

North New Zealand Conference
PRAYING AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF NNZC

TOWN HALL MEETINGS 2011

“Plans are established by seeking advice” Proverbs 20:18

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do and he will establish your plans.” Proverbs 16:3

Why are Town Hall Meetings being held? So that churches may provide feedback to the NNZC Executive Committee on the **draft plan** for the future direction of the conference.

What plan is this? The Executive Committee have been praying and discussing the future of the conference. Together with the conference leadership team they drafted a strategic plan for NNZC.

How can we access this plan? The plan has been sent to all church pastors, head elders, company leaders and church clerks. It can be downloaded from the conference website at www.nnzc.org.nz/document_groups The document name is 'North New Zealand Conference Strategic Plan'.

What is the Executive Committee asking the churches to do?: (1) Pray for and discuss the plan as proposed by the Executive Committee. (2) Select representatives to attend the Town Hall meeting and/or (3) send your responses to Pastor Ben Timothy NNZC General Secretary.

Town Hall Meetings Schedule

DAY	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Wednesday	June 8	7:30-9:00pm	Palmerston North Church -
Thursday	June 9	7:30-9:00pm	Wellington Church
Sunday	June 12	7:30-9:00pm	Napier Church -
Tuesday	June 14	7:30-9:00pm	Henderson Church -
Thursday	June 16	7:30-9:00pm	Otara Church
Saturday	June 18	6:45pm	Whangarei Church -
Sunday	June 19	7:00-8:30pm	Stratford Church
Monday	June 20	7:30-9:00pm	Hamilton Church
Tuesday	June 21	7:30-9:00pm	Rotorua Church -
Sunday	July 03	7:30-9:00pm	Ponsonby Church

Proposed North New Zealand Conference Strategic Plan

Dear NNZC Churches,

Please pray over and take time to discuss this plan. Share your thoughts on each of the sections below. Understanding that we have limited resources, provide the committee with an indication of how much emphasis should be placed on each area.

Context

The North New Zealand Conference operates a family of 93 congregations with 9490 members, 13 schools, a camp ground (Tui Ridge Park), a Lifestyle Care Village (Bethesda), and a Book & Multi-media Centre (ABC).

It employs 76 personnel including 62 ministerial staff, and 14 support staff.

The conference has a gross income of \$11 million of which \$6 million is spent on pastoral support.

Vision

“To see a Spirit-filled body of believers leading our communities to Jesus”

(options)

To be known throughout New Zealand as a compassionate people with real hope

To ensure all members grow spiritually and reach out to those who do not know Christ

Strategic Options

The following strategic options have been identified:

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Church Member Engagement

Goal

- To make the church an integral part of each member's daily life, not just a Sabbath event

The Problem

- Church membership lists are inaccurate, inaccessible and not updated. They do not reflect an individual's engagement with the church
- Engagement requires regular attendance on Sabbath morning
- Members are able to drift away from the church with little intervention
- Members who no longer attend regularly have few avenues to re-engage "gently"
- It is difficult to engage with like minded members or join interest groups outside your local church

Opportunities

- Establish an electronic database that accurately records each member's profile in a timely way
- Encourage each member to regularly maintain their own profile including: characteristics, church office, church attendance, interests, qualifications, address, email, phone number, information they would like to receive from the church
- Encourage members to form informal networks, forums or special interest groups
- Foster social network groups amongst various age groups

Action Required

- Procure/access a robust database which includes:
 - Secure access by members for checking and editing
 - Ability to establish a social network platform
- Engage a person/company/partnership to:
 - Maintain the database
 - Establish and maintain secure access
 - Provide support (password maintenance etc)
 - Moderate the social networks

Rate the level of urgency you place on this Strategic Option (tick one):

Requires action NOW	
Can be put off to next year	
Low priority for this current triennium	

**What proportion of our limited funding should be given to this Strategic Option?:
(tick one)**

The maximum possible	
Minimal funding	

Comments:

Local Church Leadership

Goal

- Every person engaged in the local church is empowered to minister according to their spiritual gifts, passions, abilities, personality and experience. Pastors assume the role of equipping, coaching, leading and vision casting.

The Problem

- Many members are not engaging in ministry
- A belief that ministry is the role of the pastor. Pastors support this belief by not empowering members to serve
- Members ministry roles are changed every 12 months and do not always recognize a member's spiritual gifts
- A few members carry the major burden of ministry in the local church. This can lead to overload, burnout and disenchantment with the church
- Current training does not always align with local church need or focus

Opportunities

- Train ministers in the skills of leadership, visioning and coaching
- Strengthen the Regional Pastoral structure
- Ensure all members recognize and embrace their mission in the church
- Encourage creativity and innovation within the local church
- Ensure the multitude of church resources are available to all members
- Include leadership training in Regional Meetings, ie, Elders, Sabbath School leaders, Pathfinders leaders etc
- Recognize and promote local church strengths and successes

Action Required

- Engage a leadership training program alongside the 'Spirit Led' training event
- Ensure all ministers actively participate in leadership training
- Consolidate the regional pastoral structure
- Encourage members to identify their talents and skills
- Ensure all members are empowered in some form of ministry

Rate the level of urgency you place on this Strategic Option (tick one):

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Minimal funding	

Comments:

Communication

Goal

- To ensure all people aligned with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North New Zealand feel valued, informed and committed

The Problem

- Members have little understanding of the vision, goals and direction of the church/conference
- Church members feel distant from the church administration and have little understanding of the church structure or how the church functions beyond the local church
- Breakdown of communication at local church level with information getting to local church leaders but not members who need it
- Administration seldom engage with church members or know how they think/feel

Opportunities

- Achieve “great” communication between the conference, local church and each member
- Emails, blogs, You-tube, podcasts
- Provide regular electronic news bulletins (DVDs/podcasts) to churches on:
 - “best of breed” services or programs (best practice, success stories)
- Available resources (ABC sales items and new books)
- Events of interest around the churches
- Progress on major projects or initiatives
- Seek feedback from members through surveys and open responses
- Empower local communication secretaries to use a variety of communication channels within their local church, ie, weekly emails, weekly texting, webpage maintenance etc
- Promote electronic subscription to church news letters/bulletin/Record
- Stimulate dialogue amongst members about the church and the community
- Encourage use of social media tools (such as Facebook) to create a sense of community
- Ensure conference executive members play a greater role in promoting the vision at local church level
- Create welcome/induction packs for new members
- Lift the public profile of the church

Impact

- Expand the role for webmaster/communications manager within the administration team to:
 - Create conference wide resources
 - Generate communication material, video content etc
 - Train local church communications secretaries
 - Operate surveys and collate reports
- Invest in/access to a robust web platform capable of:
 - Web casting
 - Email list services
 - Survey administration
- Engage a person/company to:

- Record and edit regular presentations
- Collect and collate images of events and successful programs
- Produce regular communication releases
- Provide resources to church communication secretaries
- Provide training to executive members in casting the vision
- Support churches to install equipment to distribute the communication material
- Support more frequent regional meetings

Rate the level of urgency you place on this Strategic Option (tick one):

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Can be put off to next year	
Low priority for this current triennium	

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Minimal funding	

Comments:

Alignment (Unity)

Goal

- All aspects of the church in North New Zealand coordinate their efforts to achieve the vision of the church

The Problem

- Little sense of collective “family”, rather a collection of isolated local churches
- Our efforts are many but fragmented. Ministries and Departments doing their own thing in the Community.
- There is a lack of consistency across Conference entities with disjointed mission effort, lack of cohesion, unregulated reporting and ad hoc planning

Opportunity

- Align all departments, ministries and institutions with the Vision and Goals of the conference
- Consolidate our efforts to ensure all churches consistently support the conference Goals & Vision
- Regularly request management reports which identify the specific contribution to achieving the conference Goals & Vision
- Ensure all ministers understand the Vision and Goals and develop documented local programmes that contribute to their achievement

Impact

- Major change in culture of departmental directors with altered departmental accountability
- Workshops with ministers to ensure shared vision and practical delivery of the goals
- Bringing about a more connected approach with all entities aligned, including our schools, may require the appointment of a National Coordinator (see managing our institutions)

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Comments:

Governance

Goal

- To be a well governed organization which has the trust of all members and is known to be accountable, transparent and compliant

The Problem

- Lack of financial accountability and transparency across Conference Entities
- Lack of understanding regarding the difference between Governance (Director) and Management roles

Opportunity

- The NNZ Conference Executive should:
 - Establish a clear set of Vision and Goals for the operation of the Conference
 - Develop a robust Executive Committee member orientation & training programme
 - Ensure all Executive Committee members undergo regular training in good governance (Institute of Directors)
 - Undertake regular Executive Committee member performance evaluation (including health, contribution etc)
 - Periodically assesses the Conference's performance & effectiveness in achieving its goals including compliance with all legal requirements
 - Ensure Executive Committee members make informed decisions in the best interest of the Conference (and its institutions)
 - Operate all meetings according to best practice governance principles
 - Ensure robust information and reporting systems are in place
 - Ensure all financial statements (across all entities) have transparency and integrity
 - Establish a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that ensure best use of resources:
 - timely receipt of financial statements
 - robust accounting practice: auditing, approval of loans, credit extensions etc
 - a "Code of Ethics/Conduct" for the senior officers of all Conference entities
 - Ensure less than 50% turnover of executive members at Session to ensure continuity of direction and mission focus

Impact

- Increased role for Secretary in:
 - Ensuring adequate preparation before meetings
 - Ensuring compliance with legal requirements
- Increase role for Treasurer in:
 - Ensuring timely and accurate financial reports from all institutions and departments
- Engagement of a technical writer over 6 months to develop manuals and document policies and procedures

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Comments:

Growth

Goal

- To have at least 120 congregations with an active membership of 10,700 spread evenly throughout the conference by 2016. This will realise approximately 1 member for every 450 people.

The Problem

- Church membership is declining in comparison to the population in the Conference. In 1996 we had 1 member for every 326 people in the population; by 2006 this had dropped to one in every 341. By 2016 this will have dropped to one in every 399.
- Church membership is disproportionately concentrated in Auckland. In 2006 40.4% of members lived outside the greater Auckland area compared with 56.6% of the population. By 2016 only 37% of members will live outside the greater Auckland area compared with 54.6% of the population.

Opportunity

- Develop a conference wide strategic plan for church planting and development where there is a low member to population ratio
- Focus our invest of resources in planting new churches in these areas
- Ensure any new church developments are multi purpose buildings that can be used for non-church activities within the community
- Encourage smaller churches to work in "teams" to get better return for available resources
- Ensure all members in local church leadership positions undertake "Spirit Led" training
- Provide training for our Pastors and members to raise competency, awareness and accountability.

Impact

- Engage researcher to identify target areas
- Invest resources in church planting

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Comments:

Community Engagement

Goal

- To be a church that makes a tangible difference in the social structures of our communities so that they are demonstrably more loving, just, healthy and safe

Problem

- We show little compassion and fail to give tangible expression to what feelings we have towards the community
- Little involvement in things that the community values
- Focus only on what we as a church care about
- The church has a hidden evangelistic agenda in our community engagement
- Tendency to regress into self-preservation and exclusivity
- We focus on programs and not relationships. Programs are temporary while relationships create lasting memberships
- The church is not relevant to the community. We are not connecting with people when we communicate in church code about things that don't matter in people's lives
- An unbalanced focus on being the Remnant can lead to a preoccupation with self-preservation and exclusivity. We need to rediscover an adequate theology of Church & Society

Opportunity

- Encourage all members to be actively involved in some form of community outreach
- Expect pastors and local church leaders to be actively involved in community service
- Have each church adopt a specific geographical area, identify the community needs and ensure every person in that area has been "touched" by the church
- Make church facilities a focus for community activities
- Establish partnerships with other community organizations (especially faith-based ones) and services
- Provide churches with examples and ideas to assist them in impacting their communities
- Strengthen and extend existing successful community initiatives
- Provide scholarships for students who wish to pursue a career in the Social Sciences
- Lift the church's public profile

Impact

- Engaging a National Convener / Coordinator to ensure community outreach efforts are effective, focused, safe and accountable
- Engage a researcher to assist churches to understand local community needs
- Investment in training of church leaders and members to identify and meet local community needs

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Comments:

Institution Management

Goal

- Every institution makes an essential contribution to the vision and finances of the church

Problem

- Church buildings are often vacant six days in the week. There is a large cost in developing church property which goes unused for much of the time
- Bethesda makes a marginal contribution to the mission and outreach of the church. People who live there are established in their beliefs and so evangelism is difficult
- Tui Ridge represents a large investment which is difficult to get a good financial return on. There is a large maintenance and staffing cost.
- With ABC there is a shift towards digital purchasing and consumption of media
- Ministers are no longer living in the conference residential properties. The church is not in the business of residential property management.

Opportunity

Church buildings

- Encourage churches to rent out their property to other Churches on Sundays.
- Urge local church boards to generate income from rental.

Schools

- Identify opportunities to open new schools as witnessing & evangelism ventures in "booming" residential areas (eg North Shore & Pukekohe)
- Expand community based interaction activities in schools.

Tui Ridge

- Maximise opportunities for Tui Ridge to work with younger people.
- Create a great environment and memories for kid through:
- Camping experiences for Church young people.
- Community witness to non Church young people
- Aim for a return of "Break Even" or better.

Bethesda

- Evaluate the role of Bethesda
- Current high demand for age care facilities and a profitable enterprise (will become more so with aging population)
- Little opportunity for membership growth

Adventist Book Centre

- Urgently enhance electronic transaction capability
- Evaluate the business case for the ABC
- Evolving opportunity for mass dissemination of Christian resources electronically without geographic constraints at relative low cost
- Turning from bookseller to resource distribution operation

Residential properties

- Sell remaining residential properties and invest proceeds in core business.

Impact

- Employ an overall institutions manager
- Be prepared to divest some of the current institutions/properties
- Capital investment in new schools
- Net realisation from sale of assets

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Comments:

Prioritizing the Strategic Options

Prioritize the options from 1 - 8, with 1 as the most important:

Strategic Option	Rating
Member Engagement	
Leadership	
Communication	
Alignment	
Governance	
Growth	
Community Engagement	
Institution Management	