***A community of Partner Churches & Cooperative Ventures seeking to reflect the essential unity of Christ's Church, living out what it means to be a missional church of Jesus Christ in today's world.***



**2020 REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD**

At year ending 2019, there were 35 Anglican-associated Cooperative Ventures (CVs), out of a total of 114, together with a small number of local ecumenical projects (LEPs), such as the Auckland Deaf Christian Fellowship.

**UCANZ Biennial Forum**

Forum was hosted by the Alexandra Clyde Lauder Union Parish, 17-20 October 2019. The Bishop of Dunedin, the Presbyterian Moderator, and the Methodist President addressed us. Two academics, the Rev Dr Kevin Ward and Professor Peter Lineham, challenged us in different ways: with the gospel challenge of hospitality and with the pressing matter of the numerical decline in CVs as well as in single-denominational churches. Welcome musical input came from the Rev David Dell. Workshops covered conflict resolution, the use of technology, and the understanding the UN development goals.

**UCANZ Office**

The Executive Officer has met regularly with the General Secretaries of Partner Churches, has attended several Regional Forums, meetings of the InterChurch Bureau and the National Dialogue for Christian Unity. The cooperation of Presbyteries, Methodist Synods and Dioceses has been greatly appreciated as we have sought to simplify processes and encourage all cooperative ventures in their local mission.

Administrative Assistant Robyn Daniels completed 19 years of valuable service to UCANZ in October last year and she retired from the office at the end of the year. Her successor is Margaret Pitt, who will work three days a week. A steady stream of enquiries leads us to believe that UCANZ has an important role in facilitating relationships between local churches and national Partner Churches.

Gathering statistics continues to be an important task. UCANZ is still asked to calculate recommended financial assessments based on churches’ returns, but it is now the Partner Churches who invoice payments.

**Appointing Partner and Convening Partner**

Amendments to *Procedures for Cooperative Ventures 2018* approved by the last General Synod came into force last year. The roles of Appointing and Convening roles (formerly combined as “Coordinating Partner”) are now separate roles, although they can be coincident. As previously, the Appointing role lasts from the process of appointing the minister to a church up to the termination of a particular ministry. Otherwise, the Convening Partner takes the lead in convening meetings of a local church’s Partners, and this role rotates among the two or three Partners every three years. A very few inconsistencies have been discovered and minor corrections will be made before the *2018* *Procedures* are printed later this year.

There has been an effort to confirm or establish Capital Ratios for all cooperative ventures. The immediate call for this was the Presbyterian Church’s need to consolidate the accounts of all Presbyterian entities and find some measure of the ‘control’ (in Charity Services terms) over cooperative ventures. The other use of a capital ratio is in dividing the assets should there be a dissolution of a parish.

**New models of relationship**

It is over 50 years since the Act of Commitment (1967, re-affirmed 1982) by which five national Churches acknowledged “our obligation to receive new insights and now to do together many of the things, which in the past we have done separately.” The Partner Churches are still formally committed to being brought by the Holy Spirit in to one church, but they have diverged from one another in some matters of faith and practice. And while some local churches rejoice in their ecumenical journey, others feel trapped by multiple denominational structures.

In recent months, both Christian Churches (CCNZ) and the Congregational Union (CUNZ) have formalized their desire to withdraw from the UCANZ Partnership nationally. The process of withdrawal has begun but will depend on negotiation with nine individual congregations as to their future status, their relationship with Partners, and property settlements.

The challenge for all of us is to be more creative and deliberative in transforming the structures that the accidents of history have given us. UCANZ Standing Committee will be asked to commission a thorough review of UCANZ structures. The gospel call to unity should encourage us not to give up on cooperative ventures; rather to find models of relationship that do not stifle enthusiasm but encourage compassion and sensitivity, flourishing and new life.

**Rev Jenny Chalmers David Hall Rev Adrian Skelton  
Co-chairperson Co-chairperson Executive Officer**