

Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

22 – 24 AUGUST 2003

PRESENT Dean Drayton (President), Bruce Binnie, Elizabeth Burns, Dennis Chapman, Samantha Charlesworth, Sue Clarkson, Terence Corkin, Tony Davies, Bev Fabb, Susan Gormann, Wesley Gleeson, Geoffrey Grinton, Matthew Grudnoff, Troy Hamilton, Jason Kioa, Isabel Thomas Dobson, Allan Thompson, Myffie Trudinger, Julie Watts

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Rob Bos, Stu Cameron, John Evans, Robert Johnson, John Rowland, Jenny Tymms, Wendie Wilkie, Jan Trengove, Lindsay Faulkner, Alistair Christie, Allan Kuchler, Alistair Macrae.

WORSHIP On the Friday evening, as part of the formation of the community, the President presided at the opening Service of Holy Communion and Susan Gormann preached. On the Saturday Sue Clarkson led morning worship and Dean Drayton led evening worship. On the Sunday Allan Thompson led morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by Myffie Trudinger.

WELCOMES The President welcomed all who will be regular participants in the Standing Committee meetings over the next three years, especially those who are newly-elected members. The President welcomed Lin Hatfield-Dodds, who assisted Wendie Wilkie in the community building and orientation session, and the Moderators who had been invited to attend this meeting.

RECOGNITION OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND

On behalf of Standing Committee, the President acknowledged the local Indigenous people and their role as custodians of the land on which the meeting took place.

APOLOGIES

03.38 **It was resolved** to receive the apology of Chris Budden, Shayne Blackman, James Haire, Sealin Garlett and Liva Tukutama for absence from the whole of the meeting, and from Geoffrey Grinton for absence from the Friday evening session.

PASTORAL MATTERS

The General Secretary referred to the illness of James Haire who had taken ill at the 10th Assembly in Melbourne and was undergoing a series of tests. Bev Fabb noted that 14 Iranian men were facing deportation back to Iran over the weekend, some of them are Christians. The General Secretary informed the Standing Committee that a petition has been circulated by EMU and it will be brought to the meeting on Friday evening.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

On the Friday evening Wendie Wilkie and Lin Hatfield-Dodds led the Standing Committee in a time of community building which assisted the new committee in the formation of a community, the understanding its responsibilities, its working procedures, and its relationships with other bodies.

REFLECTING ON THE TENTH ASSEMBLY

On the Saturday morning the Committee spent time reflecting on the Tenth Assembly in table groups and then the groups shared their experiences of the 10th Assembly. Among others, the Committee emphasized the strong sense of community, togetherness at the Assembly, praised the outstanding organization, the grace with which the practical arrangements were dealt, the profoundness of the Bible studies, and the excellence of the KUCA-A presentation. The General Secretary noted that the Design Team was committed to building a community and he had felt very well supported by the Assembly and the staff. The President expressed a heartfelt thank you to Geoffrey Grinton for assuming the demanding task of Business Manager at the Assembly and noted that the Assembly had been a learning process, a really positive but exhausting one, and it was a marvelous time to remember.

- 03.39** **It was resolved to** adopt a minute of appreciation to the Synod of Victoria/Tasmania for the excellent organization.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1. New documents were distributed. The General Secretary reported that Document 6 had been withdrawn as Uniting Education wanted to do more work on it, and that there were not reports from the Legal Reference Committee (Document 7) and the National Finance Committee (Document 9). The orientation session was rescheduled as the Moderators had been invited to the meeting.

- 03.40** **It was resolved to:**

- 03.40.01 approve the timetable and agenda of the meeting as outlined in Document 1, noting that the committee is free to vary the agenda at any time.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 03.41** **It was resolved to** confirm the minutes of the meetings held 14-16 March 2003 with the following corrections:

- 03.41.01 to add to Minute 03.08 re the report on the review of the Associate General Secretary:

03.08.01 receive the report;

03.08.02 express the Standing Committee's affirmation of the skills and gifts that Wendie brings to this important role in the life of the Church and of the Assembly in particular;

03.08.03 approve amendments to the position description as presented in the report;

03.08.07 request the General Secretary to take appropriate steps to enable the ASC to engage in a policy discussion of equitable remuneration for lay and ministerial senior executive appointments in the Assembly.

03.41.02 to renumber minutes 03.08.01 – 03.08 .03 as 03.08.04 – 03.08.06.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On the Friday evening the President reported to the Standing Committee on his various activities in his short time as President. He spoke of the invitation to Canada that never came and he feels it was God's timing as it would have been inappropriate to be out of the country after the Tenth Assembly. He spoke of his visit to South Australia and the amazing opportunity that presented itself to him to spend some time with Northern Regional Council of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress members. He highlighted his trip to Milingimbi where he spent three days and was involved in strong discussions. He had said that he wanted to go and to listen and emphasized it was a historical meeting as NRCC was moving to organize its work into 3 areas. He spoke of the funeral where he formally represented UCA for the first time and where dances replaced words, nothing was said about the Tenth Assembly but everything has been said. The President said he will treasure this experience especially because it was founded on the ground of reconciliation. A great deal of time has been spent reposting to the Church regarding Proposal 84. He also added that this short period of time had been an important learning time for him and thanked the Standing Committee and the congregations for their prayers and support.

03.42 It was resolved to receive the report.

REFERRALS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE FROM THE TENTH ASSEMBLY

The General Secretary introduced Documents 2 and 2A consisting of all resolutions of the Tenth Assembly which contain a referral or request to the Standing Committee.

1. Appointment of a Task Group re the Code of Ethics

03.43 It was resolved to:

03.43.01 appoint the following persons to the Task Group re the Code of Ethics: Meg Herbert;

03.43.02 determine that the terms of reference shall be:

- the knowledge of the Code of Ethics within the life of the church
- the operation of the Code of Ethics within the church, including within different cultural backgrounds
- whether areas addressed by the Code of Ethics should be broader than professional ethics ie "ministry practice"
- the inclusion of candidates for the specified ministries of Ministry of the Word, Ministry of Deacon and Ministry of Youth Worker
- the inclusion of persons in recognised placements fulfilling the roles of those ministries named in the Code of Ethics, and
- such other matters as may be agreed in consultation with the Standing Committee

- 03.43.03 request the Task Group to report to the Standing Committee, with any recommendations arising from the review, no later than July 2005.
- 03.43.04 request the Assembly Officers to approach people to serve in the Task Groups and bring names for confirmation to the next meeting.

2. Arising from the Task Group on Theological Education

03.44 It was resolved to:

- 03.44.01 receive the referral from the Assembly (Proposal 22.5) to review the mandate membership and name of the Ministerial Education with a view to widening the responsibilities to include theological education of lay persons, and any necessary Regulation changes.
- 03.44.02 appoint the following persons to the review group: Terence Corkin (Convenor);
- 03.44.03 request the review group to bring a progress report no later than July 2004.
- 03.44.04. request the Assembly Officers to approach people to serve on the Task Groups and bring names for confirmation to the next meeting.

3. Re Ministry Leadership (specified)

03.45 It was resolved to:

- 03.45.01 receive the referral from the Assembly (Proposal 83.1);
- 03.45.02 appoint a working group to:
- develop the Terms of Reference for the Task Group(s) envisaged in the proposal
 - determine a process for undertaking the task including, but not limited to, consideration of the range of tasks and committees that will be required
 - bring recommendations of people who might serve on the Task Group(s)
- 03.45.03 appoint Chris Budden (Convenor), Bruce Mullan and Rob Bos to do this work;
- 03.45.04 request the working group to bring recommendations to the November meeting of the Standing Committee.

4. Review of the Sexual Misconduct Regulations

03.46 It was resolved to:

- 03.46.01 appoint the following persons to a Review Group to review the Sexual Misconduct Regulations:
Robert Johnson (Convenor), Allan Thompson, Philip Battye, Rob Ewing, Dianne Stanton and Jenny Byrnes with John Evans and Jenny Tymms as corresponding members;
- 03.46.02 determine that the terms of reference for the review shall include, but is not limited to:
- a) the principles which underpin the process, including the outcomes which are desired by the Church;
 - b) those things which make it more difficult for the process to deliver equitable outcomes for the parties and the Church;
 - c) limitations on the process which arise due to lack of clarity in language;

- d) consideration of whether the use of panels assists the process or whether other options should be adopted;
- e) ways in which there can be consistency in the decisions of committees;
- f) ways in which original complainants can be respected in the Discipline processes;
- g) consideration of whether the Regulations and Policies covering sexual misconduct and discipline should be extended to candidates for the ministries of Minister of the Word, Deacon and Youth Worker in recognised placements.

- 03.46.03 advise the Review Group that it is to consult with each synod in the exercise of this task;
- 03.46.04 refer Proposal 37 to the Review Group for its consideration in developing responses to the needs identified in the Review;
- 03.46.05 request the Review Group to report to the November 2004 meeting of the Standing Committee.

5. Multicultural Ministry Policies

03.47 It was resolved to:

- 03.47.01 establish a Task Group to review the following Assembly policies:
- The 1985 Statement “We are a Multicultural Church” and 1985 resolutions
 - The Property Guidelines of the Uniting Church (1992; revised 2002)
 - 1995 Assembly Resolutions relating to the Reception of Ministers from Partner Churches in Asia and the Pacific (94.32)
 - The Guidelines on Receiving of Mission Co-workers (Co-written with UIM, 1998)
 - The Alternative Korean Regulations (2000)
 - Guidelines for Biennial National Conferences of Migrant-ethnic Communities of the Uniting Church in Australia
 - Guidelines for Migrant-ethnic Congregations of the UCA in Relation to the UCA and their Homeland Churches (2000)

and how they impact on the functioning and role of different Councils of the Church, and the processes followed by the Councils of the Church in implementing these policies;

- 03.47.02 appoint the following persons to the Task Group:
- Clive Pearson (Convenor), Jason Kioa, Myong Duk Yang, Caroline Thornley, Mata Havea, Andrew Elia, Eseta Meneilly
- 03.47.03 request the Task Group to report to the March 2005 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee, with any recommendations.

6. Proposal 66 “Membership in a culturally diverse church”

03.48 It was resolved to:

- 03.48.01 Request the General Secretary to
- a) consult with Assembly Multicultural Ministry to develop a process through which the 12 persons referred to in Proposal 66 can be identified

- b) inquire of Synod Secretaries about the processes and policies they use in identifying people from non-Anglo culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds for appointment to Assembly
- c) bring a report to a later meeting of the Standing Committee regarding a process for the implementation of Proposal 66.

7. Proposal 52 “A National Church”

03.49 It was resolved to:

- 03.49.01 receive the referral from the Assembly of Proposal 52 “A National Church”;
- 03.49.02 refer proposal 52 to the Synod Secretaries and invite them to bring a proposal about a process for addressing the issues raised in Proposal 52 to the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

8. Proposal 55 “Ministerial Stipends and Allowances”

03.50 It was resolved to:

- 03.50.01 receive the referral from the Assembly of Proposal 55 re Ministerial stipend and allowances;
- 03.50.02 note that with the discontinuation of the National Finance Committee at the end of 2003 that it is anticipated that a national co-operation group will be established;
- 03.50.03 refer Proposal 55 to this new national co-operation group when it is established and request it to bring comment and recommendations as soon as possible.

8. Anglican – Uniting Church Dialogue

The Christian Unity Working Group advised that it is not possible to appoint the UCA members of the Dialogue group due to Anglican considerations. The UCA membership of the dialogue will be considered at the November meeting.

9. Proposal 35 “Reception of Ministers Committee”

03.51 It was resolved to:

- 03.51.01 request the General Secretary to consult with the Synod Secretaries of Western Australia and New South Wales and Multicultural Ministry to determine the issues that they believe need to be addressed and bring a report with any proposals to the November meeting of the Standing Committee.

10. Membership of Presbytery – Regulation 3.4.15

03.52 It was resolved to:

- 03.52.01 request the Assembly Legal Reference Committee to amend regulation 3.4.15 in order to enable Presbyteries to have the option of appointing retired Ministers and Ministers in Association as members of Presbytery.

11. Requests of the Standing Committee in Proposal 84.4

03.53 It was resolved to:

- 03.53.01 request the Synod of South Australia to be the lead Synod in identifying people to develop resources that will guide Congregations and Presbyteries on how to conduct discussions on contentious issues in ways that comply with the church's policy on vilification and harassment;
- 03.53.02 note that preliminary legal advice has been received, based on the Victorian legislation, regarding the Church's position under anti-discrimination legislation. This advice supports the view presented to the Church by the previous Standing Committee. A more complete advice, including reference to legislation from other jurisdictions, is being developed and will be distributed as soon as practicable.
- 03.53.03 request the Assembly Legal Reference Committee to amend Regulation 2.7.16(l) to make more explicit the role of the Presbyteries in the in the placement of people in specified ministries.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. Agency Arrangements

The General Secretary introduced Document 10, which presented decisions of the Tenth Assembly and highlighted the implications for the work of the Assembly Standing Committee as well as presenting background information for new members of the Standing Committee.

- 03.54 It was resolved to** receive the report.

2. Beneficiary Fund

Rob Runco and Robert Hoskin introduced Documents 3 and 3A including a powerpoint presentation that focused on the benefits the Fund can provide, the Fund's investment profile, the Fund's performance, structural issues, key impact factors and the variety of options the Fund need to choose from. Discussion then took place in table groups to seek the Committee's view on which option is the most viable.

03.55 It was resolved to:

- 03.55.01 receive the report;
- 03.55.02 encourage the Beneficiary Fund to:
- undertake further analysis of alternative options in the light of discussion at the Standing Committee
 - obtain a legal opinion as to the legal implications associated with the alternative courses of action
 - continue to consult with the Synod Stipend Committees
 - continue dialogue with the Church Working Group
 - closely monitor the number of potential Member exits from the Fund and evaluate the impact, if any, on the alternative options

- prepare a report and recommendation for the consideration of the Assembly Standing Committee and present it at its meeting in November 2003.

3. Coolamon College

The General Secretary spoke to Document 18, consisting of a proposal submitted by the Coolamon College Council. Discussion followed.

03.56 It was resolved to:

- 03.56.01 approve the position of Dean of Students/Education Developer at Coolamon College as a placement and authorise the General Secretary to fill the placement and report to the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

4. Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga

Jason Kioa presented Document 11, consisting of a report on action taken since the March 2003 Standing Committee meeting and the proposed actions to hold consultations with various Tongan groups, a preliminary proposal to be discussed in various consultations and discussions and an amended form of the Draft Partnership Agreement.

03.57 It was resolved to:

- 03.57.01 receive the report
- 03.57.02 affirm the process of consultations with Tongan congregations and groups from 20th to 24th November
- 03.57.03 give initial approval to the framework for a preliminary proposal to be made to Tongan congregations and other groups as a basis for discussion, comment and amendment.
- 03.57.04 approve the revised form of the Draft Partnership Agreement as the basis of further discussions with the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga and consideration by councils, committees and groups in the Uniting Church.
- 03.57.05 request a further progress report for the November meeting.
- 03.57.06 request a comprehensive report, including proposals concerning Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga congregations in Australia, amended guidelines for the Tongan National Conference, and a draft Partnership Agreement be submitted at the March 2004 meeting.

5. Legal Reference Committee

There were no documents for the Legal Reference Committee report, the General Secretary spoke to it.

03.58 It was resolved to:

- acknowledge that Peter Tebbutt and Pat Dale, two long-serving members, are concluding their service on the Committee and adopt the following minute of appreciation for their long service.

Prior to union, Pat Dale was a member of the Joint Constitution Commission and Council for a number of years. She has been a member of the first eight (8) Assemblies and a member of the first four (4) Assembly Standing Committees (4 trienniums). She has served as a member of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee from union and was Chairperson of the Committee from 1982 to 2000.

Mr H W (Peter) Tebbutt was Chairperson of the Joint Planning Committee for New South Wales prior to union. Peter estimates that the Committee held over one hundred (100) meetings, usually for a duration of about four (4) hours. He has been a member of six (6) Assemblies and four (4) Assembly Standing Committees. He was appointed as Chairperson of the Regulations Review Committee by the first Assembly and has been a member of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee from the time of union.

Pat and Peter have each made unique contributions to the Assembly, marked by dedication, professional expertise, sensitivity to people and in dealing with issues affecting the Church, and a sharing of knowledge, experience and wisdom.

6. Multicultural Ministry

The General Secretary introduced Document 17, consisting of a report on the future shape of the Assembly work in Multicultural Ministry, development of a national Multicultural Ministry Network, and advice about the establishment of four new Assembly Working groups. Discussion followed.

03.59

It was resolved to:

03.59.01

receive the report;

03.59.02

request more information from Helen Richmond, National Director of Multicultural Ministry on how the Reference Committee will work.

7. Reference Committee on Relations with People of Other Faiths

Wendie Wilkie spoke to Document 16, consisting of requests for policy changes to be made prior to the appointment of the members of the Reference Committee.

03.60

It was resolved that:

03.60.01

the reference committee be related only to Assembly work and not incorporate the NSW Synod committee;

03.60.02

its membership comprise
a) 6-8 people from NSW synod;
b) a person from each other synod – nominated by that synod;
c) the Associate General Secretary or other person nominated by the General Secretary, and
d) the President, ex officio

03.60.03

the committee have an executive comprising the people from NSW Synod and the Associate General Secretary;

03.60.04

the committee closely liaise with other agencies of the Assembly, especially Uniting Justice, Multi-cultural ministry and Uniting International Mission;

03.60.05 the membership of the committee be

- Rev Ray Richmond – chair Minister at Wayside Chapel and a member of the committee in the last triennium.
- Wilma Viswanathan - works with NCCA. Sri-Lankan woman with background in Hinduism and multi-cultural issues. Has been on the committee last triennium. Wilma was the chairperson last triennium.
- Rev Graham Brookes minister at Lakemba with special interest in Muslim-Christian Relations. Rev Clyde Dominsh – retired minister with special interest and expertise in Jewish Christian relations
- Rev Ian Pearson – minister at Pitt St Uniting, new to the committee this triennium.
- Mary Gibbs - young lay woman, background in international mission. New to the committee this triennium.
- Stuart Mills - young lay man, also new to the committee this triennium. Has post graduate qualifications in comparative religions, currently working with NCCA on Decade to Overcome Violence.
- Rev Sef Carol - young female minister, chaplain at MLC School which has a large Muslim population. Lectures occasionally at UTC in multi-cultural issues. New to the committee.
- Five other people nominated by the Synods of Qld, SA, WA, Victoria / Tasmania and the Northern Synod.

8. Theology and Discipleship

Rob Bos introduced Document 15, consisting of proposed changes to Theology and Discipleship's mandate and way of working in light of the decisions made by the Tenth Assembly regarding the structure of Assembly committees and staff, as well as the resolutions on the role of the General Secretary, and Document 15A consisting of nominations for Theology and Discipleship conveners and working groups.

03.61 It was resolved to:

03.61.01 receive the report

03.61.02 approve to revised mandate to read:

“The role of Theology and Discipleship is:

- a) to provide theological leadership by assisting the Church and to reflect on, articulate and apply the Christian faith and to engage the culture, and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.
- b) to support the Working Group on Doctrine and the Working Group on Worship in their tasks of advising the Assembly.
- c) to provide national leadership to the Church in the Assembly's functions in Evangelism, Gospel & Gender, Missiology and Spirituality.
- d) to integrate and focus the above tasks, and the role of the National Consultant, Theology & Discipleship, around the Assembly's stated goals for the triennium.”

03.61.03 approve revised position description as follows:

- a) that the title of the key staff position be changed to “National Consultant, Theology and Discipleship” and to serve as an ex officio member of agency’s various working groups and networks;
- b) that the National Consultant’s role be:
 - i. to resource and co-ordinate the functions of all Working Groups/Network within Theology and Discipleship
 - ii. to offer theological leadership to the whole Church, in accord with the traditions of the Uniting Church as expressed in the Basis of Union;
 - iii. to consult with the Working Groups and the National Forum on the development and recommendation of policies for presentation to the Assembly or its Standing Committee;
 - iv. through liaison with the President, General Secretary and Assembly agencies and with appropriate bodies, assist them in areas of theology and ecclesiology;
 - v. to share in representing the overall life and mission of the Church to all sectors of the Church;
 - vi. to work as a member of cross-agency multi-disciplinary staff teams, as determined by the General Secretary.

03.61.04 express sincere thanks to Rev Dr Wes Campbell, Rev Myung Hwa Park, Ms Kirsten Preece and Rev Dr Richard Wallace for their outstanding contributions to Theology and Discipleship from 1998 to 2003, and to Ms Colleen Geyer during 2002 and 2003.

9. UnitingJustice

Bev Fabb spoke to Documents 13, Document 13A and Document 14, with Document 13 being a proposal to revise the mandate for UnitingJustice Australia (formerly National Social Responsibility and Justice) Document 13A indicating the planned ways of working in the next triennium, Document 14 consisting of a report on the actions undertaken by UnitingJustice to meet the requests from the Standing Committee to consider a range of issues around the emerging ministry in Detention Centres and matters considered relevant to the Church’s work with asylum seekers/refugees.

03.62 It was resolved to:

03.62.01 approve the revised mandate;

03.62.02 note that that the Refugee Working Group has met its term of reference and to request UnitingJustice to thank and discharge the Refugee Working Group;

03.62.03 Defer the endorsement of Alternative approaches to asylum seekers: Reception and Transitional Processing System as the Uniting Church’s preferred model for reception of asylum seekers to the November 2003 Standing Committee meeting.

APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS OF COMMITTEES

The General Secretary presented documents 8 and 8A, consisting of profiles of nominees for election to Assembly committees.

03.63 It was resolved to appoint the following members of Reference Committees for a period of three years to 2006:

03.63.01 **CHRISTIAN UNITY WORKING GROUP**
Secretary Rev Rob Gallacher

Morag Logan
Rachel Kronberger
Eric Smith
Isabel Thomas Dobson
Alistair Macrae
Taryn Harding

Michael Champion
Joan Mcrae-Benson
Maureen Postma
Bart Delloso
Robyn French

03.63.02

COVENANTING

John Brown
Sandy Boyce
Wendie Wilkie

03.63.03

DEFENCE FORCE CHAPLAINCY

03.63.03.01

It was resolved to approve the current Convener and committee continues until November 30 2003.

L J Gaghan
Marion McCarthy
John Maddern
Graham Pitman
W D Reddin
Margaret Sandow
Ben Usher

Mark Hinton
R McIntosh
Trish Perkins
Margaret Pitman
Peter Ryan
L Stuckey

03.63.04

FRONTIER SERVICES

Keith Fagg
Sealin Garlett
Gale Hall
Jan Trengove
Rosemary Young

Shayne Blackman
Vince Ross
Bruce Walker
Wendie Wilkie
Gale Cressewell

03.63.05

HISTORICAL

Christine Gordon
Joan Mansfield
Dr Andrew Thornley

Daryl Lightfoot
Rev Wendy Snook

03.63.06

LEGAL REFERENCE

Warrick van Ede
Paula Reid
Jelita Gardner-Rush
Philip Battye (corresponding member)
Prof Miles McGregor-Lowndes (corresponding member)

Maxine Roberts
Dwayne Hickman
Terence Corkin

03.63.07

MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

Rev Alamoti Lavaki
Rev Sophia Ng
Rev Apwe Ting

Meryl Gemo
Eseta Menielly
Rev Dr Clive Pearson

03.63.08

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS

Ian Breward
Jason Choi
Robert Johnson
Graham McAnalley
Howard Wallace

Heather Cameron
Elliott Forsyth
Jason Kioa
Alison McRae

03.63.09

UNITINGJUSTICE

Paul Chalson
Rosemary Miller
Ann Wansbrough
Andrew Watts

Jason John
Rohan Pryor
John Woodley
Bev Fabb

- 03.63.10 **THEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP**
- 03.63.10.01 **NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON WORSHIP**
Convener: Rev. Dr Paul Walton
- Members:**
Rev. Pam Batson.
Ms Michelle Cook
Rev. Dr Gedeon Gakindi
Mr Michael Jeffrey
Mrs Terani Lima
Rev. Dr Anita Monro
Rev. David MacGregor
Rev. Ray Nutley
Rev. Robert Warrick.
Rev. Geraldine Wheeler
- 03.63.10.02 **NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON DOCTRINE**
- Convener:**
Rev. Dr Chris Budden
- Members:**
To be brought to November meeting.
- 03.63.10.03 **NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON EVANGELISM**
- Convener:**
Ms Jan Trengove
- 03.63.10.04 **NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON GOSPEL AND GENDER**
- Convener:**
Ms Sue Goodwin
- 03.63.10.05 **NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON MISSIOLOGY**
- Convener**
Ms Tina Rendell
- 03.63.11 **UNITINGCARE AUSTRALIA**
- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Harry Herbert | Janet Scott |
| Paul Drielsma | Director of UnitingCare Qld (position to be filled) |
| Jill Wilson | Stephen Muggleton |
| Colleen Pearce | David Pargeter |
| Phil Conrick | Allan Thompson |
| Peter Bicknell | Michaela Tiller |
| Robert Watson | Rosemary Young |
| Ann Wansborough | |
- 03.63.12 **UNITING CHURCH OVERSEAS AID**
- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Rev. Bill Fischer | Rev. Carolyn Thornley |
| Rosemary Miller | Bob Jakes |
| Rev. John Mavor | Wendie Wilkie |
| Gwen Willis | Jamie Isbister |
| Rev Rob Brown | |
- 03.63.13 **UNITING EDUCATION**
- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Rev Dr Adrian Brown | Rod Dungan |
| Brad Fenner | Rev. Bethany Hancock |

Rosemary Johnston Lorna Martin
Rick Morrell Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Nolan
Helen Rodd Wendie Sargeant
Margaret Scanlon Wendie Wilkie

03.63.14 **UNITING INTERNATIONAL MISSION**

Mrs Margaret Reeson Rev Dr Gordon Dicker
Rev Steve Orme Rev Carolyn Thornley
Ms Rebecca Thiem Rev Gordon Ramsay
Rev Dr Dennis Robinson

03.63.15 Nominations for Church Polity and Coolamon College will be presented to the November meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Correspondence

The General Secretary tabled correspondence that had been received from the following presbyteries: Riverina, Downs, Gippsland, Eyre, The Coorong, Central Queensland, Parramatta-Nepean, Georges River.

03.64 It was resolved to receive the correspondence

2. EMU Petition

On Friday evening representatives of EMU presented a petition that had been circulated through the Church in response to the Assembly decision on Proposal 84. The President received the petition and a response was discussed, at length, over the course of the meeting.

03.65 It was resolved to:

03.65.01 Receive the petitions signed by approximately 24,000 members and “attendees” and acknowledge with deep regret their “deep spiritual and emotional dismay and concern”;

03.65.01.01 advise the signatories of the petitions of Standing Committee’s decisions in relation to Proposal 84;

03.65.01.02 strongly reject assertions within the petitions and affirm that:
(i) the concept of “right relationships” was neither adopted nor recognised by the Assembly;
(ii) the Assembly has not placed the Uniting Church outside of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church;
(iii) the Assembly has acted faithfully in accordance with the Basis of Union;
(iv) the leadership of the Assembly did not mislead the Assembly;
(v) those who adhere to resolution 84 have not separated themselves from the Uniting Church.

03.65.02 Acknowledge the request to recall the Assembly for the purpose of referring proposal 84 for concurrence and engaging in a service of repentance. The ASC declines to accede to this request, noting the following:
(i) the clarification offered by the ASC of Proposal 84, in particular that the 10th Assembly did not endorse or approve “right relationships”;
(ii) proposal 84 did not introduce new policy for the Church;

- (iii) councils of the Church are free to discuss matters of ministry, membership and sexuality and to bring proposals to other councils of the Church as appropriate.

03.65.03 request the General Secretary to contact as many individuals as possible who signed the petition and provide them with a short pastoral letter picking up the Standing Committee responses to the petition, referring them to the website for more information and advising them of Standing Committee action re Proposal 84.

General Report

The General Secretary introduced Document 12, consisting of a report that contained information to the new members on the translation of Uniting in Worship; publication arrangements in the Assembly, Human Resources policies and procedures, changes in the Accounting Services Unit, location of the Sydney Assembly Offices and the General Secretary's leave. Discussion followed.

03.66 It was resolved to

03.66.01 Receive the report;

03.66.02 Release \$20,000 from the Wesley Uniting Employment funds to pay for the work to be undertaken in order to address the unresolved issues of HR policy and procedures.

- 03.66.03
- a) appoint three members of the Standing Committee to work with the General Secretary to bring to the November 2003 Standing Committee meeting a strategy/position paper on the property needs of the Assembly agencies within a five year time frame
 - b) the General Secretary to consult with National Finance Committee in relation to the financial implications connected to any move in the location of the principal office;
 - c) express openness to look beyond 222 Pitt Street for the principal office and not necessarily to be located with the New South Wales Synod.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE TENTH ASSEMBLY

The Standing Committee devoted a significant amount of time considering a response to the concerns expressed about Assembly Proposal 84 and the UMU petition. The Moderators were in attendance and contributed to this discussion on Saturday.

03.67 It was resolved:

The Assembly Standing Committee joyfully acknowledges that:
"The Church as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit confesses Jesus as Lord over its own life; it also confesses that Jesus is Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation, of a new humanity." (Basis of Union, para 3)

We further gratefully acknowledge that:
"in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules and renews [us] as his Church." (Basis of Union, para 4)

Having prayerfully met in retreat from 22 to 24 August 2003, seeking God's will and believing this to be God's guidance, we resolved that the Assembly Standing Committee:

03.68 STATEMENT OF APOLOGY AND REGRET

03.68.01 Acknowledges with regret that proposal 84 and the way it was reported has evoked depths of shared suffering among members of the Church, leading to many members experiencing pain, hurt, confusion and anger.

03.68.02 Apologises to members and ministers that more was not done to make them aware in advance of the Tenth Assembly that matters of membership, ministry and sexuality would be considered by the Assembly.

03.69 CLARIFYING PROPOSAL 84

03.69.01 Notes that “Celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in marriage” and “Right relationships” referred to in parts 2(ii) and (iii) of proposal 84 were intended to illustrate some differing views held by church members and have never been endorsed or approved by the Assembly or its Standing Committee.

03.69.02 Celebrates that in the Uniting Church we have already agreed on and affirmed important matters regarding marriage, marriage preparation, marriage counseling, divorce, re-marriage, sexuality and sexual ethics (Assembly minutes 97.31.5-97.31.13) and we have adopted the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice which gives clear guidance about the appropriate conduct and accountability of ministers.

03.69.03 In order to clarify the meaning of proposal 84 in accordance with the rationale presented to the Assembly, determines to act under its powers stated in Constitution clause 47 and Regulation 3.6.26 to vary proposal 84 as follows:

03.69.03.01 note the following extracts from Assembly minute 00.25.03:

- (a) we celebrate that the Church’s faith is in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that the Church’s work and unity are built upon the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ;
- (b) we affirm the authority of the Scriptures as defined in the Basis of Union, acknowledging that within the Church there is a range of views on questions of Biblical interpretation on various matters of Christian faith and practice;
- (c) we affirm we are bound together by Christ, and because we love the Uniting Church as part of the one holy catholic and apostolic church we will continue to work together in our diversity as servants of the living God.

03.69.03.02 noting that:

- (i) within the Church people of faith have wrestled with integrity to interpret Scripture in relation to the issue of Christian sexual ethics and have on some issues come to mutually exclusive positions;
- (ii) membership of the Uniting Church is open to all persons subject only to the guidance of the Basis of Union, the Constitution, the Regulations and policies of the Assembly,

call upon members of the Church to seek to live together in peace as people of faith, notwithstanding differing views in the matter of same gender relationships.

03.69.03.03 remind Presbyteries of the decisions of previous Assemblies that:

- (a) in considering issues related to candidature, ordination or commissioning for specified ministries, and the placement of persons in specified ministries, decisions should only be taken on a case by case basis; and
- (b) a decision on the suitability of an applicant or candidate depends upon a wide range of criteria and may include consideration of the manner in which the applicant’s or candidate’s sexuality is expressed.

03.69.03.04

request the Standing Committee:

- (a) to provide guidance for Congregations and Presbyteries on how to conduct discussions on contentious issues in ways that comply with the Church's policy on vilification and harassment;
- (b) to seek advice for the Church on the legal implications of the relevant legislation, eg anti discrimination legislation, anti vilification legislation, etc; and advise councils of the Church of this advice; and
- (c) to amend, on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, Regulation 2.7.16(l) to make more explicit the role of presbyteries in the placement of people in specified ministries."

03.69.04

informs the Church that congregations and councils of the Church who wish to state a sexual ethic may elect to do so after prayerful consideration and study of the Scriptures providing that

- there is respect for and acknowledgment of those who hold a different view;
- such statements do not prevent the consideration on a case-by-case basis of individuals related to candidature, ordination or commissioning, and placement, according to proposal 84.3.

Notes of the variations made by the Standing Committee to Proposal 84

- *This wording of Proposal 84 is to be used in all future discussion on this matter.*
- *in part 1(a) the words "We celebrate" have been added, in order to be fully consistent with the resolution of the Ninth Assembly;*
- *in parts 1(b) and (c) the words "we affirm" have been added, in order to be fully consistent with the resolution of the Ninth Assembly;*
- *in part 2 line 1 "Recognising" has been replaced by "Noting";*
- *in part 2 clauses (ii) and (iii) have been deleted;*
- *in part 2 clause (iv) has been renumbered as clause (ii);*
- *in part 2 last line "same sex" has been replaced by "same gender";*
- *in part 3 line 1 the words "of the decisions of previous Assemblies" have been added.*

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 4.00pm with prayer led by Myffie Trudinger.

NEXT MEETING:

14 – 16 November 2003