

UCANZ 23/04/24

Kia ora e te whanau

One of the areas of concern I'm regularly confronted with is property. So, today I'm starting a short series on 'Property in CVs'. I'm interested in both feedback, and pushback where you think I might be wrong.

Property In CVs Part 1: Who owns CV Property?

So often I hear expressions like "Oh, this is Methodist Property, or Presbyterian Property, or" - you get the picture. What is being referred to is who holds title. I want to suggest (perhaps controversially for some) this is different from who owns it.

So, lets start with a thought experiment which will highlight the issue.

For simplicity, imagine an hypothetical Methodist Parish and Presbyterian Parish deciding to form a CV. They look at the two church properties they have, and have them valued. The Methodist Property is worth more than the Presbyterian property, and a ratio is struck at 60:40 in favour of the Methodist Church (I'll deal with the issue of ratios next week). As they consider the properties – location, utility etc, they decide that the Presbyterian Property better suits their need, and the Methodist property is sold. Because it was a Presbyterian property it continues to be held in Presbyterian title – someone has to hold title. I want to suggest that this is simply an 'Administrative Convenience'. Does this mean that the Presbyterian partner owns it? Yes, it does - 40% of it. And the 'Methodist' partner owns 60% of it – yet it is held on Presbyterian title.

The building properly 'belongs' to the CV, yet as CVs have no legal status (as far as I'm aware – this is invested in the Partner Churches) it is held, looked after, maintained, used, and loved by the CV – on behalf of the partner churches. This has implications legally – about who has power of decision, and relating to issues like insurance, seeking approvals for building related works, and applying for funding for such works. So, while the main authority/responsibility goes with whoever holds title, hopefully we can see that the issues of ownership are much broader, and require an understanding of how each CV got to be where it is. It also requires a commitment from the Partners to working together to secure the best future for the CV – irrespective of who holds title.

Personal and Leadership Resources

Years in parish leadership has consistently demonstrated a willingness to kid ourselves about what our future might look like.

New Study Finds Wishful Thinking Can Have Catastrophic Consequences

My last parish had a fairly stable leadership team over many years. One of the exercises we engaged in was to put ourselves through the Belbins Team Roles

questionnaire. We discovered while we were rich in 'ideas' people, we were very lean in 'finishers' – people who actually 'made sure it got done!' One of our team emerged as 'monitor evaluator'. Until we had gone through this exercise we considered him a pain – he was always the one who would be pointing out the pitfalls and why things wouldn't work. After the Belbins exercise he was promoted to a valued member of the team, as we recognised that the role he fulfilled was essential.

Having said all that, cynicism sneaks in as I become aware of how few of our grand plans actually seem to really make a difference. Within the church – locally, regionally, nationally, there is a great deal of wishful thinking. This article is a call to realism, and points to the possibility that if we face squarely up to our situation as it is - rather than how we'd like it to be, and seeing our strategies for what they are - rather than the rose-coloured tint we put on them, we might be able to find better ways forward. It can be read here: <https://www.inc-aus.com/adam-hanft/new-study-finds-wishful-thinking-can-have-catastrophic-consequences.html>

Homilies

Trevor Hoggard covers both the Acts 8:20-40 text – focussing primarily on the grace of God extended to the rejected Ethiopian Eunuch, and the Gospel text John 15:1-8. His sermon can be experienced here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24n-0BcChAE>

My response to the Gospel text is titled 'The Real Deal'. In this homily, a response to Jesus claiming to be the True Vine, we reflect on Jesus invitation to a relationship of intimacy. It can be experienced here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rImyqDLjVw4>

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Ngā manaakitanga

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