

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ministers, Presbyteries and Church Councils

FROM: Martin Baker, Clerk of the 2008 Assembly

DATE:

SUBJECT: **Matters arising from the General Assembly 2008**

Dear friends,

Decisions made by the General Assembly relating to presbyteries and church councils, for your information and, where appropriate, action are set out below. Please take special note of the matters relating to the Special Legislative Procedures at the end of this memo. These matters need to be discussed and voted on by your presbytery or UDC by July 31 2009.

The minutes of the Assembly will be posted on the Church's website before the end of November. The website address is www.presbyterian.org.nz

Turakina Maori Girls' College

The Assembly commends to its congregations the work of the Turakina Maori Girls' College, recognising that its Christian nurture and empowerment of young Maori women is exceptional and that it holds a unique place in the mission of outreach of the Presbyterian Church.

The release of Capital Funds

Presbyteries, when considering their recommendations to the Trustees in relation to all property transactions (including the purchase of property, the sale of property, and major alterations to property) are to act consistently with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 1 of the Council of Assembly's report D1-5 in the GA08 reports, which is available online. When making recommendations to the Trustees, full information in relation to these guidelines is to be provided to the Trustees.

(The new guidelines incorporating these changes will be included in the Property Handbook, a new edition of which is due out before Christmas.)

All property transactions should serve the purpose of God's mission.

Ecology and Congregations

Congregations and presbyteries are asked to study the issues of climate change and the environment, and take practical action.

Congregations are encouraged to audit their environmental footprints.

Resources can be found on our website at www.presbyterian.org.nz/4439.0.html. A workshop is also available through the Knox Leadership programme

The Church has endorsed the following declaration on Climate Change:

Climate change, with its life-threatening consequences, raises theological, economic, political and ethical issues. It reflects the distortion of relationships between God, human kind, and creation.

The Bible teaches the wholeness of creation: Life is created sustained and made whole by the power of Christ and God's Holy Spirit (Genesis 1, Romans 8, John 1). God creates human beings out of the dust of the earth (Genesis 2). Sin breaks relationships among human kind and with the created Order (Genesis 3 and 4, Jeremiah 14, Hosea 4:1-3). Bearing the marks of human sin, 'creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God' (Romans 8:19). God provided all creatures with the conditions to live life as it is meant to be, in a specific relation towards one another. Part of the Christian call to discipleship is for the Shalom and restoration of creation through Jesus Christ.

Bio ethics

The General Assembly encourages individuals to write to the Associate Minister for the Environment, the Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Office of the Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, expressing their view that sex selection should be banned for non-medical reasons.

Beneficiary Fund

There were a number of matters relating to changes in provisions of the Beneficiary Fund. These changes were outlined in the report to GA08, with further details available from Doug Langford, Secretary of the Beneficiary Fund Committee. The core change was to include a complying section to meet Kiwisaver legislation employer requirements.

The Confession of Faith –Kupu Whakapono (formerly called the “Focal Identity Statement”)

While it was not adopted by General Assembly, Assembly affirmed the Confession of Faith – Kupu Whakapono and the commentary as an interim document to be used in the life of our Church.

Press Go

General Assembly approved the release of up to \$2 million of Laughton House sale funds for the use of congregations and presbyteries whose growth projects meet criteria developed through consultation with presbyteries and UDCs.

General Assembly actively encourages all congregations and presbyteries to voluntarily provide a 1 percent return on all investment assets for the use of the Press Go Advisory Group. This money will support growth projects that meet the criteria referred to above and are approved by the Press Go Advisory Group.

The General Assembly actively encourages all congregations, presbyteries, and UDCs to contribute to Press Go in whatever ways they can.

Christian World Services

Assembly affirms the work of Christian World Service and encourages parishes to support the Christmas Appeal and emergency appeals.

Assembly encourages all parishes to support the CWS campaign on climate change and its continued advocacy for policies to eradicate poverty.

Presbytery Review (please refer to the Presbytery Review report to GA08)

The General Assembly adopted the model for the reform of presbyteries and union district councils as outlined in Section 5 of the Presbytery Review report.

Presbyteries are to establish Presbytery Reform Teams with appropriately skilled missional leaders to implement the model. They will:

- Consult with other presbyteries and Union District Councils to establish a reconfiguration of presbytery boundaries;
- Establish Resourcing Groups; and,
- Establish new Governance structures.

Presbytery Reform Teams are to be established by the beginning of 2009, and the new presbyteries are to begin operating within the new presbytery structure as soon as is practicable. The new presbytery boundaries will be formalised by General Assembly.

The Presbyteries Task Group has been asked to coordinate presbyteries and their Presbytery Reform Teams in the implementation of the model, and to monitor progress for report to the 2010 General Assembly.

Younger people

General Assembly invites congregations to explore and action ways in which young people can have a voice and input into the decision-making processes of the Church, with a particular emphasis being placed on the need for young people to have a place on Church Councils and related decision-making groups.

Student regulations

Student regulations are amended to state: At the time of application to the presbytery a candidate must provide clear evidence of at least two years' commitment to and involvement with one congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand or a Co-operative Venture partner. It is expected that this commitment and involvement would be expressed in formalised membership of the congregation.

If a presbytery considers a candidate's situation to be exceptional, they may request the Council of Assembly, through the Leadership Sub-committee, or equivalent, to grant a waiver of this requirement. Such a request must be made at the time the presbytery assesses the candidate, and before his or her name is forwarded to the National Assessment Work Group.

Minister and Parish Reviews (please refer to the Leadership sub-committee's report to GA08)

The system for minister (NOM and LOM) reviews and parish reviews has been adopted by the General Assembly.

The Certificate of Good Standing as detailed in the Leadership sub-committee report was adopted by the General Assembly. This certificate also includes areas previously covered by regulations 192 and 212 in the 2003 Book of Order.

All matters relating to remuneration in relation to the review process have been removed, for consideration by the Council of Assembly.

Book of Order

The new (2006) Book of Order has been adopted and prescribed.

Matters to be considered under the Special legislative procedure (formerly the Barrier Act) Section 14.9

Each presbytery, UDC and Te Aka Puaho must determine its approval or disapproval of the following matters.

Please indicate your approval or disapproval by sending the Assembly Executive Secretary an extract minute from your meeting's proceedings, no later than July 31 2009.

There are two items of legislation for consideration.

Item 1 (adopted *ad interim* by the 2008 General Assembly)

1. Repeal Chapter 14.12(2) and replace as follows:
 - (2) The responsibilities of the Council of Assembly are to:
 - (a) act in place of the General Assembly between Assemblies to consider and determine administrative issues relating to the Church. In this regard the General Assembly delegates its administrative responsibility to the Council of Assembly between Assemblies,
 - (b) implement policy and strategy for the Church within the direction set by the General Assembly, to make recommendations regarding policy to the General Assembly, to implement decisions of the General Assembly and to report to the General Assembly on policy development and operations,
 - (c) review, form, reform and discharge groups to carry out General Assembly functions without infringing the powers of the General Assembly and to delegate functions to appropriate groups, persons, or bodies,
 - (d) receive reports from the groups referred to in paragraph (c) and to report policy issues to the General Assembly,
 - (e) act as a Commission of Assembly in appointing the Assembly Executive Secretary where appointment by the General Assembly is not possible without the calling of an emergency meeting,
 - (f) oversee and direct the Assembly Executive Secretary in managing all employees of the General Assembly, and in relation to the Assembly Executive Secretary, to act as a Commission of Assembly to concur in the acceptance of a call or resignation, or to terminate an appointment,

- (g) receive nominations from the nominating committee and make appointments to the Council of Assembly, commissions, committees and other bodies,
- (h) adopt a budget, allocate funds raised for the work of the General Assembly, and apply untagged legacies and donations as it sees fit,
- (i) adopt the accounts of the General Assembly, report these to the General Assembly, and appoint a person to review or audit the accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Act,
- (j) determine staffing and resourcing requirements for the General Assembly and the Council of Assembly,
- (k) nominate co-conveners of the nominating committee to the General Assembly,
- (l) appoint a commission to consider, prior to an Assembly and if the Council thinks it advisable to do so, any particular matter which has been submitted to the Clerk of Assembly with the instruction to the commission that it must report to the Assembly on that matter but not determine it,
- (m) summon a Special Assembly to determine proposals or references, after consultation with the Book of Order Advisory Committee,
- (n) refer any appeal, proposal or reference to the Assembly Judicial Commission, after taking advice from the Book of Order Advisory Committee, and to appoint the Commission for the purposes of any such proceeding comprising:
 - (i) not less than 3 nor more than 5 members from the panel of Assembly Judicial Commission members, and
 - (ii) not more than 2 other members of the Church, being a person or persons particularly suited for appointment having regard to the subject matter of the proceeding, and
 - (iii) an advisor as to procedure, being a member of the Book of Order Advisory Committee or its nominee,
- (o) consult widely within the Church where practicable,
- (p) do anything else which the Assembly may direct."

2. Repeal Chapter 14.13 and replace as follows:

14.13 Membership of Council of Assembly

- (1) The Council of Assembly consists of:
 - (a) a convener nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the General Assembly,
 - (b) a deputy convener nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the General Assembly to complement the skills of the

convener and, if the convener is not proximate to Wellington, to provide close liaison with the Assembly Executive Secretary,

- (c) six members nominated by the nominating committee, elected by the General Assembly and appointed from presbyteries/union district councils,
 - (d) one nominee of Te Aka Puaho,
 - (e) one nominee of the Pacific Islanders' Synod,
 - (f) one member of the Council of Asian Congregations,
 - (g) the Moderator of the General Assembly,
 - (h) the convenors of the Leadership Subcommittee and Resource Subcommittee of the Council of Assembly.
- (2) There shall also be four associate members of the Council of Assembly as follows:
- (a) the Moderator of Te Aka Puaho,
 - (b) a nominee appointed by the Synod of Otago and Southland,
 - (c) the Assembly Executive Secretary,
 - (d) a nominee of the Presbyterian Church Property Trustees.
- (3) That apart from the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Moderator of Te Aka Puaho and the Assembly Executive Secretary, each member of the Council of Assembly shall be appointed for a four year term with half the members of the Council of Assembly retiring and being replaced at each biennial General Assembly. Any member's term of office may be extended by a further two-year term.
3. Repeal Chapter 14.14(3) and replace as follows:
- "(3) The procedure for nomination and election is to be set out in the supplementary provisions."
4. Amend Chapter 14.26(3) to provide as follows:
- "(3) Presbyteries, the Pacific Islanders' Synod, Te Aka Puaho and the Council of Asian Congregations may in accordance with the supplementary provisions appoint additional members to represent young people who are members of congregations of the Church or of a co-operative venture."
5. Add in at the end of Chapter 14.31(7) the figure "30".
6. Repeal Chapter 16.4(3) and renumber the subsequent subsections of Chapter 16.4 by reducing the relevant number by one.
7. Enact new Chapters 16.13 and 16.14 as follows:

"16.13 Any income, benefit, or advantage gained by the Church must be used to advance the charitable purposes of the Church. No member, no associate member and no person associated with a member or associate member is permitted to take part in, or to influence, any decision of the Church in respect of payments to or on behalf of the member, associate member or associated person of any income, benefit or advantage. Any payments made to a member, associate member or any person associated with a member or associate member, must be for goods or services which advance the charitable purpose of the Church and must be reasonable and relative to payments that would be made between unrelated parties.

16.14 In the event that the Church should dissolve or be wound up, if any property remains after the dissolution or winding up and the settlement of all debts and liabilities, that property shall be given or transferred to another organisation that is charitable under New Zealand law or for some other charitable purpose recognised under New Zealand law.",

while the existing Chapter 16.13 is to be renumbered 16.15.

Item 2 (note: this has not been adopted *ad interim* by the 2008 General Assembly)

That proposals for special legislation are sent from the General Assembly to Parish Councils and Sessions as well as to Presbyteries and that all responses from all courts to be considered of equal value.

Martin Baker
Clerk of the 2008 Assembly