

18th July 2003

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write this letter, along with the other Moderators of the Uniting Church, following decisions made at this meeting of the National Assembly in relation to sexuality, membership and ministry. The media coverage has generally been sensationalist and, at times, inaccurate.

I am aware that some of our members may be alarmed or angered by what they think has been decided. Therefore it is very important that we convey to the whole church accurate information. Please make this letter and the attached Resolution 84 freely available.

The resolution clarifies decisions made by previous Assemblies:

- o It reaffirms the position we have always held on church membership.
- o In relation to ordination the Presbyteries, as always, make decisions on the suitability of candidates on a case by case basis.
- o It recognises that parts of our church have as their basic Christian standard 'celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in marriage'.
Others operate on a Christian standard that has come to be referred to as 'right relationships' as described in the 1997 Report - Uniting Sexuality and Faith.
- o It calls us to continue 'to live together as people of faith' with these differences.

Please be assured that no congregation will have ministers imposed upon them who in conscience they cannot accept.

The proposal attempts to help the Uniting Church be a place where all its members can participate in the mission and ministry of Christ through the Church, seeking to live up to the high expectations of our Christian calling. I pray this will be your experience.

A group of Uniting Church leaders will meet in the next fortnight to produce a more detailed resource for our members in relation to these issues.

I urge members to respond to one another with respect and understanding; with the dignity and love due to brothers and sisters in Christ.

And above all pray that the church can witness powerfully to Jesus Christ whose grace is sufficient to hold us together.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. Alistair Christie
(Moderator, Synod of NSW)
Rev. Alistair Macrae
(Moderator, Synod of Victoria & Tasmania)
Rev. Colleen Grieve
(Chairperson/Moderator, Presbytery of Tasmania)

Rev. Allan Kuchler
(Moderator, Synod of Queensland)
Mrs. Jan Trengove
(Moderator, Synod of South Australia)

Rev. Lindsay Faulkner
(Moderator, Northern Synod)
Rev. Gemmel Sherwood
(Moderator, Synod of Western Australia)

18 / 7/2003

親愛在基督裏的朋友,

我與聯合教會的議長因著教會全國大會就性問題、會籍及事工所作出的決定而寫下此信。由於傳媒在報導上過於感性,所以出現了不付合事實的情況。

我意識到部份會友會因著對他們以為已決定的而感到驚覺或憤怒。因此我們認為將教會所作出的決定向你們準確地傳達是十分重要的。請將此信並所通過的84方案自由傳遞。

方案澄清了上一屆全國大會的決定:

- o 重申我們對有教會會籍的立場
- o 有關眾教區按立(聖職人員)^{1*}上,以個別的個案型式,來考慮候選人是否合適

^{1*} 譯者按

- o 確認了在教會中,有認為基督徒的標準是「單身者過獨身生活或結婚者忠於婚姻」,而其他則認為是1997年的合一之性問題及信仰報告中的「適當之關係」。
- o 呼籲在分歧中,大家繼續以信心同共存。

請放心,個別堂是不會被逼接受一個他們良心不能接納的牧者。這個建議旨在幫助聯合教會能夠容納所有的會友共同參與基督藉教會所確立的使命和事工,並尋求達到基督徒最高的期望。我祈禱這將會是你們的經驗。

一羣聯合教會的領袖將在兩個星期後舉行會議,並對這個問題向會友提供一個更詳細的報告。我懇求眾會友以尊重、了解、尊嚴,並在基督裏弟兄姊妹的愛中回應這個問題。除此以外,請為教會禱告,叫她能滿有見證基督的能力,其恩典能夠叫我們聯合在一起。

此致

Rev. Alistair Christie
(議長, 新南威爾斯省總會)

Rev. Alistair Macrae
(議長, 維多利亞省及塔斯曼尼亞省總會)

Rev. Colleen Grieve
(主席及議長, 塔斯曼尼亞省教區)

Rev. Allan Kuchler
(議長, 昆士蘭省總會)

Rev. Gemmel Sherwood
(議長, 西澳省總會)

Rev. Lindsay Faulkner
(議長, 北嶺地總會)

Mrs. Jan Trengove
(議長, 南澳省總會)