



## **POLICY FOR ESTABLISHING NEW CHURCH BRANCHES**

*(simplified version, May 2009)*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In 2003 the Parliament of the Cook Islands passed the Cook Islands Christian Church Incorporation Amendment Act, which replaced the old constitution of the CICC with a new constitution. Under the schedule of the new constitution the names of all existing Ekalesias was listed, being 24 from the Cook Islands, 16 from New Zealand and 9 from Australia making a total of 49 Ekalesias recognized as members of the CICC and able to attend and participate at the CICC General Assembly.

It is recognized and acknowledged by both the General Assembly and by the Executive Council that the number of Ekalesias of the CICC is bound to increase due to the continuing migration and spread of Cook Islanders throughout New Zealand and Australia. Accordingly it was time for the CICC to set out some policy guidelines for the introduction, development and acceptance of new Ekalesias under the umbrella of the CICC. Church planting amongst our people throughout Australia and New Zealand is part and parcel of the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **2. AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

The CICC believes that with an estimated 50,000 or more Cook Islanders living in New Zealand and about 25,000 or more living in Australia the potential for Church planting in these two countries have increased substantially. It is estimated that despite the fact that most of our people who left our islands came out of the CICC Church yet more than 80% no longer attend Church (any Christian Church ) in their new domicile in New Zealand or Australia.

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **Church Planting**

##### **1 Goal Statement**

Under the Constitution of the CICC one of the “sacred duties” of the Church is as follows:

*“To preach salvation*

*It is the work of the Church to preach the gospel to every creature and to expound the plan of salvation as taught in the scriptures. Christ has made salvation possible by providing it, the Church must make it actual by proclaiming it.”*

##### **2 The CICC will Encourage the Establishment of New Ekalesias in Australia and New Zealand**

The CICC will encourage the establishment of more CICC Ekalesias in Australia and New Zealand in the following manner.

1. Positive Church Planting. If the National Councils of the CICC in Australia or New Zealand recommends to the Executive Council the planting of a new Ekalesia in any locality in Australia and New Zealand.
2. The Executive Council shall satisfy itself of the following before agreeing to the recommendation of the National Councils of Australia or New Zealand.
  - (a) that there is a sizeable Cook Island population in the locality (minimum 500).
  - (b) that the new Ekalesia is not located close to an existing CICC Ekalesia (minimum of 5 kilometer).
  - (c) that the Cook Islands population in the location is likely to grow.
  - (d) that there are sound Christian leadership or potential leadership in the locality to form the backbone of the new Ekalesia.
  - (e) availability of suitable accommodation for the new Ekalesia for church building, meeting hall and accommodation for the pastor.
  - (f) any other relevant information which will assist the Executive Council in making its decision.
3. The Executive Council may decide as follows:
  - (a) approve the establishment of a new Ekalesia.
  - (b) reject the proposal to establish and new Ekalesia.
  - (c) defer the establishment of a new Ekalesia for further consideration.
4. No new branch shall be established or accepted by the CICC unless it complies with the above procedure.
5. No application for consideration of a new Ekalesia will be accepted if the new group is a breakaway from an existing Ekalesia of the CICC. All efforts shall be made to restore unity and reconciliation of the divided Ekalesia.
6. The CICC shall work closely with the National Councils of the CICC in New Zealand and Australia to develop a global plan for the evangelizing of Cook Islanders in Australia and New Zealand, followed by church planting.