

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FREE WESLEYAN CHURCH OF TONGA  
AND THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA  
CONCERNING THE RECOGNITION OF A  
DISTRICT OF THE FREE WESLEYAN CHURCH OF TONGA IN AUSTRALIA**

This agreement expresses the intention of paragraph 6 of the proposed Partnership Agreement between the two churches which says:

“For us a critical part of our relationship will be the deep care that we provide to people originally from one church now living in the country of the other church. We acknowledge that this care will be expressed mutually and in ways recognised and/or agreed between the two churches.”

**1. Mutual Recognitions**

The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (FWCT) and the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) recognise that:

- (a) The UCA is providing for the spiritual and pastoral care of Tongan people through congregations related in various ways to councils of the Uniting Church in Australia. In this agreement where reference is made to the UCA it includes Tongan congregations and bodies of the UCA.
- (b) The number of Tongan people worshipping in congregations of the FWCT in Australia has steadily grown. These congregations operate legally under two different incorporated bodies.
- (c) The members of the FWCT in Australia have sought to be related to the FWCT in Tonga for many years.
- (d) In response to repeated requests to clarify their relationship with Tonga the 2001 FWCT Conference agreed to establish a trial “District” in Australia. This “District” in Australia was to include all Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga congregations in Australia.
- (e) The FWCT Conference has delayed the confirmation of the “District” at its 2002 and 2003 meetings to allow further consultations to occur with the UCA.
- (f) Extensive consultations and discussions have occurred since 2001 concerning the proposed “District” including leaders of the FWCT and the UCA, Tongan members of the UCA, and members of FWCT congregations in Australia.
- (g) That the prime concerns of both the FWCT and the UCA are for:
  - (i) The provision of good quality spiritual and pastoral care for Tongan people originally from the FWCT.
  - (ii) Harmonious and cooperative relations between Tongan people in UCA and FWCT in Australia congregations.

**2. Agreement and Understandings**

The FWCT and the UCA mutually agree to the recognition by the FWCT Conference of the District of the FWCT in Australia as a means of providing for the spiritual and pastoral care of Tongan people worshipping in FWCT in Australia congregations.

This agreement is made with the following understandings:

- (a) That the District will seek to have cooperative and open relations with the UCA (including its Tongan congregations and bodies).
- (b) That the UCA (including its Tongan congregations or bodies) and the FWCT in Australia District will not seek to attract members from the other.
- (c) That the FWCT and the UCA will continue to work to strengthen relationships between the FWCT in Australia District and the UCA.
- (d) It is understood that the FWCT will be responsible for the oversight of the FWCT District in Australia.
- (e) That consideration will be given by the UCA to inviting observers from the FWCT in Australia District to attend meetings of UCA Presbytery and Synod in which FWCT congregations are situated and other relevant bodies of the UCA such as the Tongan National Conference.

- (f) That consideration be given by the FWCT to inviting observers from the UCA to attend meetings of the FWCT in Australia District.
- (g) The UCA and FWCT will seek to provide assistance, as they are able to facilitate the ministry and mission of the FWCT in Australia District.
- (h) That the FWCT and the UCA explore the possibility of meetings (or retreats) involving Tongan ministers from the UCA and the FWCT in Australia District.

### **3. Concerns and Issues**

If issues or concerns arise concerning the activities of the FWCT District in Australia or the UCA (including its Tongan congregations and bodies) then the following process will be followed:

- (a) If the FWCT has concerns or issues about how the UCA is relating to the FWCT District in Australia or has a special request, then the FWCT in Tonga will raise the matters with the designated officer of the UCA responsible for international relationships with the FWCT.
- (b) If the UCA has issues or concerns about the activities of the FWCT District in Australia or has special requests the designated officer of the UCA will raise these matters with the responsible officer or body within the FWCT in Tonga.

March 10, 2004