbytery immediately appoint forward looking, creative and missional leaders to become part of small “Presbytery Reform Teams” that will work across and within presbyteries to drive the implementation of the model. The Task Group believes the appointment of these could be quickly facilitated through the Business Committee of each presbytery. The Task Group suggests that presbyteries do not appoint their ‘governance experts’ to these teams.

These teams would meet across presbyteries to facilitate the reconfiguration of presbyteries, taking into account all relevant factors including the regional boundaries of partner churches. These teams would then work within the reconfigured larger presbyteries to implement resourcing groups and new governance structures. It is anticipated that the implementation of resourcing and governance will include and continue to include experimentation. The Task Group also believes that the whole process itself will engender other changes that will enhance the culture and effectiveness of presbyteries.

As a spring board for action the Task Group is suggesting the following five groupings of presbyteries for initial discussions about reconfiguration. This is not presupposing nor suggesting the creation of five presbyteries, but rather providing a big enough area for substantial and realistic reconfiguration.

- The six presbyteries of the Synod of Otago and Southland.
- The other five presbyteries of the South Island.
- Gisborne-Hawkes Bay, Wellington, Wairarapa, Manawatu-Wanganui and Taranaki.
- Waikato, Bay of Plenty, South Auckland.
- Northland, North Shore, Auckland and South Auckland.

It is proposed that the Presbyteries Task Group be asked to encourage presbyteries and their Presbytery Reform Teams in the implementation of the model, and to monitor progress for report to the 2010 General Assembly.

## 7 Painting a Picture

So what might the future of presbyteries look like under this model?  
Looking ahead - a possible scenario, a hypothetical case study.

The Central North Island Presbytery has been operating for over five years. The Waikato and Bay of Plenty Presbyteries joined together, with three parishes from adjoining presbyteries also transferring their membership given the flow of geography and mission context. Resourcing groups are well established and over the five years the governance structure has been refined and streamlined. The changes have led to a significant improvement in confidence and growth.

The heart of the presbytery is in its resourcing groups. It has taken time but it is very clear that these groups have led to a depth of pastoral concern and ministry sharing that was rarely experienced under the former structure. Of particular benefit has been the in-depth sharing about the particular congregations represented in the group and the discussions about more effective strategies in mission and church life. Two of the resourcing groups are geographically based, especially in the extremities of the Presbytery area. There are two made up of those in an entirely rural context, two whose mission context is centred on a small town, two that are urban, and one of regional sized churches. As well as the minister and elder from each parish a significant number of other key lay leaders have joined. Most of the resourcing groups meet monthly, using a variety of gifted leaders. Interestingly the Moderator's role has evolved into being one primarily focused on encouraging the leaders of the resourcing groups. Given the strong relational and mission focus of the groups the presbytery has noticed an increase in the number of younger people involved. Overall these groups are where most resources are used: energy, skills, leadership, time and travel.

The full presbytery only meets two times per year; the first in a large scale two day mission equipping event and the second to cover a number of more formal governance tasks. In one of these a major mission review was completed leading to the amalgamation of three parishes and the planting of a new one in a new growth area of the Bay of Plenty. These full presbytery meetings include significant times in worship and relationship building. The day-to-day work is carried out by the Presbytery Business Committee with regular changes in personnel, and by the paid Clerk. They meet in various places every two months, with email dialogue in between, and oversee the key governing decisions although at times there is 'very little to do'. Representatives of the Business Committee ensure that local voices are heard in decisions concerning congregations and parishes. Some particular needs are handled by ad hoc task groups. All presbytery members see the Business Committee minutes electronically. The new presbytery boundary also approximates the local synod of the Methodist Church, an advantage for those in Co-operative ministries.

The larger scale has also meant that as well as paying for a Clerk the presbytery has employed two part time people: a lay youth worker working with youth groups across the presbytery and in association with the national youth movement and two Presbyterian camps, and an ordained minister who is working part time in a parish and the rest of the time among other parishes as a mission enabler. Both have helped to build confidence and facilitate new approaches in a variety of situations.

**Very Rev Garry Marquand**  
Convener, Presbyteries Task Group

## Appendix 1 – Current Presbytery Functions

---

### 8.1 Background (Book of Order)

‘The presbytery is responsible for the worship, life, and mission of the church. It provides the link between congregations and the General Assembly, facilitating and overseeing the worship, life, and mission amongst the congregations for which it has responsibility. Its task is to provide resources for the congregations for which it has responsibility and to cultivate a sense of community amongst those congregations.’

### 8.3 Primary Function of Presbytery (Book of Order)

‘A presbytery’s primary function is to facilitate and resource the life, worship, spiritual nurture and mission of the congregations for which it has responsibility.’

### A listing of Presbytery Functions

#### 1. Personnel:

- Provision of personnel for specific roles such as Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Convenors and members of standing committees. (e.g. Business, Ministry, Students, Property & Finance, Social Issues)
- Provision of personnel as Nominators, Interim Moderators, supervisors, and as members of Settlement Boards, Commissions, parish visitations, youth bodies, etc.
- Provision of personnel as representatives on bodies associated with presbytery such as Synods, school boards, chaplaincy committees, social agencies, other denominational bodies.
- A high expectation of all members of mutual support in ministry and pastoral care in times of need.

#### 2. Tasks:

##### Regarding ministers:

- Overseeing students for the ministry, and licentiates
- Processing calls
- Inductions and ordinations
- Provision of supervision
- Minister appraisals
- Overseeing education and training – study leave – CMF points
- Disciplinary processes
- Dissolving pastoral ties
- Training of Local Ordained Ministers
- Oversight of Local Ministry Teams

##### Regarding parishes:

- Forming and dissolving congregations / parishes
- Parish Mission Appraisals / Quinquennial Visitations
- Training and authorising lay celebrants of the sacraments
- Commissioning elders (for Presbytery / General Assembly)
- Responding to parish concerns / crises, and hearing appeals, complaints etc
- Processing requests re building projects, borrowing
- Financial budgets and parish levies
- Gathering statistical data

**Other tasks:**

- Maintaining links with schools, social agencies, chaplaincies
- Maintaining links with ecumenical partners
- Maintaining links with Te Aka Puaho, the Pacific Islanders Synod and the Asian Council.
- Processing business to and from the General Assembly
- Establishing new forms of ministry
- Initiating legislative proposals
- Social / Public Issues

**Book of Order** regulation **8.4 (3) (4) (5)** detail additional functions about facilitating in congregations their worship (3), life (4), and spiritual nurture (5).

