

Multicultural Policies 1985-2004

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WE ARE A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

A statement adopted by the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, July 1985

1. The Uniting Church in Australia is a union of Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. Its unity is both the gift of God through Christ who is the head of the church and the fruit of the labours of those who sought to be responsive to the prayer of Christ that his disciples might be one.
2. The Basis of Union also points to the fact that the Uniting Church unites not only three former denominations, but also Christians of many cultures and ethnic origins:
Paragraph 2- the Uniting Church –believes that Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries...” Jesus Christ has made peace between people of every race, culture and class. This unity too is a gift of God, a foretaste of the reconciliation of all things in Christ. It is also a goal to be achieved as we commit ourselves in one fellowship to achieve justice, affirm one another’s cultures, and care for any who are the victims of racial discrimination, fear and economic exploitation.
3. The fourth Assembly of the Uniting Church welcomes the progress that has been made in the last twenty years towards the formation of a society in Australia in which people of many races and cultures live together. The Assembly rejoices that successive governments have substantially removed racial criteria from the policies covering the selection of migrants and the reception of refugees, and that in particular significant groups of people from Asia and the Pacific have been welcomed to this land.
4. The fact that our membership comprises people of many races, cultures and languages, is a reminder that the church is both product and agent of mission. In the church the Kingdom which is to come is experienced in the ambiguity of the tension between the old age which has not yet passed away and the new age which has not yet full come. As part of that church which is a sign of and witness to the Kingdom, the multicultural Uniting Church seeks to be a sign of hope within the Australian community, and particularly to those who are pushed to its fringes on racial and economic grounds.
5. It is essential therefore to provide for full participation of Aboriginal and ethnic* people, women and men, in decision making in the councils of the church; to ensure that these groups have equitable rights in the use of Uniting Church properties and access to its resources; and to include their concerns and perspectives in the agendas of the councils of the church. The Uniting church seeks to be open to changes that the Holy Spirit will bring to the church because of the creative contributions of people of different racial and cultural group to its life.
6. The ethnic and aboriginal congregations are a sign of the diversity of the cultures of the members of the Uniting Church. Organisation of the church in ethnic congregations enables us to worship in familiar languages, to hear the Gospel in terms of our several identities and culture’s, and to provide pastoral care for all our people. There is a risk, however, that the establishment of ethnic congregations will become a means whereby the rest of the church is insulated from the hurts and-struggles of Australia’s minorities. Opportunities should be made therefore for bilingual worship, and for fellowship across racial and cultural boundaries.
7. There is a great variety among ethnic congregations. This produces diverse relationships between such congregations and other congregations of the Uniting Church. Situations in

which the minister has been settled in Australia for several years will be different from those in which a minister has recently arrived from another country. First generation settlers often seek the security of a congregation of their own culture and traditions. Their desire for such close security is to be respected, and such a congregation may be organised as a parish of the church. Where there is preparedness to reach out to people of other cultures, the Assembly encourages the establishment of multicultural parishes. It supports a policy in which ministers of different ethnic backgrounds will plan and share the ministry in congregations, some of which are culturally mixed, and some of which meet separately for reasons of language.

8. The Assembly recognises the need for special ministerial education programs to prepare people for ministry in multicultural parishes, and ethnic congregations. For those who are to minister in multicultural parishes, sociological studies on contemporary, urban society where different cultural groups live side by side and interact, will be important. Because the Gospel speaks with direct relevance to situations of political oppression and economic exploitation, an awareness of what is happening at the points of interaction between different racial and cultural groups in Australia will be essential for ministry. The Assembly recognises that candidates for ministry with ethnic congregations need to be aware of the theological and ecclesial traditions of the church(es) from which the members of the congregation have come, and also need to have an opportunity to reflect theologically on the life situation of the members of the congregation here in Australia. This may require theological study in both countries, and effective ministry will certainly be enhanced by field education with a migrant congregation in Australia.
9. The Uniting Church welcomes those Christians of other church traditions who find in the Basis of Union and the life of the Uniting Church a faith community of which they want to be part, but rejects any form of proselytism as inappropriate in the ecumenical fellowship of the church. Presbyteries are encouraged, therefore, to assist ethnic congregations of other Christian traditions to provide adequate pastoral care for their people, and to obtain access to buildings suitable for their needs.

**Footnote: The Commission has not found an entirely appropriate word to describe congregations composed of people of cultures other than Aboriginal or Anglo Celtic, and worshipping in languages other than these. The word "ethnic" is used throughout to describe such.*

RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO THE 1985 ASSEMBLY

- 85.89.1 To adopt the Statement 'The Uniting Church is a Multicultural Church' as a declaration of the intention and nature of the Uniting Church in Australia.
- 85.89.2 To request the Commission on Mission to undertake further study on intercultural aspects of worship, communication, polity, decision-making processes and models of ministry.
- 85.90.1 To request the Standing Committee in exercise of the power contained in Regulation 3.6.2(c) to ensure the presence at the Fifth Assembly of men and women representing ethnic parishes and congregations and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, such representation to be determined in consultation with the relevant groups.
- 85.90.2 That these representatives should be in addition to any delegates elected as representatives of Synods and Presbyteries.
- 85.90.3 That the number of such representatives be not less than six from the Congress and six from ethnic congregations and parishes.
- 85.90.4 To request Synods to make similar provisions in the membership of their annual meetings and to recommend appropriate changes in the Regulations for Synod membership to the Standing Committee.
- 85.91 In order to avoid giving to ethnic and Aboriginal congregations the feeling that they are guests or tenants of the Uniting Church, in situations where ethnic or Aboriginal congregations of the Uniting Church in Australia use existing Uniting Church properties, to request Parishes and other bodies responsible for such properties to provide for such congregations to
- a) have representation, at least proportionate to their membership on property and/or related committees, and
 - b) to make contributions towards the cost of property maintenance proportionate to use made of the properties concerned.
- 85.92.1 That major Assembly worship services incorporate sections in one or more languages other than English to encourage symbolically and practically the participation of Aboriginal and ethnic groups.
- 85.92.2 That such services be arranged and conducted so that at all times all those present can understand and participate in the proceedings.
- 85.92.3 To request the Synods to make similar provision for major Synod worship services, and that such services be arranged and conducted so that at all times all those present can understand and participate in the proceedings.
- 85.93.1 To recognise that ethnic and Aboriginal congregations for a variety of reasons may need to organise their congregational life differently from other congregations.
- 85.93.2 To note that the Basis of Union simply says that the Elders' meetings 'consist of the minister and those who are called to share with him in oversight'¹ (15.b) and that the Church 'will seek to recognise in the congregation those endowed by the Spirit with gifts fitting them for rule and oversight' (14.c).

- 85.93.3 To accord freedom to Aboriginal and ethnic congregations to propose the establishment of structures and provide for the appointment of officers according to patterns appropriate to their needs and to authorise Presbyteries in consultation with appropriate Synods to approve such arrangements.
- 85.94 To request the Commission for Mission to consult with the Commission on Liturgy and the Joint Board of Christian Education with a view to providing for the translation of the Basis of Union, the Constitution of the Uniting Church, the Orders of Service for Holy Communion and Baptism, and the Statement 'The Uniting Church is a Multicultural Church' into all the languages used for public worship in the Uniting Church.
- 85.95 To request the Ministerial Education Commission, in consultation with the Commission for Mission, to encourage theological colleges to explore alternative forms of theological education by which candidates from ethnic backgrounds, for whom English is a second language, can be prepared for Ministry of the Word and Ministry of Deaconess within the Uniting Church.
- 85.96 To commend the New South Wales Synod for the establishment of a Multicultural Forum as a means by which ethnic congregations may make their voices heard in the Synod and to recommend that any Synod with ethnic congregations establish a similar Forum so that ethnic congregations can share experiences and common concerns and plan together.
- 85.97.1 To commission internal studies and ecumenical consultations on evangelism, proselytizing and belonging in the life of the Church.
- 85.97.2 To commission investigation and action within the Church to strengthen its contribution to community education on immigration and community relations.
- 85.97.3 To request Synods to identify and investigate the needs and resources for financing those ministries to ethnic congregations or communities which are not financially viable as the responsibility of the whole Church rather than the Parish in which the congregation is located.
- 85.98 To request the Standing Committee to establish a committee to examine and report on the implications of ethnic diversity for the Uniting Church in Australia, especially but not only in regard to ministerial education.
- 85.99.1 To encourage ethnic ministers and their congregations where appropriate to maintain their relationships with their church of origin while exercising membership in the Uniting Church.
- 85.99.2 To encourage ethnic congregations to use liturgies familiar to them.
- 85.99.3 To make available to ethnic congregations liturgical resources from the Uniting Church in their community languages.
- 85.99.4 To encourage ethnic congregations to make available to the Liturgy Commission prayers, litanies, and other devotional and liturgical materials for the enrichment of the whole Uniting Church.

THE 1990 NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

Major actions taken on the recommendations

1. Reception and settlement of overseas ministers (Workshop 1: Rec. 1-5)

A working group was formed. The convener is Mr Robert Jakes, and Revs Norman McDonald, John Mavor, Kotoni Fihaki, Sione Eli, Jedida Posumah, Sangjin Lee, and Seongja Yoo were appointed.

A draft of the working paper on guidelines has been revised several times. The areas of concern are pre-arrival information, on-arrival orientation, the way of invitation or call, terms of settlement, qualifications of overseas ministers, etc.

This recommendation could be simply worded in a line as "reception and settlement of overseas ministers". But what it implies is a years' work to do and a serious argument between people involved in this matter.

2. Property policy (Workshop 2:1,3,4,6, 7,9, 10,13)

The guidelines of the property policy of the Uniting Church has been completed by a working group, consisting of eight people: Revs John Brown, John Mavor, Kil-Bock Hong, Mr Ed Walker, Mrs Fefiloi Reid, Veitinia Fotofili, Keasi Kupu, and Seongja Yoo.

The guidelines are to be submitted to the 6th Assembly to be adopted as the policy of the Assembly.

3. Conferences with the pastoral relations committees in three synods: Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales (Workshop 2:8)

The agenda will include the recommendations 1: 2 - 3,2: 3, 5, 11,4: 8,8:13, which are related to ethnic ministry within presbyteries.

One-day meetings are being arranged with representatives of the Pastoral Relations Committees of the presbyteries where many migrant-ethnic congregations live.

4. Sunday school materials and conferences for young migrant members (Workshop 6:3)

The Joint Board of Christian Education has been contacted and discussions held on the matter of Sunday school materials for the second generation migrants in the Uniting Church. A further meeting is arranged with Rev David Merritt during June, 1991.

A list of migrant-ethnic congregations in the Uniting Church was sent to Rev Ken Anderson in South Australia. He will contact each migrant-ethnic minister, informing them of "About Face" and seeking young people to take part. The people of the National Christian Youth Convention also expressed their interest in the Christian education for young migrant members. A similar arrangement will be made to invite them to the NCYC 1993 held in Canberra.

5. Government immigration policy (Workshop 10:1)

A. Task group

The Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Committee of the synod of Victoria was contacted by Rev Dr John P Brown. It was suggested to them to include three Sydney based staff in the Committee as corresponding members and to have an annual meeting together to review the Government Immigration policy.

The possibility of forming a task group together with the Committee is being discussed.

B. Assistance for overstayers in the UCA

Three solicitors were arranged in New South Wales to help migrant-ethnic members' settlement and also to protect overstaying members from the exorbitant charges of some solicitors. It is believed that the majority of overstayers are residing in New South Wales.

6. Special concern for Pacific immigrants (Workshop 10:1)

Rev Chris Budden and Mr Bob Jakes have been asked to consult with the Pacific Island community to develop a submission to the government, concerning the status of overstayers and would-be immigrants from the Pacific.

The submission is intended to develop the argument that exceptional treatment should be given to the Pacific Islander people in applying the present immigration laws, considering a special historical and political relationship between Australia and the Pacific Islands.

7. Training courses for lay preachers (Workshop 4:4)

The Institute for Mission of the NSW synod has started evening courses for lay preachers from February 1991. It is a two years' part time course. At present 40 to 50 people from five migrant communities are participating in this new program.

6th ASSEMBLY

In the President's report to the 6th Assembly in 1991 Sir Ron Wilson wrote:

- 5.1 The national consultation convened in 1990 to focus on our multiracial and multicultural character was an important landmark. It provided an opportunity for a cross-section of the church to become more fully aware of the problems faced by our migrant-ethnic congregations and to identify the changes that must take place before we can truly rejoice in the richly diverse composition of the UC.

REPORT TO THE 6th ASSEMBLY FROM ETHNIC AFFAIRS

29. The Uniting Church as a Multi-Cultural Church

- 29.1 Mrs Seongja Yoo is Ethnic Affairs Officer for the N.M. & E. Committee. She has prepared part of the report which calls us to be a Multi-cultural Church in a Multi-Cultural Nation.

The present situation

- 29.2 There are currently eighty migrant-ethnic congregations in the life of the Uniting Church. Besides these groups, there are "tenant type" migrant-ethnic congregations, who share the Uniting Church properties and maintain good relations with the Uniting Church.
- 29.3 The 23 places of origin or languages of these congregational members are: Armenian (1), Assyrian (1), Chinese (3), Dutch (6), Fijian (9), Greek (1), Hindi (2), Indonesian (3), Korean (15), Macedonian (1), Cambodian (1), Rotuman (2), Samoan (8), Sri Lankan (2), Tongan (22), Taiwanese (1), Vietnamese (1), and Spanish (2). The numbers in brackets represent the number of congregations of each community. The total number of members, including children and adherents in migrant-ethnic churches is approximately 9,000. The largest group is Korean with about 3,500 members, the Tongans number about 2,500, the Chinese about 1,000, and the Indonesians about 400. About 6,000 live in New South Wales, especially in the Sydney Metropolitan area.

Patterns of migrant-ethnic Congregations

- 29.4 There are many patterns for migrant-ethnic congregations. Four main ones can be distinguished.
- 29.5 Interim Congregation. Some migrant-ethnic members are not keen to form a congregation of their nationality. They prefer to attend an Anglo-Australian church in their residential area. Or they may form an interim congregation within the Australian congregation or parish. Tamils in the Northern Territory and Cambodians in Victoria are illustrations of this approach. It is encouraging that some migrant-ethnic people are elected by Anglo-Australian members as elders or to other positions in the church. While they adjust well to Anglo-Australian church life, they organize special services and Bible classes in their mother tongue once or twice a month. These meetings become an opportunity to have a "get-together", not only for themselves but also for their community.
- 29.6 Component Congregations in a Parish. One third of the 80 congregations are component congregations (or member congregations) within a Uniting Church parish. The other part of the parish is usually made up of Anglo-Australian congregations. There are two parishes which have more than three congregations of different nationalities. The South Side Inner City Parish in Queensland consists of three congregations — Tongan, Fijian and Anglo-

Australian. The Wesley Central Mission in Sydney has eleven congregations with people from various places overseas, particularly from Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Rotuma, and from Asian countries.

- 29.7 Multi-ethnic Congregations/Parishes. This type of Uniting Church congregation has begun to develop particularly in Sydney where nearly seventy percent of Uniting Church migrant-ethnic members live. The attendance of migrant-ethnic people from various countries at particular Anglo-Australian Uniting Church congregations has been increasing. In this type of congregation they share, contribute, and bear witness together in one congregation with their different cultures, traditions, and experiences. As Australia becomes more culturally diverse, a growing number of multi-ethnic congregations are expected to develop.
- 29.8 Mono-ethnic congregations or separate parishes. In seeking the security of a congregation of their own culture and traditions, many migrant-ethnic congregations form a separate mono-ethnic parish. Some parishes of Pacific Islanders consist of many congregations in one mono-ethnic parish. These mono-ethnic parishes run a very active life in their own way of administration according to their original Christian tradition. As new members of the Uniting Church, however, their church life is one of exploring and adjusting to the new life of the Uniting Church. They are showing great concern and effort to modify their system of church government so that it is similar to the Uniting Church regulations.
- 29.9 Several annual conferences have been held for congregational leaders of migrant-ethnic communities according to their country of origin e.g. Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, Indonesian. These conferences provide them with opportunities to share their faith, thoughts, problems, joys, pains and difficulties within the life of the Uniting Church. Through these conferences and other gatherings, several issues relating to the multicultural life of the Uniting Church are identified.

National Consultation on Ethnic Diversity

- 29.10 After two years' preparation, the National Consultation on Ethnic Diversity was held for three days, 27th-29th of August 1990 at the Labour Conference Centre in Sydney. It was the first national meeting concerning the multicultural life of the Uniting Church. There were eighty two people present from about sixty groups—parishes, presbyteries, synods, UAICC, and the Assembly. Thirty one migrant ethnic congregations sent a total of forty five representatives to this consultation. They were Tongans, Indonesians, Armenians, Egyptians, Fijians, Samoans, Taiwanese, Chinese, Sri Lankans, Indians, Koreans, Dutch, and Hungarians. Besides these migrant-ethnic members, we had three faculty members from theological colleges, twelve synod staff members, the President and six members of the Assembly staff, fifteen Anglo-Australian parish ministers, one presbytery officer (NSW), and two representatives from the UAICC. The conference was representative in general, but it would have been more effective if we had had more people from presbyteries.
- 29.11 The meeting was comprehensive and open to most critical issues arising in the multicultural life of our Church. All participants were able to contribute freely to the subjects assigned to ten workshops, share their frank opinions, and talk about their experiences, hopes and visions.
- 29.12 The most significant thing brought to the surface was the fact that the Uniting Church is indeed multicultural. We proclaimed this vision five years ago during the 4th Assembly, but too few practical achievements and too little understanding of the multicultural life within our Church have been accomplished, particularly at parish level.
- 29.13 Participants were reminded of the fact that the present rules and regulations of our Church were instituted in terms of a mono-cultural value system fifteen years ago. And yet we are living not only in a multicultural church but also in a multicultural society. Even the Government is making an effort to reflect this multicultural aspect of the society in policies and laws. It was stressed during the consultation that now is the time for the Uniting Church to re-examine the regulations and administrative practices of the Church in view of the multicultural value system. The issue of property was treated very thoroughly. Even though there are good reasons, it is not easy for migrant ethnic people (or anyone really) to

understand why Uniting Church people have to purchase a Uniting Church property if they really want to feel the property is theirs to administer. Property is a major, perhaps the major issue to be dealt with in becoming a truly multi cultural church. Another area of deep concern is the recognition of the training and qualifications of ministers who come from overseas countries to minister to congregations which are part of the Uniting Church. Some of these continue to minister to migrant ethnic congregations. Some minister to Anglo Australian congregations. In some cases these ministers have become Australian citizens but they are still not recognised as ministers in the Uniting Church in Australia. Following the request of the Commission for Mission, the General Secretary has instituted discussion about a whole range of issues relating to these matters.

- 29.14 Some people said that the consultation offered them an opportunity for healing and learning. It certainly brightened the future of the Church as a truly multicultural church. It gave all who attended a hope and possibility that they could open their hearts to anybody, any tradition, and any culture, because the Church that Jesus has built is universal. We are proud to be multicultural and universal.
- 29.15 The Korean congregations of the Uniting Church have worked under a diversity of constitutions and rules since Union. Some of these constitutions and rules derive from the Presbyterian Church of Korea, some from the Korean Methodist Church, and others were compromises developed over the years between Korean and Uniting Church systems. The leaders of the congregations have worked hard over the last three years to arrive at an agreed constitution which is as close as possible to the Uniting Church Constitution and regulations, and yet preserves some elements which are recognisable to Koreans arriving in Australia. They have now agreed on a constitution and regulations. These diverge very slightly from those of the Uniting Church in Australia. It is important that the Uniting Church act with enough flexibility to allow the Korean congregations to operate under these regulations. A detailed resolution will be prepared setting out the variation from Uniting Church Constitution and Regulations, for the approval of the Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE 1991 6TH ASSEMBLY REGARDING KOREAN CONGREGATIONS

91.14.13 **Korean Congregations**

To authorise the Standing Committee to vary, or if appropriate, grant exemptions from the regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia as they apply to the Korean congregations of the Uniting Church in the following areas:

- (a) the length of the term of settlement of Minister of the Word;
- (b) the extension of parish settlements beyond the tenth year;
- (c) Ministers eligible for a call or appointment;
- (d) the election of elders;
- (e) the length of time during which an elder shall hold office;
- (f) Chairperson of the parish council and the parish meeting.

GUIDELINES ON PROPERTY SHARING IN A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA PROPERTY POLICY IN A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

Preamble

This document is a rewrite of the Assembly policy adopted in September 1992. The changes can be summarized as consequential amendments due to changes in nomenclature eg Parish to congregation, minor editorial corrections for clarity, and some expansion of theological points of the Conclusion.

Terence Corkin

Assembly General Secretary, 2003

1. Introductory statement

1.1 This policy clarifies the basis upon which property is acquired, held by the Uniting Church and transferred internally within it. As the number of new Aboriginal and migrant ethnic congregations within the Uniting Church are growing, it has become necessary to develop a unified national policy on the sharing of properties between two or more culturally different congregations in the Uniting Church in Australia and on the transfer of rights over property from one congregation to another.

This policy is to give every congregation of the Church the opportunity to receive fair and appropriate consideration as we are parts of the same body.

1.2 Synod and presbytery has responsibilities to assist and encourage congregations as they develop a mission strategy that effectively relates to their immediate community and the wider Australian society. The presbytery provides pastoral and administrative oversight for the mission of the Church within the congregation and regional community area while the synod provides support, resources and encouragement.

1.3 In matters of property, final responsibility rests with the synod working in consultation with congregations and presbyteries. The regulations specify the manner in which the Synod Property Board may make a final decision. **(Note that the property belongs to the Uniting Church in Australia. The legally registered body to hold property is the Synod Property Trust. It is the transfer of rights and responsibility for the control and use of the property and not the transfer ownership that is referred to.)**

1.4 The duties and responsibilities of a congregation are detailed in Regulation 3.1.13. The presbytery exercises oversight of congregations and may “disband and cease to recognise a congregation for reasons which it considers are in the best interests of the mission, witness and service of the Church within the bounds of the presbytery” [3.1.6 (b)]. Such a decision only occurs following prayerful consideration and adequate consultation.

1.5 Each congregation should have a conscious mission strategy. This is especially important for both parties when transfer of property rights and usage is considered.

- In many situations an existing congregation may have a long historical relationship to a particular property through many generations and therefore to transfer the use of the property to another congregation may involve considerable pain. However, that relationship alone is not

sufficient reason for the continuation of the congregation. It exists to worship God and bear faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the local community. If it is no longer able to fulfil these purposes, then it may be appropriate for that congregation and for the property to be made available for the use of a new congregation.

- The emerging new congregation similarly needs to develop a conscious mission strategy, though it may have no property and only limited resources. It is expected that requests for property and resource needs will become approved as a consequence of that strategy and particular cultural heritage. Presbytery will encourage each congregation involved to see these issues in terms of conscious, specific mission strategy of a multicultural church.

1.6 As the synod assists in resourcing new church development, so it will be important to create resources to meet cases of particular need involving transfer of rights and usage of property between existing congregations and new congregations.

If the Uniting Church is to be truly a fellowship of pilgrim people responding to God's call to mission, to worship and service, our only right to ownership of property is where it is a creative facility for that purpose. It must always be a means to an end – the purpose to which we are called – never an end in itself.

2. Transfer of Property between Congregations

2.1 Where, by arrangement, a congregation of the Uniting Church desires to obtain sole use of a property from an existing congregation, the presbytery will assist these congregations to develop their future mission strategy and consequently, property needs, and will make recommendations to the Synod. The presbytery may consult with the Synod mission agency and the Synod Property Officer early in this process.

In some cases, there will be no financial transaction involved; however, where it is agreed that the existing congregation requires some compensation for the property in order to enable it to carry out its mission strategy as agreed, the amount of compensation will be worked out between the synod, the presbytery and the congregations, with an agreed recommendation to the Synod Property Board for final property approval.

The Synod will then make the property available to the new congregation on the basis of an approved financial arrangement. For example, that arrangement could include a basis whereby the new congregation will contribute annually an agreed proportion of its income to an appropriate synod mission fund as an expression of gratitude and to defray the transfer cost.

2.2 When by arrangement property is transferred between Uniting Church congregations to further the mission of both congregations, that may occur as a generous gift from one congregation to the other or it may involve an appropriate consideration which will need to be negotiated between the parties in consultation with presbytery and synod. Whilst financial transactions may be necessary, these should be based upon mission needs, rather than market considerations.

2.3 It is important to assess each transfer in terms of the mission possibilities. The following factors are most important:

- The results of an investigation projecting future needs for resources for witness and mission in that area
- The mission benefits to both congregations of such a transfer occurring.
- The present resources of both parties to the dealing.

2.4 There will need to be adequate assistance given to the “releasing” congregations to grieve over the loss, and to accept fully that the mission of the Church is best served by these changes. An appropriate service of symbolic handing over and celebration of new beginnings conducted by the presbytery is appropriate.

3. Shared Use of Property

3.1 Where two or more Uniting Church of Australia congregations function from one property base, an appropriate form of written agreement will apply to that relationship. It will accord rights of usage, an appropriate sharing of costs and take into account the ministry needs. The working out of this agreement should recognise their equality and sharing in mission as sisters and brothers in the service of Christ, through this Church.

3.2 Where two or more Uniting Church congregations are involved on a continuing basis, it is inappropriate for the sharing of property to be based on a rental or tenancy agreement. As all property is resource for mission, it should be shared on the basis of the agreement which will foster the mission and growth of the Church as a whole.

3.3 The wording of the agreement or covenant will vary but the principles are as follows:

3.3.1 Both Uniting Church congregations have a clear priority of use of the property (both church and hall accommodation) before this accommodation could be offered to any outside body.

3.3.2 The needs of each congregation will be given equal attention in decisions relating to the use of property.

3.3.3 Each congregation which uses the property shares in the cost of its maintenance in a responsible way. This might be in proportion to the time usage by the respective Uniting Church in Australia congregations, or it may have some relation to the size of the respective groups or nature of usage. A mutually agreed basis of sharing the costs of repairs, maintenance, and service charges is to be determined.

3.3.4 Where two or more congregations share property (and have separate Church Councils) there will be joint meetings of the Councils. (or fair representation of each congregation) when property decisions are to be taken.

3.3.5 Where there is sharing of property by two or more congregations a Property Sub-Committee is formed, a joint committee comprised of representatives of each congregation. The make up of that membership would normally be in proportion to the number of active members of each congregation, or in some other proportion as agreed by the Presbytery/Presbyteries.

4. Purchase or Sale of Property

4.1 The purchase or sale of property must be in accordance with the regulations of the Uniting Church and the procedures as directed through the Synod Property Board.

4.2 All purchases and sales of property by the Uniting Church must legally be made in the name and identity of the Property Trust of the Synod.

4.3 Where a congregation receives a request to lease or sell a property to a church group that is not a part of the Uniting Church in Australia, the congregation must seek permission of the presbytery

and Synod Property Board in the usual manner. The Board will be required to make every endeavour to ensure that the property is not needed by any other UCA congregation before taking a final decision. This might be achieved through talking to Synod Multicultural Committees (in synods where one exists) or any related ethnic community etc.

5. Conclusion

All our church property belongs to God and we are stewards of it. Property is a resource for the ministry and mission of the whole people of God. This means equality and partnership in the way we share the resources God has given us. The implementation of these Guidelines will require careful consideration by the congregations and presbyteries concerned, and a great deal of patience and charity on the part of everyone. The challenges also represent exciting opportunities for cross-cultural learning and sharing as we open ourselves to receive the transforming gift of hospitality from one another.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE 1994 7TH ASSEMBLY REGARDING MINISTERS FROM OVERSEAS

94.32 WORKING GROUP ON THE RECEPTION OF MINISTERS FROM PARTNER CHURCHES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AS MINISTERS OF THE UNITING CHURCH

Rev Dr Robert Bos presented the report of the Working Group.

The Assembly resolved:

94.32.01 to receive the report;

94.32.02 to request the Standing Committee to:

(a) consult with synods on

(i) ways of increasing the number of ministers and candidates for ministry who are bi-lingual;

(ii) the feasibility of broadening the responsibility of the Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee, including the possibility of the Assembly committee taking over the functions of synod Reception of Ministers committees;

(iii) ways of assisting ministers of other churches who are serving within the Uniting Church on temporary resident visas with the higher costs of income tax and educational and medical services;

(iv) the desirability of making new Regulations to provide an appeal process against a synod decision taken in accord with Regulation 2.3.7;

(v) the desirability of regarding a congregation and minister as a unit where a congregation applies to become part of the Uniting Church and where that congregation has a minister from a partner church;

(b) include at least two members who have come from partner churches in the membership of the Reception of Ministers Committee;

(c) consider the matters raised in section 9 of the report;

and authorise the Standing Committee to act in these matters, including any necessary amendments to Regulations;

94.32.03 to request the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 2.3.5(b)(iii) by the addition of the words "and attained competency" and "ministers and" so that the Regulation will read:

"unless there are special circumstances the applicant shall have received an education and attained competency comparable to that required of ministers or candidates for the corresponding ministry in the Church;"

94.32.04 to request presbyteries to:

(a) provide a mentor for each migrant-ethnic minister;

(b) ensure that migrant-ethnic ministers have time to attend English classes;

(c) enable migrant-ethnic ministers to undertake a course of orientation to the Uniting Church;

(d) provide encouragement and support to migrant-ethnic ministers as they adapt to the Uniting Church and Australian society;

94.32.05 to request the National Network for Distance Theological Education to prepare a course of orientation as outlined in the report and make this available to ministers and congregations seeking to join the Uniting Church;

94.32.06 to request synods to provide financial support for migrant-ethnic ministers towards the costs of English courses, orientation courses to the Uniting Church, and courses of formal theological education required by the Reception of Ministers Committee;

94.32.07 to determine that no decision for the recognition of a minister from another church as a minister of the Uniting Church will be made until the applicant has permanent residency status, except in very exceptional circumstances.

Working Group On The Reception Of Ministers From Partner Churches in Asia And The Pacific As Ministers Of The UCA

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The working group was appointed and received its terms of reference (task) in March 1993. The members of the working group are: Seongia Yoo, Revd Dr James Haire, Revd Bryan Gilmour, Revd Dr Ian Breward, Revd Sione Eli, Bob Jakes, Revd Rex Fisher, Velvy Holden and Revd Dr Robert Bos (Convener).
- 1.2 The terms of reference of the Working Group were as follows:
.... to give consideration to the reception of ministers and deacons from churches in Asia and the Pacific with which the Uniting Church has a partner relationship and the acceptance of those ministers and deacons as ministers of the Uniting Church in Australia, and that the working group:
 - (a) *give particular attention to Regulation R 2. 3.5(b)(ii) [now 2.3.5(b)(iii)] which deals with educational requirements;*
 - (b) *request submissions...;*
 - (c) *give special consideration to the situation where a congregation may be received as a congregation of the Uniting church but the minister of that congregation may not be accepted as a minister of the Uniting Church.*
- 1.3 The terms of reference of the working group did not cover ministers who are on loan or on secondment from a partner church and then return home after a term of service in the Uniting Church in Australia. Nor were we asked to consider ministers on loan who remain in Australia longer than originally planned but continue as ministers of the partner church without ever applying to become a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia. We were also not asked to look into the matter of ministers from churches other than partner churches.
- 1.4 It may well be, however, that the Assembly will decide that some of our recommendations (such as those regarding orientation courses for example) may also apply to other groups of ministers.
- 1.5 The working group prepared a detailed discussion paper raising the issues, and this was circulated widely throughout the church. We received 29 submissions. We are grateful to those who took the time to prepare these submissions. They were carefully considered in producing this report for the Assembly.
- 1.6 We were aware that, as the discussion paper was in (sometimes difficult) English, the people most affected by the issues were already at a disadvantage in reading the discussion paper and in writing responses. In a way this highlighted some of the matters we were dealing with.
- 1.7 In the process of preparing this report the working group has heard and shared in the pain that is being experienced both by ministers from partner churches and migrant-ethnic congregations in the UCA. We have also shared the struggles of the Uniting Church in Australia as a whole with these issues. It is our prayer that the recommendations will assist the UCA to be a more caring and just church and so be more faithful to its calling in Jesus Christ.

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION

- 2.1 The reception of ministers from other churches is decided by synods after the Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee (RMC) checks their education and good standing. The synods also check good standing, as well as ordination, professional qualifications and experience, and willingness to work within the order of the Uniting Church. Synod committees interview applicants, gather testimonials, secure signatures to an affirmation of the *Basis of Union* and assess suitability for ministry and settlement.

- 2.2 The Assembly Standing Committee, under Regulations 2.3.5(c), has appointed a Reception of Ministers Committee (RMC). The current members are: Revd Dr Ian Breward (chair), C Anderson, Deacon B Fabb, Prof E Forsyth, Revd G McAnalley, E Mitchell, Dr E Nolan and Revd B Prior. All the current members of the committee are from the Synod of Victoria. Half are ministerial, half are lay and there is an equal gender balance. The chairperson is originally from the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. Apart from him, none of the members is of a migrant-ethnic background and none has been received as a minister from a partner church. It should be noted, however, that the majority of cases considered by the Reception of Ministers Committee have to do with ministers of Anglo- Celtic background.
- 2.3 This committee shares the responsibilities for administering the Regulations relating to the reception of ministers from other churches. It looks carefully at evidence for ordination and good standing and receives the signed affirmation of faith. Where necessary, it recommends ordination according to the form of the Uniting Church. In addition the committee receives transcripts of academic and professional qualifications and decides whether they are of equivalent standing to those required of Uniting Church ministers. If they are not of equivalent standing, the committee requires the satisfactory completion of either full-time or part-time further study. Synods have differing policies about paying for this further study or requiring applicants to meet the cost. Once this work has been completed the Assembly committee recommends to synods that applicants are eligible for admission to the ministry of the Uniting Church and synods make the final decision.
- 2.4 In addition to formal education requirements, the committee normally requires that applicants are placed with a mentor to be introduced to the polity, liturgy and ethos of the Uniting Church and make a careful study of the *Basis of Union*.

3. PARTNER CHURCHES

- 3.1 The Working Group was asked to look into the matter of ministers from partner churches who apply to become ministers of the Uniting Church in Australia. We were provided with a list of churches which the Assembly regards as partner churches. Some, but not all, of the partner churches in the Pacific are signatories to an agreement on the appointment of Pacific missionaries. Four of the ten partner churches in Asia have signed formal partnership agreements with the Uniting Church in Australia. Some of the submissions we received asked why these particular churches were considered 'partner churches' and not others (eg. Church of Christ in Thailand, churches in Aotearoa - New Zealand, members of the World Methodist Council, members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches).
- 3.2 Furthermore, partner church agreements in other parts of the world sometimes include mutual recognition of ministers and it is then possible for a parish in one church to call a minister the partner church without further ado.
- 3.3 The whole question of what is, and what is not, a partner church, and what this means was beyond the terms of reference for the Working Group. It may be that the Assembly will want to clarify this further.

4. LANGUAGE ABILITY, ORIENTATION COURSES, ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

- 4.1 The working group received most submissions about language ability, orientation courses and academic requirements.
- 4.2 Some people believe that if the Uniting Church is to expect high levels of English and education, then we are expecting people from migrant-ethnic groups to become like those whose ancestors come from Great Britain. This is not so. The Uniting Church has committed

itself to be a multi-cultural church and is therefore not assimilationist. We value and welcome the gifts of language and culture that people from overseas bring to us. We do not ask people to forsake their languages, cultures and insights into the gospel that they bring to us. These can enrich us all. However, we want such gifts exercised within the Uniting Church; not at its margins or in virtual isolation.

English ability

- 4.3 If the Uniting Church is to be truly a multicultural church, then we should encourage as many members of the church as possible; Aboriginal Australian, migrant-ethnic and Anglo-Celtic, to be able to communicate in at least two languages and cultures. In short, we should encourage people to be bi-cultural.
- 4.4 We would hope that the Uniting Church will find ways to enable those of Anglo-Celtic background to learn the languages and cultures of migrant-ethnic groups. This could be done by arranging for field education placements with migrant-ethnic groups, asking students who do not study biblical languages in depth to study a migrant-ethnic language, arranging for continuing education courses to help people study the languages and cultures of migrant-ethnic groups etc.
- 4.5 The second thing is that the Uniting Church must be, and must appear to be, a welcoming, accepting church. In particular, we must be finding ways to help migrant-ethnic groups settle in Australia and feel at home. They already have many difficulties to overcome.
- 4.6 Because of our English and educational requirements, some people have the idea that the Uniting Church is 'elitist' and does not want them. We deeply regret this. We should not be putting impossible conditions in people's way which give people messages which we do not mean to give. If we do not welcome people, then they will form independent groups, or retain loose links with overseas churches, sometimes with little accountability. This runs counter to our commitment to being 'Uniting'.
- 4.6 In our dealing with migrant-ethnic groups the emphasis must therefore be on encouragement and practical assistance, rather than on regulations and requirements.
- 4.7 English is, however, the official language and is the most useful way we can share and communicate together in Australia. We *do* see it as important that ministers in migrant-ethnic groups become fluent in English, and so *do the ministers and the migrant-ethnic groups to which they belong*. The working group does not recommend that the Uniting Church set a certain level of English that ministers must reach before settlement. As part of their theological education overseas these ministers have already had to do at least some of their study in English. Then, when they come to Australia, there are many pressures on people to improve their English. These incentives come from the wider society, from the church community and from people in migrant-ethnic groups themselves, not least of which the second generation of people growing up in Australia. Furthermore, the congregations and presbyteries already consider English ability as one factor in the settlement procedures. Also, ministers realise that without a high degree of English ability it may be difficult for them to get a second settlement. We believe there are enough incentives for people to learn English that we do not need to make this a matter for regulation.
- 4.7 We do, however, see a role for the presbyteries and synods in ensuring that ministers have the opportunity to improve their English. A reasonable goal might be for people to have sufficient competency within five years to be able to deal with presbytery and synod staff, as well as government and community agencies. There are courses available in the wider community so the church probably does not need to be a provider of English classes. But ministers must have the time and money to go to classes.

- 4.9 The working group sees the role of the presbytery as:
- (a) Providing a mentor who is available as:
 - a friend;
 - a person who can help the minister understand the Uniting Church and make his/ her contribution to the Uniting Church;
 - if necessary, be an advocate for the minister and the migrant-ethnic group;
 - be a 'bridge' into the wider society;
 - (b) Ensuring that the minister has time to go to English classes;
 - (c) Offering encouragement and support.
- 4.10 The working group sees the role of the synod as providing finance to enable the minister to go to classes.

Orientation courses

- 4.11 If we are to make people feel at home and adjust quickly to the Uniting Church the migrant-ethnic congregations must have access to clear and accurate information about the Uniting Church. Where possible, this must be provided in the language of the people concerned. Where this is not possible, it needs to be in plain English.
- 4.12 We see this information as including the following:
- The *Basis of Union, Constitution and Regulations*;
 - The worship, ethos and polity of the Uniting Church;
 - Ministry and sacraments;
 - Multiculturalism in the Uniting Church;
 - Pastoral care expectations;
 - Specific issues (ordination of women, children and Holy Communion, baptism etc);
 - Australian history and culture (including legal rights).
- 4.13 It may be that some of the theological colleges wish to offer such courses. As well as that, it needs to be available by distance education so that everyone, no matter where they live, they can do the course.
- 4.14 Again the mentor could help the minister work through this.
- 4.15 The orientation course needs to be done as soon as possible after arrival.
- 4.16 We see the presbytery's role as ensuring that:
- ministers have access to the orientation course;
 - time is allotted to it;
 - a mentor/support person is appointed;
 - the course is satisfactorily completed.
- 4.17 We see the role of the synod as ensuring that finance is available.
- 4.18 Some students may wish to do the orientation course as credit for a Bachelor of Theology. This opportunity should be looked into. (Clearly the orientation courses may have a wider use than just for ministers from partner churches.)

Academic qualifications

- 4.19 The working group notes that the Reception of Ministry Committee appointed by the Assembly has its task set out in Regulation 2.3.5(b)(iii). We believe that, given the current wording of the Regulation, the committee has carried out its work with a high degree of expertise and flexibility.

- 4.20 Regulation 2.3.5 (b)(iii) requires ordained ministers applying for acceptance as ministers of the UCA to have an education 'comparable to that required of candidates for the corresponding ministry of the church'. Some people have argued that this is unjust because:
- (a) Not to accept them with their existing training may carry with it an implication that these ministers and the churches from which they come have an inferior ordination; (It should be noted, however, that presbyteries have never re-ordained such people, emphasising that the issue is one of adequate preparation for ministry in the Australian context and suitability for settlement, not recognition of ordination.)
 - (b) These people may have trained 20 or 30 years ago and have comparable qualifications to some people who trained in Australia at that time;
 - (c) They may have to undergo such further education in Australia in English and with all the assumptions and logical style of the Western academic tradition. This demands more of them than we require of Anglo-Celtic ministers who are not required to study in another cultural and language context. Some simply find it too difficult. (In a few cases people have been helped to go back to their home country for further education before returning to Australia to work);
 - (d) Some people come from cultures where people are much more status conscious and to ask experienced ministers with years of service to sit in classes with people doing their initial training may be considered insulting by the migrant-ethnic group.
 - (e) It may place too much emphasis on academic qualifications as a measure of competency in ministry. (Others would say that readiness for ministry is in fact assessed in a holistic, not just an academic way. Furthermore, the purpose of study is not academic elitism, but formation into the traditions of the Uniting Church);
 - (f) Some have served in the UCA as ministers-on-loan for a long time. When they are then asked to do further formal study, they feel this is a judgment on their ministry.
- 4.21 On the other hand, there are those who argue that not to offer them the opportunity to attain a comparable education is to accept a group of 'second class ministers', which is unfair both to the individuals concerned and the parishes in which they minister.
- 4.22 The Working Group believes that the Reception of Ministers Committee should be given greater flexibility in dealing with individual cases. This may be done by amending Regulation 2.3.5(b)(iii) by the addition of words so that it reads:
- (a) Unless there are special circumstances the applicant shall have received an education *and attained* competency comparable to that required of *ministers and* candidates for the corresponding ministry of the church.
 - (b) Where formal courses of further theological education are required then synods need to accept financial responsibility, as they do for candidates. The cost of the education should not be a further burden on the ministers themselves.

5. THE RECEPTION OF MINISTERS COMMITTEES

- 5.1 The working group considered the possibility of recommending that the Assembly's Reception of Ministers Committee be made a committee of the Ministerial Education Commission. We do not wish to recommend such a change at this stage.
- 5.2 As mentioned above, all the members of RMC are of Anglo-Celtic background. While it is true that most cases dealt with by the RMC are people from other Australian churches, we nevertheless believe that the Assembly Standing Committee needs to give consideration to including a couple of people of migrant-ethnic background as members of the committee. Furthermore, the current practice of consulting widely, including people of the applicant's migrant-ethnic background, should be continued.

- 5.3 The working group is concerned about the way the responsibilities are divided between the Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee and the synods. The Assembly Committee only makes recommendations to synods. Synods do not have to act on the recommendations. In some cases synods have implemented the recommendations much more rigidly than intended. Some have required people to repeat basic level theological courses, rather than study courses which would enable people to minister effectively in the Australian context. There may be other cases where the recommendations may have been implemented much more freely than the RMC intended. There is no requirement to report back.
- 5.4 A further consideration is that migrant-ethnic ministers tend to move more across synod boundaries than other ministers. Relationships with overseas churches are involved in the reception process. There are good grounds for regarding the reception of ministers from partner churches as a national matter.
- 5.5 We propose that the Assembly should consider increasing the role of the Assembly RMC so that it is not just a recommending body, but also a body which can make real decisions. This could be achieved by placing the powers of the present Synod Reception of Ministers Committees with the Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee. This would avoid some of the current duplication between the Assembly and the Synod RMC's. It ensures that the body which makes the decisions can monitor the way its recommendations are put into effect. It also reduces the number of committees in the Uniting Church by seven and is in line with the thinking of the Assembly Development Commission.
- 5.6 There appears to be no procedure for appeals, either against a decision of the Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee, or the Synod Reception of Ministers Committees. The Working Group believes that a way of hearing appeals should be set up.

6. PERMANENT RESIDENCE

- 6.1 Some ministers may apply to become ministers of the UCA without having been granted permanent residency status by the Australian Government. Others have been granted permanent residency and then use that status as part of their argument for being accepted as a minister of the UCA. We recommend that synods exercise great care with this.
- 6.2 The Working Group believes that where the applicant has not been granted permanent residency status, the UCA should consider application for acceptance of a person as a minister of the UCA only subject to that person being granted permanent residency status. Exceptions should only be made in very unusual circumstances e.g. for refugees.

7. PROCEDURES

- 7.1 At times the appropriate procedures for settling ministers in migrant-ethnic congregations have not been adhered to. Sometimes ministers have been called and settled in a parish before the presbytery or synod hears about it. Ministers have sometimes been appointed while the terms and conditions of appointment (stipend levels etc.) have been very much less than what is acceptable in the UCA.
- 7.2 The working group is strongly of the opinion that all settlement of ministers, including those in migrant-ethnic parishes must go through presbytery and the Joint Presbyteries Settlement Advisory Committee (JPSAC) of synod in the normal way. Furthermore, World Mission, and through World Mission the home church, must be consulted in order to be faithful to our ecumenical relationships.
- 7.3 Each synod has a consultant on ethnic ministry. We see the consultant as having an important role as an adviser and facilitator in the process of application.

- 7.4 The working group believes that a case can be made out for *higher* stipends to be given to ministers who are not permanent residents, as they are responsible for higher levels of income tax as well as higher educational and medical costs. If the Uniting Church accepts this principle, then the parish, where necessary supported by synod, should accept this additional responsibility.
- 7.5 It seems that synods (and the UAICC) have had differing arrangements for receiving ministers from other churches. The working group firmly believes that there should be common guidelines which apply rationally. The working group is pleased to see that the secretaries of synod have worked on producing a common standard application form and believes that this uniformity across the church is important.

8. CONGREGATIONS REQUESTING TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE UNITING CHURCH

- 8.1 When migrant-ethnic congregations apply to become members of the Uniting Church, this should be regarded as an occasion for celebration and joy. But when this happens, it may be that the congregation is accepted, but the congregation's minister can not be accepted as a minister of the Uniting Church because of inadequate education. Such congregations find it intolerable that they, and not their minister, is acceptable to the Uniting Church.
- 8.2 The working group believes that a case can be made out on theological and sociological grounds for regarding the congregation and its minister as a unit and receiving both at the same time.
- 8.3 Both the congregation and the minister will need to undergo a process of orientation to the Uniting Church. We suggest that the minister needs to be related to a mentor for five years.
- 8.4 The settlement of the minister is, of course, related to the parish of the Uniting Church into which he/she is received. It needs to be clearly understood that the Uniting Church does not guarantee settlements for all its ministers until retirement.
- 8.5 Where the migrant-ethnic congregation coming into the Uniting Church is related to another congregation within the one parish, then the financial implications for the parish needs to be carefully worked through.

9. OTHER RELATED MATTERS

- 9.1 There were other related matters which are relevant to the issues we were asked to look at, but which, for reasons of time, or because they were outside of the terms of reference given to us, we were not able to deal with in detail.

The definition of 'partner church'

- 9.2 We noted above that some submissions expressed dissatisfaction with the list of partner churches. The Assembly may want to clarify the definition of partner church, reconsider the list of partner churches and clarify what a 'partner church' arrangement would normally entail.

Ministers who were invited because of their special expertise

- 9.3 In the past, ministers have come from partner churches at the invitation of the Uniting Church for specific ministries for which people trained in Australia were not available or qualified. Some of these people have served the UCA for many years. When they then apply to be ministers of the UCA, they may then be asked to do further theological education. They find it difficult to understand why they were invited to come because of their special expertise, only to be told later that they are not sufficiently qualified.
- 9.4 It is then argued that it is one thing to be a minister-on-loan and quite another to be a minister of the UCA, even though their function may not change.

- 9.5 The working group believes that consideration should be given to giving such people special consideration by waiving some of the educational requirements.

Conditions of service

- 9.6 To avoid pain later, the Uniting Church should consider the information it provides to all ministers who come to work in the Uniting Church, even if on a temporary basis, so that the conditions of serving within the Uniting Church are clearly understood from the beginning, and that people will know what the extent of the Uniting Church's obligations to them is. This information should also be available to the partner churches.

Selection of candidates

- 9.7 Without having looked into the matter in depth, it seems to us that the Uniting Church would do well to have a program of encouraging candidates from migrant-ethnic groups. In future this may be better than bringing ministers from overseas. We were pleased to note the 'Ethnic Ministries Program' of the Victorian Theological Hall and the Ministerial Education Commission's endorsement of this. We commend this to the church.

Education of migrant-ethnic congregations about the Uniting Church in Australia

- 9.8 It seems to us that migrant-ethnic congregations can be brought more into the life of the Uniting Church by making available to them clear information about the Uniting Church. This could be available in the language of the group or, where this is not possible, in plain English.

Robert Bos, Convener

The 8th Assembly (1997)

Extract 8th Assembly – Report of National Mission and Evangelism

–The biennial conferences for particular groups such as Fijian, Samoan, Korean and Indonesian, have become very significant. The Tongan Uniting Church people so value their coming together that they meet annually. Serious consideration is being given as to how these conferences can find a significant place in the structures of the Uniting Church. The One Great Sunday of Sharing was celebrated by many congregations across Australia in a variety of ways in July 1996.

The Second National Conference on Cross-cultural Ministry in a Changing Australia was attended by 130 people. It was held in Collaroy, Sydney in late 1996. Twenty nine resolutions came from the Conference. A committee to develop a National Education Policy was formed with the Rev Colville Crowe as Chairperson. They will propose a number of initiatives to the Church in the future. The Consultation recommended that the Committee on Ethnic Diversity become a separate Committee of the Commission. At the time of writing that matter was before the various councils of the Church...There are still many issues that have to be dealt with if we are to become a truly multicultural Church. The process of receiving ministers into the Uniting Church continues to cause deep concern amongst overseas ministers. Some Anglo Celtic orientated congregations continue to treat migrant ethnic congregations as tenants rather than as another Uniting Church congregation which is sharing the property. The task of maintaining contact with the migrant ethnic congregations grows as the number of congregations increases”.

EXTRACT OF THE 8TH ASSEMBLY MINUTES RELATING TO THE TASK GROUP ON THE REVIEW OF MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

97.32.03 to affirm the six goals for Ministerial Education set out in section 5.1 of the report, noting that the Uniting Church seeks to form Ministers who

...

(d) are equipped to help the Church discover its identity and lead the Church in mission in a rapidly changing and diverse cultural and social context.

Mandate of MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

Revised March 2005

Preamble: *In 1985 the Uniting Church proclaimed itself a multicultural church, acknowledging the changed context of ministry in Australia and the presence of people from culturally diverse background in its membership. This vision is one that needs to be continually nurtured. Developing models of ministry and mission in a multicultural and multifaith environment remains a key challenge for the church.*

Responsible to: The Assembly

Reporting Arrangements: The Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee

Mission Statement: Develop respectful relationships with Indigenous people and across the life of the church, assisting the Church in learning to live as people from diverse cultures in worship, witness and service and foster models of cross-cultural ministry and mission that reflect the hospitality of God.

Mandate:

- 1) Promote cross-cultural learning and sharing across the life of the Church- in congregations, Presbyteries, Synods, Assembly Agencies, Boards and Theological Colleges, and ecumenically. Reflect theologically on the shape of witness and mission in cross-cultural and multifaith contexts. Promote cross-cultural understanding between Indigenous people and later arrivals.
- 2) Support the ministry of migrant congregations and ministry to new and emerging groups *and*
 - *To facilitate the development of policies that will enhance the multicultural life of the UCA, in consultation with the relevant communities (For example, policies on use of UCA property)*
 - *Encourage the networking of migrant congregations, particularly through National Conferences*
 - *Translate key documents into community languages*
 - *Ensure consultation occurs with migrant communities when relationships with partner churches may impact on the life of their congregations*
 - *Monitor and educate on matters relating to the sharing of property*
 - *Encourage the participation of migrant members in the life of the Uniting Church*
 - *Advice and assist on matters relating to the orientation of ministers coming from overseas, and the settlement and reception of ministers and congregations from culturally diverse backgrounds.*

- 3) Work collaboratively with Synods and other Assembly Agencies to support leaders who can minister across cultures and foster the development of multicultural congregations. Share creative models of cross cultural worship, mission and multicultural ministry with the rest of the Church.
- 4) Assist the national networking and co-ordination of the work of Synods in exploring ways of discipleship formation and leadership training of second generation members.
- 5) Assist the Church to fully utilise the gifts of members from culturally diverse backgrounds and develop policies and cultural sensitivities that respond to their needs. Organise National Consultations to review multicultural policies and practice and the implications of ethnic diversity for the ordering of the Church's life.

*Adopted by the Assembly Standing Committee in March 2005
Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly*

Guidelines for Receiving Mission Co-Workers (1998)

Printed in 1999 booklet “Migrant-Ethnic Congregations in the Uniting Church in Australia”

Guidelines for Receiving Mission Co-workers

The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) believes that Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries. To this end the UCA commits itself to seek special relationships with other churches, especially in Asia and the Pacific. We seek to be open to the possibility that the UCA will grow and be renewed in thought and attitudes as a multicultural church by learning from partner Churches.

The UCA gladly welcomes mission co-workers from partner Churches to bear witness to Jesus Christ and so to share with the UCA in commitment to God's mission in this rapidly changing world.

Definition

Mission co-workers with the UCA are members or ordained ministers from partner Churches and/or ecumenical organisations who have been officially invited by the UCA to serve in Australia.

- The usual term of service is two to four years
- This term may be extended if both the UCA and the partner Church agree.
- It will not normally be extended beyond a total of ten years.

Qualifications

The UCA and the partner Church will decide together what qualifications are needed for each Mission Co-worker. The final approval of a selected person and assessment of his/her qualifications will be by the UCA.

Guidelines

1. The relevant body of the UCA submits a call for a Mission Co-worker to a partner Church or an ecumenical organisation, stating its requirements and preferred qualifications

OR

A partner Church may offer a Mission Co-worker to the UCA, stating his/her qualifications.

2. The partner Church recommends a person in response to the call.

OR

The UCA may invite the Co-worker to serve in the UCA.

3. The UCA will receive the recommendation or offer from the partner Church and recommend it to the appropriate body of the UCA for final approval.
4. When a person has been approved as a Mission Co-worker, he/she will be provided with orientation and training.

The UCA will give advice on immigration requirements. The sending church, with the Co-worker, will ensure that entry papers are in order before departure.

The UCA will closely co-operate with the sending church in planning the goals, objectives and methods of the Co-worker's program. Any changes of the original plan and directions about his/her mission task in Australia will be made through mutual agreement of the two churches.

The UCA will periodically assess the Mission Co-worker's work. The appropriate body of the UCA will appoint a support group which will work with the Mission Co-worker to define his/her program, tasks and goals, to monitor progress, and to care for his/her professional and personal welfare.

As partners in mission, the UCA and the partner Church will negotiate how they will share in financial support and responsibility for the Mission Co-worker. Their agreement should include travel expenses to and from Australia, stipend, housing, program costs and emergency costs.

The lifestyle of the Mission Co-worker must be consistent with that of his/her working partners in Australia. Under no circumstances will a Mission Co-worker be permitted to receive remuneration in excess of the minimum stipend and allowances set by the relevant synod of the UCA. Any excess in salaries and/or benefits provided by the partner Church must be held in trust by the partner Church and provided to the beneficiary only after he/ she completes his/her term of service in Australia.

If the UCA deems it necessary to apply for a Permanent Resident Visa for the Mission Co-worker, the Mission Co-worker (and any legally responsible dependents) will be required to give a legally binding written undertaking that neither he/she nor any of his/her dependents will apply for Australian citizenship nor take advantage of Permanent Resident status to remain in Australia after their term of service or any extension to their term of service. It is understood that the Mission Co-worker will return to serve with their church following their time of service with the UCA.

8. An ordained minister of a partner Church, who is appointed as a Co-worker, will be received as a colleague in ministry but will remain a minister of the partner Church, and will not be accepted on transfer to become a Minister of the Word of the UCA during his/ her period of service.
9. If a Mission Co-worker intends to change his/her marital status while living in Australia, he/she should inform both the UCA and the partner Church of this intention before making the change, in order that the churches may respond appropriately.
10. For the support and well being of the Mission Co-worker, the UCA will not accept as Co-worker any person of currently married status who is unable to bring his/her spouse to Australia while serving as Mission Co-worker. The travel and support expenses of the family will be negotiated as in paragraph 5 above.
11. The Mission Co-worker should at all times seek to maintain a clear and healthy relationship with his/her sending church. The Co-worker should seek at all times to strengthen the relationship between the UCA and his/her sending church. For this purpose, the Co-worker should write periodic reports and reflections to be submitted to both churches.
12. The Mission Co-worker will be a key to the development of good relations between the partner Church and the UCA, and should always have this in mind. The Co-worker will be encouraged to develop understanding of the mission of Christ in Australia and will be invited to bring fresh insights to meetings of Presbytery and Synod. The Co-worker will be sensitive to and will work within the ordering and policy of the UCA, and will serve under the oversight of the UCA.

13. The Mission Co-worker will not directly request or receive funding for program initiatives from the sending body or any funding agency. All requests for funds must be submitted in the form of an official project proposal to the relevant body of the UCA. Upon receipt of such a proposal, the UCA will decide whether it falls within the overall program of the UCA.
14. When the UCA proposes to invite a Mission Co-worker from an overseas church, it must consult the corresponding migrant-ethnic community within the UCA.
15. All working or project funds will be channelled through and audited by the relevant body of the UCA.

November 1998

Jointly prepared by
Multicultural Ministry and
Unity and International Mission,
National Assembly of the UCA,
and approved by the Assembly Standing Committee
in November 1998 as an official document of the UCA

A WORKING DOCUMENT
(DRAFT) ASSEMBLY GUIDELINES (2004)
ON CALLING A MINISTER FROM OVERSEAS OR FROM ANOTHER
DENOMINATION TO SERVE CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITING CHURCH

(I) Background

For many years the Uniting Church has sent and received mission co-workers from partner churches and ecumenical organisations, believing that Christians are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural, economic, national and racial barriers.

—..the UCA commits itself to seek special relationships with other churches, especially in Asia and the Pacific. We seek to be open to the possibility that the UCA will grow and be renewed in thought and attitudes as a multicultural church by learning from partner Churches. The UCA gladly welcomes mission Co-workers from partner Churches to bear witness to Jesus Christ and so to share with the UCA in commitment to God's mission in this rapidly changing world.”¹

Some mission co-workers have been ordained ministers from partner churches in the Pacific and Asia who have served ethnic communities and congregations assisting the ministry to migrant communities in Australia and contributing to process of building a multicultural Uniting Church. The presence of mission co-workers represents a living witness to the unity we have in Christ and witnesses to the special relationships between the Uniting Church and churches in Asia and the Pacific. Following discussion with partner churches, it is intended that these guidelines replace previous guidelines, ensuring that the close working relationship that exists between International Mission and partner churches in relation to the sharing of personnel is maintained.²

The Uniting Church affirms the continuing value of receiving ministers and mission co-workers from partner churches to serve within the Uniting Church. At the same time it is important to note that some things have changed in the last 10 years in relation to the migrant communities within the life of the Uniting Church, which should be noted.

One sign of the changed context we now find ourselves in relates to the way the Uniting Church is being reshaped and enriched by the gifts of its members that come from a wider variety of cultural backgrounds. Increasingly the different communities are taking up their place in the life of the Uniting Church and are developing people who are taking up leadership roles, not only to their own communities, but also for the wider life of the church and there is increasing numbers of people graduating from theological colleges from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Many communities are now producing bi-cultural/bi-lingual ministers who have the additional benefit of being able to understand the specific issues faced by the second and subsequent generations brought up in Australia.

¹ Taken from the Guidelines in Calling a Mission Co-worker (1999)

² In the past, there were specific guidelines relating to placement of ministers from the Pacific - *“Mutual Agreement on Appointment of Pacific Missionaries”* (1982).

In addition stricter migration requirements have implications that require further thought. Uniting Church congregations, when calling a minister, are required by Australian law in the first instance to consider possible candidates from within Australia. Therefore increasingly the calling of people from overseas to serve migrant communities occurs in those situations where specific skills are needed that not available in the Uniting church. Synods are not able to apply for a visa for an overseas minister unless it genuinely believes that there is no suitable person in Australia

For the above reasons the policy within the Uniting Church is that:

–The congregation, Presbytery and Synod jointly endeavour to place in a migrant-ethnic congregation a bilingual minister who has cultural and social understanding about the homeland as well as Australian society”³.

There are situations though where it is still appropriate to call a minister from overseas to serve within the Uniting church for some of the following reasons:

The Uniting Church does not have sufficient numbers of ministers who can effectively minister bi-culturally and bi-lingually to all our communities.

There are some new and emerging communities in Australia needing intentional and proactive ministry from the Uniting Church which may involve calling a minister from overseas.

Some congregations still feel they can best be ministered to through having a minister from their country of origin. For these congregations the sense of being connected with the “home” church remains very strong.

There are people migrating to Australia who are ordained and who approach the Uniting Church wishing to see if there is a way they can exercise ministry within their communities and be recognised by the Uniting Church

And finally, the Uniting Church remains open to receive mission co-workers/missionaries from partner churches who minister in Australia, just as the Uniting Church sends mission co-workers to work with partner churches.

(II) Principles To Guide Appointments Or Placements

- The minister coming from overseas works within the ordering and policy of the Uniting Church and serves under the oversight of the Presbytery. The minister will have an active involvement in their local Presbytery.
- The minister’s presence strengthens the relationship between the Uniting Church and the sending church.
- When serving one of the migrant communities of the Uniting Church the minister is expected to strengthen relationships between the congregation and the Uniting Church and help nurture the community they are serving in their life within the Uniting Church.

1. ³ See *Guidelines on Relationships between Ethnic Congregations and the ‘Home’ churches*

- Where the community has a ‘National Conference’ is it expected that the minister will play an active part in such gatherings.
- The minister will be connected to the Assembly, Synod and Presbytery multicultural ministries.
- The congregation calling a minister from overseas needs to be aware that they are not free to send the person away if their ministry is deemed unsatisfactory. In cases of any serious complaints, the Presbytery is notified and involved in mediation.

(III) UCA Placement Procedures Relating To Ministers From Overseas Coming To Serve In UCA Congregations

Sometimes complex issues arise in relation to how the UCA placements procedures relates to appointment procedures in partner churches, for example the annual conferences of some churches provide the timing for change of appointments. Careful negotiation is needed to ensure respect for the placement procedures of the Uniting church and a partner church who may be requested to provide a minister to serve in Australia. Therefore good communication between a congregation and the presbytery is needed to ensure there is agreement about the proposed process that is to be followed. Below the normal UCA placement procedures for calling a minister from overseas or another denomination to serve in the UCA is explained. Diagram A provides an outline of the Uniting Church Placement procedures in relation to calling a minister from within Australia. In cases where a minister is coming to fill the placement from overseas the following process would be followed.

Developing a Profile

A Congregation or Faith Community needing to call a new minister (or if the case is made for developing a new ministry) works with the local presbytery towards that end, undertaking a mission study and preparing a *Profile* that gives a description of the kind of ministry that is needed. In the Uniting Church this process of discernment that is engaged in through the formulating of the profile represents a key way the congregation with the presbytery and the Synod reach an agreed statement about the ministry needs in a congregation.

Permission to call a minister from overseas

Once the Synod Placements Committee has given *Approval to fill* a key question that will be asked is whether there is an appropriate person already in Australia who can serve this congregation. The Presbytery and congregations may well seek the advice of the Synod and Assembly Multicultural Ministry committees, (and the National Conference leadership in situations where the community is connected to a National conference of the Uniting Church) to help discern who may be available to be called. If the Presbytery gives approval to a request from the congregation to call a minister from overseas then the congregation and presbytery (through the Joint Nominating Committee) begin the process of seeking an appropriate person with the gifts and skills that are needed for the placement, in consultation, with the General Secretary of the Synod and UIM, in dialogue with the sending church overseas. Before the appointment goes ahead the General Secretary of the Synod must receive a letter from the overseas church saying that this person is a *minister in good standing in their church*; and is given permission to be released to serve in the Uniting Church for a set period of time. Police screening as dictated by Australian States Child protection Legislation is also required before the minister comes to Australia. In some cases the minister may need to visit the Congregation before agreeing to accept the call or appointment and in such cases the cost of bringing the minister to Australia would be born by the congregation. Once the call/appointment is

confirmed usually the Synod and Assembly have met half the costs of moving the minister, their spouse and family to Australia.

Terms of Appointment

The appointment of a minister coming from a partner church is facilitated by *International Mission* in close co-operation with the Presbytery, Synod and Multicultural Ministry. UIM may pass on recommendations for appointments to the presbytery and synod placement committees, the appropriate bodies in the UCA, responsible for placements. *Terms of Appointment* are prepared by the Synod in consultation with UIM, the Presbytery and local congregation, outlining the stipend, superannuation, medical insurance, annual leave, book allowance, manse furnishings, fares and freight, car allowance, length of appointment, accommodation, other allowances and the process of orientation (*see Appendix B for Draft Terms of Appointment*).

The General Secretary of the Synod arranges for a copy of the Terms of Appointment to be sent to the minister with a copy to the home church

Length of appointment

A minister is called or appointed for a limited period of time, up to five years, agreed with the partner church. They will initially come on a 2 year Religious Workers Visa with the option of further extensions subject to a satisfactory presbytery review at the conclusion of the first year of the placement and with the agreement of the sending church. It should be noted that when a minister comes on a 2 year Religious Workers Visa, arrangements need to be made to ensure medical insurance is provided for the minister and his/her family as Medicare does not apply. (There may be further educational costs for school children (though it appears few government schools are requiring this).

Ministers are expected to return home at the end of 5 years unless the congregation, minister, presbytery and the overseas partner church agree to a further extension.

The minister has an obligation to advise the sending church if their circumstances change in any way. In a case where a minister may wish to apply to be received as a Uniting Church minister, the application will not be considered until they have advised the home church of their intention. A response from the home church needs to be received before the application may proceed.

Arranging visas

The Synod arranges the appropriate immigration needs of the minister and assists with the visa application in consultation with International Mission and the Presbytery.

(IV) Orientation To The Uniting Church And Required Courses For Ministers Serving From Overseas In Uniting Church Congregations

It is helpful for congregations and ministers before they arrive, to be aware of the orientation process outlined below.

Ministers coming from overseas or from another denomination to serve in the Uniting Church undergo an Orientation Process that includes:

Orientation Shortly after Arrival

An initial period of orientation is prepared for the minister and their family by the Synod and Assembly Multicultural Ministry staff in consultation with International Mission, the appointed Mentor and someone assigned from the congregation. Congregations are requested to allow an initial two weeks after the arrival of the minister during which time the minister will not be required to preach or take on other ministerial duties.

Mentor

A Mentor is identified by the presbytery in consultation with Synod or Assembly Multicultural Ministry staff, either from within the presbytery or from the wider synod multicultural network.

The Mentor has the role of supporting and assisting the minister and their family as they adjust to life in the Uniting Church, the local church and Australian society.

The Mentor has a pastoral support role with the minister and their family

Monthly meetings are held with the minister during their first year and there is a continuing supportive role in the second year of their term.⁴

The Mentor has the responsibility of introducing the minister to the Presbytery, Synod and Assembly, to multicultural ministry networks and orientating the minister generally to the Uniting Church.

The Mentor assists the gifts and skills of the minister to be known and utilised by the wider church.

The Mentor has the role of bringing to the attention of the minister, congregation, presbytery and synod, the courses the minister needs to be doing and has an enabling role to ensure the Synod provides financial support to assist the minister in doing the necessary courses.⁵ The Mentor supports the minister as they undertake their studies (see below), and works with them to relate the processes and policies of the Uniting church to their local context and

The Mentor may draw on others in fulfilling these roles.

Courses

All ministers in the Uniting Church undertake 2 weeks continuing education annually. During the first year the minister undertakes a *Coolamon* (Distance Theological education) course such as *–Introducing the Uniting Church in Australia* or an equivalent course in *Uniting Church Studies* or *Uniting Church Ethos and Polity* run by one of the Theological Colleges. The cost of this course is normally shared by the Synod and Presbytery.

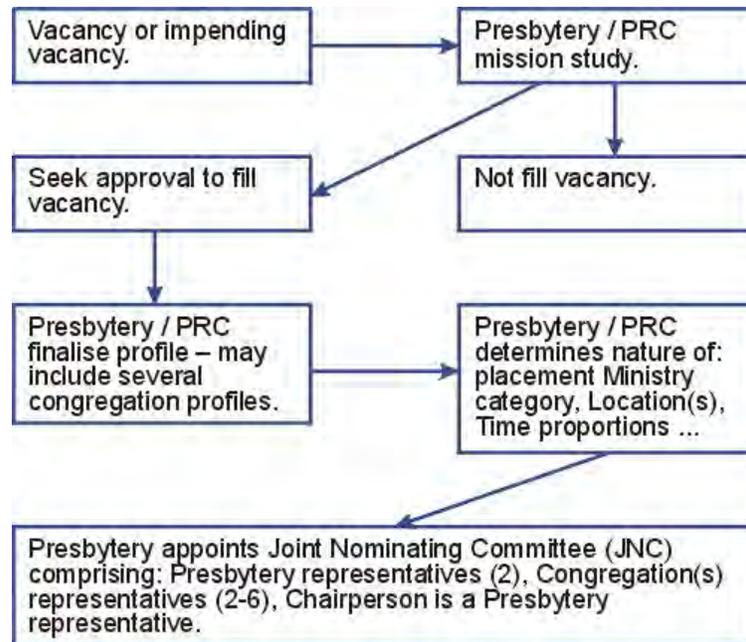
During the first year the minister is also required to undergo the UCA Minister's *Code of Ethics* course; and the *Sexual Misconduct* course. (Required of all ministers serving in the Uniting Church)

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2. ⁴ During the second year the Mentor explains the process of pastoral supervision and assists the minister to identify someone to act in this role for the future.
 3. ⁵ Assembly Resolution 94.32.06 requests synods to provide financial support for migrant-ethnic ministers towards the costs of English courses, orientation courses to the Uniting Church, and courses of formal theological education required by the Reception of Ministers committee.

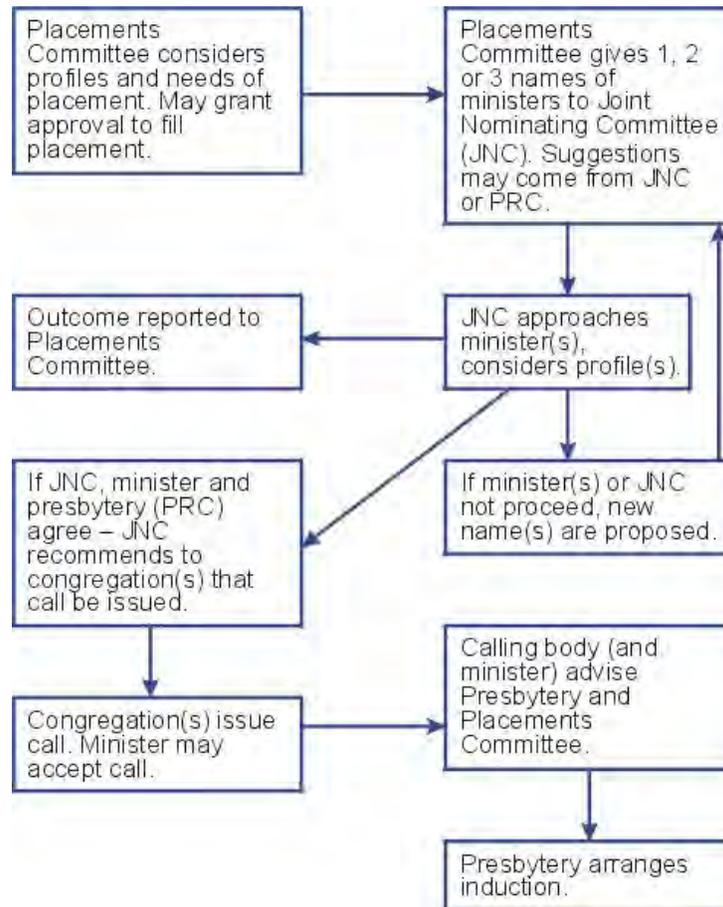
If English language study is required, synods *provide financial support for migrant-ethnic ministers towards the cost of English courses.*” Presbyteries have the responsibility of ensuring the minister has adequate time to attend English classes and undertake the course of orientation to the Uniting Church. The Mentor has a supportive role to ensure adequate attention is given to language training.

Assembly Multicultural Ministry and UIM will arrange for these Guidelines on Calling a Minister from Overseas and Orientation to the Life of the UCA, be translated into community languages.

The placements process – a vacancy occurs



The selection process



SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION OF THE 2000 NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY, 28 FEB 2000

A report received by the March 2000 meeting of the ASC

Participants : Rev. Inoke Nabulivou, Rev. Ivan Roberts, Mrs. Fefiloi Reid
Rev. Dr. Myong Duk Yang, Mrs. Wilma Viswanathan, Ms. Deb Brown, Rev. Dr. James Haire,
Rev. James Latu, Rev. Dr. Clive Pearson (Chair), Rev. Dr. Keith Rowe, Rev. Dr. Geof Lilburne,
Rev. David Pargeter, Mrs. Wendie Wilkie, Mrs. Seongja Yoo-Crowe

Apologies: Rev. Dr. Robert Bos, Rev. Dr. Chong-Bok Choi, Rev. Sophia Vaitkus,
Mr. Peter Lewis, Mr. Scott Litchfield, Rev. Dr. Graham Beattie

The meeting was held with fourteen participants from 1.30 pm to 9.00 pm, on 28th February 2000 at 5th floor, 222 Pitt Street, Sydney. After a short devotion and greetings, the participants were invited to respond to the working paper prepared by the National Director, Seongja Yoo-Crowe, to identify the specific areas we have to look at in the future Multicultural Ministry of the UCA.

1. Two major points of the working paper prepared by the National Director

In presenting the paper on “The Future of the Multicultural Ministry of the UCA”, the National Director emphasised her own two major understandings.

1.1. Multicultural Ministry and Migrant-ethnic Ministry

We have been using two terms, Multicultural Ministry and Migrant-ethnic Ministry, in describing life with people from many different cultural traditions in the UCA, without giving careful thought to the real definition of the two terms.

Migrant-ethnic Ministry, as part of Multicultural Ministry, is directly related to practical issues derived from the life of migrant-ethnic congregations. It involves invitation of ministers for m/e congregations, church buildings for worship accommodation, Christian education for second generation migrants, relationship with home churches, immigration law and refugee issues, pastoral care for migrant-ethnic ministers, etc.

When we talk about some issues such as:

- Equal participation in decision making,
- Inclusiveness,
- Affirming one another’s culture,
- Our common faith,
- Sharing all resources,
- Growing in mission and evangelism,
- Racial discrimination and reconciliation,
- Adjustment to the UCA rules and regulations,
- Second generation issues including Anglo-Celtic and Aboriginal descendants,
- Life with members of different cultural traditions, etc... we are entering Multicultural Ministry-beyond Migrant-ethnic Ministry.

Multicultural Ministry is to **all** members across the boundaries of their various cultures. The interaction and mutual impact between members/congregations of different cultures has been getting deeper and wider, creating a new dimension in the life and mission of the Church. This Ministry is not only for migrant-ethnic members. It is not a marginalised ministry. It is not an extension of overseas mission. It

is an integral part of the life of the whole church, enriching every aspect of it and including every member - Aboriginal, Anglo-Celtic and newly arrived migrant members.

1.2. **Multicultural Ministry and the Mission of our Church**

While the structures and value systems of our community are changing, the life of the Christian church is also changing. The Christian churches are urged to be serious about the changes and to establish new appropriate ways of living up to their responsibilities to fit in with the changes. How do we understand this change? How does this change relate to the purposes and the mission of God? How do we prepare for the future ministry in the 21st century? What roles would migrant-ethnic congregations play in this future ministry and mission? At present, those migrant-ethnic congregations are the only growing part of the UCA. What co-operation can we establish between culturally different groups in our Church for future mission and evangelisation? Now as our churches and communities are becoming more diverse in races, cultures, languages and religions, we try to see the work of God for us at this time, standing in between the two multicultural churches, the Early Church and the Ultimate Church of the ~~P~~romised End” (Rev. 7: 9).

The First International Network Forum on Multicultural Ministry was held at the end of November 1999 in Sydney. Representatives of 13 churches of the world confirmed Multicultural Ministry’s place at the core of many churches’ future ministry. 23 UCA participants in this Forum also made a strong comment: *“We believe the Christian Gospel calls us to regard multicultural ministry as „core business” of the UCA. Despite the good intentions of many within the UCA, our inherited Eurocentric styles and structures have had the effect of marginalising many ethnic and migrant Christians among us. Changing this perception and reality will call for some radical modifications of the ways in which we construct our ministries and do our theology”*. The National Director said, *“From my faith and experience of fifteen years” work, I believe Multicultural Ministry and its mission in a pluralistic community is God”s all to the churches in our time”*.

2. **Areas Identified as of Priority in the Multicultural Ministry of the UCA**

The participants were divided into three groups and examined the future of multicultural ministry under three headings: What are the pivotal issues for multicultural ministry? Where should our priorities be? Where might there be blockages? The issues introduced below were identified as pivotal ones by the majority of the participants.

2.1. **New terms for Multicultural Ministry: Why not call it “the New Frontier in Mission”?**

The New frontier in mission, New cutting edge ministry, Core business, Integral feature of mission - these are terms used by the participants. Multicultural Ministry was certainly acknowledged as an up-coming core new mission area by the participants.

Two important comments came up : *There is a need to develop inter-cultural mentality in the UCA, sharing of theological insights. **All ministry is in a multicultural setting.***

Yet MM is part of the core mission of the Church. How can we help people to see that it is a ~~r~~eceiving mission” whereby the Anglo churches can receive a great gift from the ~~e~~thnic” churches? We need to think of it as a two-way giving and receiving. This is a new ~~m~~ission” possibility for us, ~~m~~ission in mutuality”.

2.2. Cultural Orientation for Leaders and Councils

The importance of people who work with migrant-ethnic communities, as well as church leaders, having orientation in this area. Too frequently the requirement is for migrant-ethnic people to assimilate to our (Anglo-Celtic) ways with little understanding of their (m/e) needs. For example, the 1994 Assembly meeting recommended orientation courses on the UCA only to the newly arrived ministers and members of migrant-ethnic congregations (7th Assembly Minutes 94.32.04. c. & 94.32.05).

A recommendation is now presented from the opposite direction, to help the dominant culture reflect on their cultural captivity: *“We are conscious of how in some churches comparable to the UCA those who work with members of other ethnic communities in positions of leadership are required to go through some sort of cultural orientation. Sometimes the business and administrative procedures that are taken for granted among a majority culture are not those of minorities. They can have the effect of leaving those in the minority position silent. We would like to suggest that we might begin to devise some „orientation“ for our leaders, so that any cross-cultural confusion and uncertainty is reduced”*.

2.3. Australian theological reflection on multicultural life as response to gospel.

Rev. Dr. Clive Pearson, who chaired the meeting, introduced four books on multiculturalism recently published in America. These books present similar notions and thoughts to the ND's experience and understanding about life with people of different cultural backgrounds living in one church/community. The participants commented on the important role of theological halls in developing an effective response to multicultural ministry and the need for greater Australian theologising in this field. The fact that the UCA is behind in theology and strategies on multiculturalism urges us to work more on Australian multiculturalism.

2.4. New questions of second generation ministry

It was stressed that the second generation issue includes not only second generation migrants but also the post-Anglophile generation of English language settlers. The meeting did not go deep into this issue, but the common concerns have been worship that fits their style, identity issues, participation in decision making/acknowledgement of gifts of young members, training of bilingual youth workers, establishment of English services in m/e congregations, etc.

2.5. Barriers

2.5.1. –Pauline Hanson” in the Church

Assimilationist attitudes of many in the Church and society have been reinforced by politicians. Existence of racial discriminatory attitude in the UCA was expressed as a reality. Conservative value system, nationalistic attitudes, patriarchal leadership and lack of education about Aboriginal people in m/e communities are also obstacles to multicultural life.

The Mission Statement in the Mandate of Multicultural Ministry is **to educate the Church in living as people from different cultures in worship, witness and service**. Overcoming these barriers and obstacles through education is one of the responsibilities of MM. –One Great Sunday of Sharing (a multicultural day of the UCA held on the third Sunday in July every year) has been contributing greatly to this educational purpose. Concept of the pilgrim people, sharing differences, and building a harmonious life together are major themes of this Sunday.

2.5.2. Multicultural Ministry needs to be better resourced

- **Publication of resource materials** is essential for educational purposes. The workload for the ND has been already too heavy to include this responsibility. *An editor who can work on publishing and an adequate budget for publication are areas needing urgent attention.* One volunteer has been helping in this area up to now.
- **The infrequency of Reference Committee** meetings (once a year) was seen as a major difficulty. Options such as teleconferencing were discussed, but not felt to address the real issues we face in maintaining a national Church. Concern was expressed that the UCA could become a loose confederation of state synods.
- **The present one-day's administrative support** is helpful but insufficient.
- **An idea for fundraising:** Seeking specific projects (e.g. the First UCA Multilingual Worship Book) that may be funded by groups and individuals. Another matter which was pointed out in relation to budget restraints is that m/e congregations send more money home or devote more to providing for their own congregation than for the work of the wider Church.

3. Role of the National Director as an affirmative leader

This issue took more time in the discussion than any other matters. The unanimous feeling was that since MM is becoming more recognised internally and internationally, the job description of the ND should be revised. Here are some suggestions:

- **Educator:** The new ND must play key roles in education at the grass roots of the church, with all members - Anglo-Celtic, Aboriginal and migrant-ethnic - about the vision of MM. This vision needs to be presented not as a ~~problem~~ "to be solved" but a ~~vision~~ "to be realised" at every level of the Church.
- **Communicator:** The person must be an excellent communicator to large and small culturally different groups of the new vision for mission or the ~~new~~ "frontier in mission".
- **Coordinator:** The new ND must have the ability to coordinate Assembly, Synod and Presbytery strategies. Rather than devising a set of ~~policies~~", it is necessary to show ways of empowering people at the local level to engage this ~~new~~ "frontier in mission".

4. Involvement of the Reference Committee in the appointment of a new National Director

The view was expressed that the Reference Committee should be more deeply involved in the appointment of a new ND. Because the Committee meets so infrequently due to cost, it was agreed that a meeting be organised quickly with the Support Group in Sydney, and that non-NSW members be invited to provide written submissions.

5. Summarising the discussion

At the outset the Chairperson sought clarification on the relationship of this Consultation to the Reference Committee on Multicultural Ministry. Our understanding was that the findings of this Consultation would be referred to the ASC, which would then keep the Reference Committee informed.

This was a one-day meeting. At the end there was no time to make recommendations. However, important comments or suggestions have been highlighted in bold/italic.

March 2000

Submitted by Seongja Yoo-Crowe, National Director, Multicultural Ministry Uniting Church in Australia

MINUTES OF THE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

19. Multicultural Ministry

Seongja Yoo Crowe, National Director of Multicultural Ministry, presented documents 26 and 26A, consisting of a report from the National Workshop on Multicultural Ministry plus recommendations. Discussion followed.

00.32 It was resolved to:

00.32.01 receive the report;

00.32.02 support the decision of Multicultural Ministry to develop educational strategies for use in congregations on the multicultural nature of the gospel;

00.32.03 (a) determine that orientation courses be developed for leaders in presbyteries, synods and Assembly on racism and cultures;

(b) request Multicultural Ministry to ensure that such courses are developed, in consultation with other Assembly agencies and synods;

00.32.04 refer Multicultural Ministry's request for increased funding to the Management Advisory Group for consideration within the 2001 budget preparations and for report back to the Standing Committee no later than November 2000.

ALTERNATE REGULATIONS FOR KOREAN CONGREGATIONS

Approved by Assembly Standing Committee March 1999

Amendments approved by Assembly Standing Committee March 2000

1. REGULATION 2.1.1

Add new definitions in Regulation 2.1.1:

–For the purpose of these alternate Regulations, unless the context or subject matter otherwise indicates:

Bu moksa means an assistant minister serving in a Korean Congregation within the Uniting Church.

Korean Congregation means a Congregation of the Uniting Church which is recognised by the Assembly, following consultation with the Council of Korean Churches, as being a Korean Congregation.

Korean partner church means the Korean Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church of Korea or the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, or any other Korean church which enters into a partnership with the Uniting Church in Australia which is recognised by the Assembly.

Tam-im moksa means a minister in charge serving in a Korean Congregation within the Uniting Church.

We-im moksa means a tam-im moksa who has been granted lifetime tenure in a placement.”

2. REGULATION 2.4.18

Alternate Regulation 2.4.18 to read:

“MINISTRY TEAMS WITHIN KOREAN CONGREGATIONS

2.4.18 Where two or more Ministers are serving in a pastoral charge in a Korean Congregation, one minister shall be designated as the tam-im moksa and the others as bu moksas. The designation of the tam-im moksa shall be approved by the Church Council, the Congregational Meeting and the Presbytery. In the event of disagreement between the three bodies the Presbytery shall determine the matter. Any arrangements made prior to the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect shall be taken into account in any determinations made under this alternate Regulation.”

3. DURATION AND TERMINATION OF MINISTERIAL PLACEMENTS **Alternate Regulations to Regulations 2.7.6, 2.7.7, 2.7.9 and 2.7.10**

Alternate Regulations to read:

DURATION AND TERMINATION OF PLACEMENTS IN KOREAN CONGREGATIONS

2.7.5A

- (a) Arrangements on the duration of placements of ministers serving in Korean Congregations which have been previously agreed between a minister and the Congregation, and which have been previously approved by the Presbytery, and which are still in force on the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect, shall remain in force notwithstanding the coming into effect of these alternate Regulations. Alterations to such arrangements shall require the agreement of the minister, the Church Council, the Congregational Meeting and the Presbytery. All such arrangements are subject to the provisions of alternate Regulation 2.7.7 and to the disciplinary processes of the Uniting Church detailed in Regulations 7.5.1ff.
- (b) In relation to the placements of tam-im moksas, Korean Congregations have the option of following the normal processes of the Uniting Church detailed in Regulations 2.7.6 – 2.7.10 or of following alternate Regulations 2.7.6 and 2.7.7 below. On the first occasion that a Congregation is planning to call a new tam-im moksa, after the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect, a meeting of the Congregation shall determine which of the two options shall be followed. The Congregation shall immediately notify the Presbytery in writing of the option chosen.
- (c) Placements of tam-im moksas in full-time positions shall be regarded as Uniting Church placements.

OPTION ONE (Uniting Church Regulations 2.7.6 – 2.7.10)

DURATION AND TERMINATION OF PLACEMENTS

2.7.6 The placement of a Minister in a pastoral charge shall normally be made for an undefined term but shall not continue beyond ten years except as provided in Reg. 2.7.10.

2.7.7

- (a) A placement in a Congregation within the bounds of a Presbytery may be terminated at any time by the Presbytery according to the procedures in this Regulation.
- (b) Any decision by a Presbytery to terminate a placement in a Congregation shall normally be made as a result of a consultation on the life and witness of the Congregation. The Presbytery shall consider any request for the termination of a placement in a Congregation made by the Church Council pursuant to a resolution carried by a two thirds majority of members present at a special meeting.
- (c) A placement in a pastoral charge shall not be terminated by the Presbytery within the first five years (or in the case of the first placement of a Minister following ordination, three years) except in special circumstances, and either:
 - (i) at the request of the Minister, or

- (ii) at the request of the Church Council by a two thirds majority of members present at a special meeting, or
 - (iii) at the initiative of the Presbytery after consultation with the Placements Committee.
- (d) Where a Presbytery has delegated its authority to its Pastoral Relations Committee a Church Council may appeal to the Presbytery against any decision of the Committee.
 - (e) Any decision of the Presbytery or its Pastoral Relations Committee to terminate a placement shall be by a two thirds majority of those present at the meeting.
 - (f) A placement in a pastoral charge shall not be terminated by a Presbytery during the term of any extension beyond ten years pursuant to Regulation 2.7.10 except on the same conditions as set out in (c) above.

2.7.8 Placements other than in Congregations:

- (a) shall be of such duration as the body making the placement determines;
- (b) shall normally be reviewed every fifth year in a manner to be determined by the body making the placement;
- (c) may be terminated at any time by the Presbytery, Synod or Assembly as the case may be, after consultation with the Minister and other bodies concerned.

2.7.9 The Placements Committee:

- (a) acting on its own initiative or on the request of a Presbytery, the Synod or the Assembly may terminate a placement at any time;
- (b) shall act on its own initiative only after consideration of the good of the whole Church and either in order to meet the particular needs of a Minister or to provide ministry in a Priority placement;
- (c) shall terminate a placement only after consultation with the Minister, the pastoral charge, the relevant Presbytery, and other appropriate bodies.

2.7.9A A Minister whose placement has been terminated shall have a right of appeal, subject to the following provisions:

- (a) An appeal shall be made in writing.
- (b) Unless an appeal is submitted within one month of the date of the written notice given to the Minister of the decision to terminate, the right to appeal shall lapse.
- (c) An appeal against a termination decision:
 - (i) by a Presbytery or its Pastoral Relations Committee pursuant to Regulation 2.7.7 or 2.7.8(c) shall be directed to the Synod or its Standing Committee. The Synod or its Standing Committee shall appoint a committee to determine

the matter. The committee shall not include any member of the Presbytery or its Pastoral Relations Committee.

- (ii) by a Synod or a body responsible to a Synod pursuant to Regulation 2.7.8(c) or 2.7.9(a) or to a by-law of a Synod shall be directed to the President of the Assembly who shall appoint a committee to determine the matter. The committee shall not include any member of the body which made the termination decision.
 - (iii) by the Assembly or a body responsible to the Assembly pursuant to Regulation 2.7.8(c) or 2.7.9(a) shall be directed to the President of the Assembly who shall without delay refer the appeal to the Moderators of two Synods. Such Moderators shall appoint a committee to determine the matter. The committee shall not include any members of the Standing Committee of the Assembly or any body which made the termination decision.
- (d) Any committee appointed shall consist of at least five persons.
 - (e) Before making a decision any committee shall consult with the Minister, the terminating body and any other body or person it considers appropriate.
 - (f) The decision of the committee shall be final and there shall be no further right of appeal.

EXTENSION OF CONGREGATION PLACEMENTS BEYOND THE TENTH YEAR

2.7.10

- (a)
 - (i) A placement in a Congregation may be extended by the Presbytery beyond the tenth year by agreement of the Minister, Congregation and Presbytery if there are circumstances that warrant such extension.
 - (ii) Before the Presbytery agrees to extend the placement beyond ten years or to grant a further extension, it shall conduct a consultation on the life and witness of the congregation (refer to Regulation 3.4.5). Such consultation will normally be conducted not less than one year before the placement is due to expire.
 - (iii) Any extension shall require a two-thirds majority by secret ballot of those present in each of the meetings of the Church Council, the Congregation and the Presbytery.
- (b) Such extensions may be for periods of up to three years at a time.
- (c) In determining such an extension the Presbytery shall consult with and give consideration to the welfare and vocational growth of the Minister.

OPTION 2

DURATION AND TERMINATION OF PLACEMENTS OF WE-IM MOKSAS

2.7.6 A tam-im moksa may be granted lifetime tenure of a placement (we-im moksa) as follows.

- (a) Only ministers who are Ministers of the Uniting Church or ministers of one of the Korean partner churches are eligible for lifetime tenure of a placement. Ministers of the Korean

partner churches who are granted lifetime tenure of a placement are encouraged to become Ministers of the Uniting Church.

- (b) Lifetime tenure of a placement may be approved from the commencement of the placement or at any time after an initial three years of service in the placement.
- (c) An invitation to a minister to accept lifetime tenure of a placement shall require a two-thirds majority vote of those present at the meetings of each of the Church Council, the Congregation and the Presbytery. Before the Presbytery votes on a proposal for lifetime tenure it shall conduct a consultation on the life and witness of the Congregation (refer Regulation 3.4.5).

2.7.7 The placement of a we-im moksa may be terminated:

- (a) when the we-im moksa accepts a call to another placement or requests termination of the placement; or
- (b) when the we-im moksa retires from active service; or
- (c) by the Presbytery, at the request of special meetings of the Church Council and the Congregation; in each case, the resolution must be passed by a two thirds majority of those present at the meeting of the Church Council, the Congregation and the Presbytery; or
- (d) by the Synod, on discipline grounds, in accordance with Regulations 7.5.1 ff.

A we-im moksa whose placement has been terminated by the Presbytery shall have a right of appeal, as per Regulation 2.7.9A.

DURATION AND TERMINATION OF PLACEMENTS OF BU MOKSAS

2.7.9 A bu moksa shall be appointed as follows.

- (a) Only ministers who are Ministers of the Uniting Church or ministers of one of the Korean partner churches are eligible to be appointed as a bu moksa where the position is half-time or greater. Ministers appointed as bu moksas where the position is less than half-time may be ministers of other churches, but are required to be ministers in good standing in their own church and to have the approval of their own church before accepting the appointment.
- (b) Bu moksas serving in full-time positions shall be appointed for a period of up to three years, and are eligible for re-appointment for further periods of up to three years at a time. The decision to appoint or re-appoint bu moksas in full-time positions is taken by a meeting of the Congregation on the recommendation of the Church Council and requires the approval of the Presbytery. Appointments to full-time positions are regarded as Uniting Church placements.
- (c) Bu moksas serving in positions which are less than full-time shall be appointed for a period of up to three years, and are eligible for re-appointment for further periods of up to three years at a time. The decision to appoint or re-appoint bu moksas in less than full-time positions is taken by the Church Council. The Church Council shall notify the Presbytery of the appointment.

2.7.10 The appointment of a bu moksa may be terminated before the expiry of the period of appointment as follows.

- (a) On the request of the Church Council, the Presbytery may terminate the appointment of a bu moksa serving in a full-time position. A bu moksa whose appointment to a full-time position has been terminated by the Presbytery shall have a right of appeal, as per Regulation 2.7.9A.
- (b) The Church Council may terminate the appointment of a bu moksa serving in a position which is less than full-time. The Church Council shall immediately notify the Presbytery in writing. A bu moksa whose appointment to a part-time position has been terminated by the Church Council shall have the right of appeal to the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Presbytery. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall determine the matter. There shall be no further right of appeal.”

4. ELDERS

Alternate Regulations 3.1.33 – 3.1.35

“ELDERS IN KOREAN CONGREGATIONS

3.1.33 In relation to Elders, Korean Congregations have the option of following the normal processes of the Uniting Church detailed in Regulations 3.1.10 – 3.1.17, with the additional special provisions in alternate Regulation 3.1.34, or of following option two below. On the first occasion that a Congregation is planning to elect new Elders, after the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect, a meeting of the Congregation shall determine which of the two options shall be followed. The Congregation shall immediately notify the Presbytery in writing of the option chosen.

OPTION ONE

3.1.34 Regulations 3.1.10 – 3.1.17 are to be followed in relation to Elders, with additional provisions as follows.

- (a) Elders who have already been elected with lifetime tenure shall be recognised as lifetime elders. Such elders shall retire from active service when they reach 70 years of age. Following retirement from active service as an Elder, such persons shall retain the title of Elder.
- (b) From the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect, at least half of newly elected Elders shall be women, until at least one third of the Elders in active service are women. From that time onwards women shall comprise at least one third of the number of Elders in active service and men shall comprise at least one third of Elders in active service.
- (c) Election of Elders is by written ballot. A simple majority of votes cast shall be sufficient for a person to be declared elected as an Elder.

OPTION TWO

The Congregation is exempted from Regulation 3.1.16 as it applies to the term of office of Elders, and additional provisions are made as follows.

- 3.1.35** (a) Elders shall be elected for lifetime tenure, although continuation in active service beyond the age of 65 years shall require a special resolution of a meeting of the Congregation. In the event of their retirement from active service as an Elder, such persons shall retain the title of Elder.
- (b) Congregations may determine, by simple majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the Congregation, that certain gifts and qualifications are required for a member to be eligible for election as an Elder.
- (c) From the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect, at least half of newly elected Elders shall be women, until at least one third of the Elders in active service are women. From that time onwards women shall comprise at least one third of the number of Elders in active service and men shall comprise at least one third of Elders in active service.
- (d) An Elder with lifetime tenure who transfers membership to another Congregation retains the title of Elder, but shall only engage in active service as an Elder in the new Congregation when elected by a meeting of the new Congregation.
- (e) Election of Elders is by written ballot. A simple majority of votes cast shall be sufficient for a person to be declared elected as an Elder.”

5. KWONSAS AND JIBSAS

Alternate Regulations 3.1.36 – 3.1.40

~~–KWONSAS AND JIBSAS~~

- 3.1.36** Kwonsas are members appointed by Korean Congregations to fulfil a pastoral role within the Congregation. Jibsas are members appointed by Korean Congregations to administrative or management roles within the Congregation. Hangjon jibsas are jibsas appointed with lifetime tenure.
- 3.1.37** Korean Congregations shall continue to recognise those kwonsas and hangjon jibsas who are serving in those roles in the Congregation, as at the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect. A meeting of the Congregation may determine that some or all such kwonsas and hangjon jibsas shall be members of the Church Council, in addition to those listed in Regulation 3.1.12(a).
- 3.1.38** Korean Congregations are free to determine whether or not the congregation elects new kwonsas or hangjon jibsas. The term of office of kwonsas and the method of election of kwonsas and hangjon jibsas shall be as determined by the Church Council.
- 3.1.39** The term of office of jibsas and the method of election shall be as determined by the Church Council. A meeting of the Congregation may determine that some or all jibsas shall be members of the Church Council, within the number of persons to be elected under Regulation 3.1.12(a)(v).”

6. CONGREGATIONAL BY-LAWS

Alternate Regulation 3.1.41

“BY-LAWS OF A CONGREGATION

- 3.1.41** Within the Uniting Church, Congregations are free to make by-laws on any matter as long as such by-laws are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Regulations of the Uniting Church (as varied by any applicable exemptions or alternate Regulations approved under Regulation 3.6.34) and are not inconsistent with any relevant Assembly, Synod or Presbytery policy.”

7. DECISION TO FOLLOW THESE ALTERNATE REGULATIONS

Alternate Regulations 3.1.42 – 3.1.45

“DECISION BY KOREAN CONGREGATIONS CONCERNING THE KONG-DONG KYU-JUNG

- 3.1.42** Korean Congregations which have chosen to follow the Kong-Dong Kyu-Jung (Uniting Church Regulations varied by alternate Regulations approved by the Assembly or the Assembly Standing Committee) shall automatically transfer to the revised Kong-Dong Kyu-Jung (Uniting Church Regulations varied by these alternate Regulations approved by the Assembly Standing Committee) on the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect.

- 3.1.43** A Korean Congregation which is following the revised Kong-Dong Kyu-Jung may decide at any time, by a simple majority vote at a meeting of the Congregation, that it no longer wishes to follow the revised Kong-Dong Kyu-Jung. Such a Congregation shall then follow the Uniting Church Regulations unvaried by these alternate Regulations. The Uniting Church Regulations shall not apply retrospectively to decisions previously taken under the original or revised Kong-Dong Kyu-Jung. The Congregation shall immediately notify the Presbytery in writing of its decision.

- 3.1.44** A Korean Congregation which is following the Uniting Church Regulations unvaried by these alternate Regulations may decide, by a simple majority vote at a meeting of the Congregation, that it shall follow the revised Kong-Dong Kyu-Jung. The revised Kong-Dong Kyu-Jung shall not apply retrospectively to decisions taken under the Uniting Church Regulations. The Congregation shall immediately notify the Presbytery in writing of its decision.

- 3.1.45** Within two months of the date on which these alternate Regulations come into effect, each Korean Congregation shall notify the Presbytery and the Synod in writing as to whether they are following the Uniting Church Regulations unvaried by these alternate Regulations or the revised Kong-Dong Kyu-Jung.”

8. ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

Alternate Regulations 3.6.46 – 3.6.47

“ASSEMBLY RECOGNITION OF THE COUNCIL OF KOREAN CHURCHES

3.6.46

- (a) The Assembly recognises the Council of Korean Churches as a national body which links all Korean Congregations and Korean ministers throughout the Uniting Church. The role of the Council is that of:
- fellowship;

- advice to all Korean Congregations and ministers;
 - promotion of the life and mission of the Uniting Church among Korean Congregations;
 - the administration of financial support from the stronger to the weaker Congregations;
- and
- stimulation of mission, outreach, education and service in Korean Congregations.
- (b) The powers and responsibilities of the Council of Korean Churches do not diminish the powers and responsibilities of Congregations, Church Councils, Presbyteries, Synods and the Assembly. In particular, the Council does not have a role in determining applications for candidature for ministry nor in the processes of placements of ministers.
- (c) The Council shall report to the Assembly from time to time through the national agency for multicultural ministry.

REVIEW OF THE KONG-DONG KYU-JUNG

3.6.47 The Assembly shall review these alternate Regulations no later than 2005.”

GUIDELINES FOR MIGRANT-ETHNIC CONGREGATIONS OF THE UCA IN RELATION TO THE UCA AND HOMELAND CHURCHES, 2000

Introduction

These Guidelines aim to clarify ways in which migrant-ethnic congregations of the Uniting Church may adjust to the life of the culturally diverse church and community, with particular reference to the ethos and policies of the multicultural Uniting Church and the cultural influence of their homeland churches.

At present the Uniting Church has about 148 migrant-ethnic groups from 26 cultural backgrounds who worship in their own language (Migrant-ethnic members who individually attend previously established Australian congregations are not included in this figure). About 50 % of them are from countries of the Pacific Islands. Over 40% are from Asian backgrounds. Some congregations were established before Union or joined the UCA at the time of Union. Many of them joined the UCA after Union.

The area of concern is that a number of migrant-ethnic congregations, which are governed by the first generation members, more or less follow the rules of their homeland churches. They are officially members of the UCA, but their life as congregations has been administered according to their homeland church tradition.

In extreme cases, some of them govern their congregational life as if they were a branch of the homeland church, receiving ministers from the homeland churches through a “minister on loan system” and supporting the homeland church with finance.

The Uniting Church declared its commitment as a multicultural church in 1985. Newly arrived migrant members have been welcomed to worship in their own languages, forming mono-ethnic/mono-cultural congregations within the structure of the UCA. The multicultural ministry of the UCA emphasises the concepts of “respect of each culture” and “sharing life”, as core values of multicultural ministry in the UCA.

The ethos of multicultural life in the UCA acknowledges that Jesus Christ made peace between people of every race, culture and class. Life in Christ transcends cultural, economic, national and racial boundaries. As a gift of God and a foretaste of the reconciliation of all things, this unity is what we are seeking together with all members from different cultural traditions within the UCA.

Multicultural Ministry has been striving to establish a true unity in diversity – a unity without uniformity, that is a harmonious sharing of life with people from different cultural traditions in one church/community.

- In which the uniqueness of each culture is not lost;
- In which we can accept, appreciate and respect each other;
- In which we can share and learn from each other;
- In which we can participate equally in decision making;
- In which we can serve people of no-faith and other faiths with the love of Jesus.

The unity which respects and at the same time embraces the uniqueness of each culture, this is our vision.

The need for migrant-ethnic congregations to maintain their own cultural traditions in their congregational life has been strongly encouraged in the UCA. But in some cases this need was found to run counter to the multicultural ethos and the Constitution of the UCA. It is becoming clearer that the extreme nationalistic attitude of some migrant-ethnic congregations is not in accord with the multicultural ethos.

Over-enthusiasm for maintaining their own tradition in their church administration has been found to isolate them from wider relationships with other culturally different communities of the UCA. Even within a community of the common origin, there are groups whose understanding or attitude about the way of adjustment is very different. It is obvious that attitudes which create a thick cultural wall block their own mission, witness and service to the pluralistic community.

In preparation of these Guidelines, three factors were taken into consideration. The first factor is the need to make a distinction between “maintaining cultural tradition” and “maintaining home church tradition”. From the beginning we have confused these two cultural aspects, i.e. their national cultural tradition and the cultures or traditions of their homeland churches. Many migrant-ethnic congregations of the UCA bring together members of the same national culture but from several denominations. Each denomination in their homeland has a different system of administration.

The second factor to be considered is that the cultures and value systems of their homeland and its churches have been changing, while the migrant-ethnic members tend to maintain the original culture and value system they remember from their church and country when they emigrated. Many migrant-ethnic members have expressed the feeling of alienation they experienced when they revisited their home country. The changes that have happened in the home country confuse their identity. At the same time, as a matter of fact, migrants themselves have changed individually in various ways according to their migrant life and experience in foreign countries.

The third factor to be considered is the life and status of the second and later generations of migrant-ethnic members in the UCA. They certainly have developed different value systems and have been living in different cultures even though they still physically live with their parents.

The mission and ministry of the migrant-ethnic congregations of the UCA should focus on the Christian education of the following generations. The majority of migrant-ethnic communities have even third generation members. There is need to respect the concerns of each generation but a particular commitment should be extended to those who are growing up and being educated in Australia. If this is done with sensitivity and wisdom, then the emerging generations can serve as a bridge between one’s own ethnicity and those who come from different cultures.

Guidelines

The relationship of Migrant-ethnic congregations of the UCA to Homeland Churches is to be guided in three areas:

1. Status of Migrant-ethnic Congregations of the UCA in relation to Homeland Churches

- Status of “dual membership of congregations” or “Congregations-in-Association” is not recognised in the UCA.

Note: This semi-membership is not considered to be beneficial to migrant-ethnic members in the UCA. It has no legal standing or rights in the UCA in terms of ordination, selection of candidates, calling a minister, property, insurance, etc.

- As congregations of the UCA, migrant-ethnic congregations together with all other UCA congregations follow the UCA Regulations and Constitution, unless otherwise granted varied rules for a particular situation, such as the Korean Varied Regulations of the UCA.
- When migrant-ethnic congregations invite leaders of homeland churches to visit, they are guests of the UCA. They cannot be officially invited to be Chairperson or to act as members in decision-making meetings organised by the migrant-ethnic community.
- The channels for migrant-ethnic communities to communicate with their homeland church about official matters are Presbytery/Synod and General Secretary/UIM(Unity and International Mission) of the Assembly. Usually the first step should be to contact Presbytery.
- When any Council or Agency of the UCA (e.g. Synods, UIM) has official discussions with an overseas Church about matters which affect a migrant-ethnic community in the UCA from the same country as that Church, the Council or Agency must consult the migrant-ethnic community or the Reference Committee on Multicultural Ministry.

2. Invitation of Ministers from Homeland Churches.

When a migrant-ethnic congregation needs to invite a minister or other clergy person:

- The presbytery is the agency to be informed of a need of placement by the congregation.
- The congregation, Presbytery and Synod jointly endeavour to place in a migrant-ethnic congregation a bilingual minister who has cultural and social understanding about the homeland as well as Australian society.
- If a minister cannot be found in Australia, then the presbytery contacts the General Secretary of Synod to contact overseas churches on behalf of the migrant-ethnic congregation.

Note: Immigration laws make it compulsory to seek any employee within Australia first.

- Orientation and language courses are organised in co-operation with Presbytery for ministers who are called to migrant-ethnic congregations.
- Training or continuing education of Ministers, Deaconesses, Youth Workers and Lay Pastors or Lay Preachers should be arranged in consultation with Presbytery.

Note: It is the practice in the UCA for ministers from homeland churches and other denominations to undergo orientation courses. The “Orientation to the Uniting Church” course is available from Coolamon College, the distance education agency of the UCA.

There are courses available at theological colleges on the nature of cross-cultural theologies and pastoral ministries in a multicultural society to help those ministers. Also the UCA is gifted by migrant-ethnic teachers who are able to train their own leaders, such as “Lay pastors”, in their own languages.

3. Christian Education for Second and later Generation Migrant Members

- The Gospel should be taught in the language that young members can understand best.
- Each migrant-ethnic congregation is encouraged to establish an English Service for members whose first language is English.
- The English Service is encouraged to extend service and pastoral care not only to members of their own culture but to any people in their community regardless of their cultural origin.
- Small migrant-ethnic congregations are encouraged to establish a combined English service with other congregations of the UCA in their region.

Note: Advice about Sunday school teaching materials prepared in multicultural context is available from Uniting Education, a national agency of the UCA. Sunday school teaching materials urgently need to be developed in co-operation with all migrant-ethnic communities and Synods together. Many migrant-ethnic congregations create their own material or borrow contextually inadequate materials from homeland churches.

More information about the general life of migrant-ethnic congregations of the UCA will be found in the resource “Migrant-ethnic Congregations in the UCA with Guidelines for Receiving Mission Co-workers 1999”, which can be obtained from the Assembly Office (Telephone: 02-6267 4224 or email: multimin@nat.uca.org.au). This resource is an official document of the UCA which provides helpful guidelines for inviting ministers or other clergy persons from overseas churches.

November 2000

Prepared by
Multicultural Ministry
National Assembly of the UCA
and approved by
The Assembly Standing Committee
of the UCA in November 2000
as an official document of the UCA

RESOLUTIONS OF THE 9TH (2000) ASSEMBLY RELATING TO MM

00.18 MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

Seongja Yoo-Crowe (National Director) and Inoke Nabulivou (Chairperson) presented the report.

The Assembly resolved:

- 00.18.01 to receive the report;
- 00.18.02 to refer to Standing Committee the request for "One Great Sunday of Sharing" to be held in June on the Anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia;
- 00.18.03 as a specific mission strategy, to strongly encourage Congregations, Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committees and Synod Placements Committees, when making decisions regarding placements, to pursue the possibility of placing ministers who are able to exercise ministry in both Anglo and specific Migrant-ethnic cultures (with the relevant language capacities);
- 00.18.04 (a) as a specific expression of the multicultural nature of the Church, to affirm the need for a national translation strategy;
- (b) to request representatives of the Reference Committee on Multicultural Ministry and the Secretariat to consult about steps to be taken in implementing such a strategy;
- 00.18.05 (a) to agree to launch a national bequest campaign for Multicultural Ministry;
- (b) to authorise the National Director for Multicultural Ministry to develop an annual appeal on One Great Sunday of Sharing for the work of multicultural ministry.
- 00.18.06 Appreciation of Seongja Yoo-Crowe
- (a) to thank God and place on record its appreciation of the contribution, leadership and practical vision given to the church by one of the courageous pioneers in Multicultural Ministry in the Uniting Church in Australia, Seongja Yoo-Crowe.
- (b) 1985: Coordinator of publication project for CWM "Handbook for New Arrivals"
- 1986-1990 Secretary for Ethnic Affairs within National Mission and Evangelism (NME)
- 1991-1997 Secretary of Committee on Ethnic Diversity within NME
- 1997-1998 National Secretary, Committee on Multicultural Ministry
- 1999-2000 National Director
- (b) to wish God's richest blessing upon her and Colville;
- (c) to commit to God her continuing work in the life of the Uniting Church;
- 00.18.07 Appreciation of Inoke Nabulivou
- to place on record its appreciation of the contribution that the Rev Inoke Nabulivou has made to the life of the Church as Chairperson of the Reference Committee on Multicultural Ministry for its first three years 1997-2000; by his leadership style and pastoral caring, Inoke has enabled the Committee to become a working model of interdependence; in prayer and worship he has consistently pointed to Jesus Christ as the source of unity amid diversity.

VISION AND GOALS FOR ASSEMBLY MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY – REFERENCE GROUP 2001

The following visions were discerned:

- To live out the 1985 declaration –“We are a Multicultural Church” in the light of who we are now, for the sake of God’s mission.
- To be diverse people living together in harmony.
- To be a truly inclusive church, empowering God’s people to live as sisters and brothers in God’s image for Australian society.
- To communicate to the whole church the value of multicultural ministry; demonstrate to the world real communities in cultural diversity.

The following values were affirmed:

Cross-cultural justice, generosity, active hospitality, equality, respect, understanding, compassion, inclusivity, solidarity, discipleship, relationships.

GOALS IDENTIFIED FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

The following goals were affirmed (not necessarily in order of priority)

1. Recognising that the sharing of property is a gospel issues- at the heart of our being a multicultural church, to consider the nature and status of the present –“Sharing Property” (1992) guidelines and collate resources [stories, biblical and theological] in order to develop a strategy for the practice of hospitality.
2. To establish a task group to discuss the receiving of ministers from overseas - to consult with Synod Reception of ministers committees; to address matters to do with respect to regulations, courses, the role of language and orientation.
3. To reaffirm the vision of 1985, recasting that vision for now, and asking for stories of good practice and achievement from presbyteries, with a possibility for publication.
4. To develop *Cross-cultural Relationships Workshops: Understanding racism*, workshops to educate all spheres of the church with respect to race and cultural dynamics.
5. To promote the *One Great Sunday of Sharing* and resource multicultural worship.
6. A multicultural church is also a multilingual church- we see as a priority translation of appropriate material into community languages. The annual appeal for multicultural ministry 2001 will go towards funding translation needs. Develop a translation team to work on a national translation strategy

7. To aim for 10% [12%?] of our active congregational members to be from cultures other than Anglo-Celtic and encourage all church councils to set in place an intentional multicultural ministry policy; to develop their congregations as a community of faith in which people of all cultures are of equal value.
9. To explore ways in which this growing numerical NESB membership of the church is represented in the councils, committees of the church, whether there is a need for orientation programmes for those in assembly and synod positions etc.
10. To educate and encourage the Uniting Church to be multicultural; to dialogue with theological colleges to develop and disseminate appropriate resources [in languages other than English as well as English].
11. To continue to give support to Biennial National Conferences (as a national network between congregations of the same culture, for fellowship and solidarity, for mutual co-operation in solving difficult issues arising in the life of their congregations; to share common problems, joys and prayers; to increase understanding about the multicultural Uniting Church and to make a distinctive contribution to its life; a way each community can have an opportunity to meet together, discussing issues in their own language)
12. To liaise closely with UIM and other assembly agencies including the Theology and Discipleship and its Working Groups; explore the possibility of initiating a Multicultural Ministry journal; work with presbyteries and develop links with other churches engaged in multi-cultural ministry within and beyond Australia.
13. To facilitate a national consultation of second generation Australians and leaders of communities who work with young people.
14. We strongly suggest that the term ~~“migrant-ethnic”~~ be removed from official papers. Further reflection is needed on this subject as we have no agreed ~~“alternative”~~ term to put in its place at the present time. Do we use *Asian Australian*, *Pacific Australian*? We want to rethink the use of the label ~~“migrant-ethnic”~~ and where possible find alternative wording.

GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL CONFERENCES OF THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA (1991 UPDATED 2003)

1. Introduction

The Uniting Church, as an ethnically diverse and multicultural community has recognised the need for migrant communities that are part of its life, to have opportunities to meet together for sharing and reflection and for discussion in their first language.

In 1987 the first national conference was held. Since the formation of the Tongan National Conference other communities have formed national conferences. In 2004 the following communities have formed or are in the process of forming National Conferences:

Tongan	Samoan	Fijian	Indonesian
Tamil	Chinese	Vietnamese	Korean

Some communities are quite small (2-3 congregations) and others are large. The possibility of developing national conferences for smaller and emerging communities is being explored.

2. Definition of „National Conferences“

- National Conferences bring together representatives of congregations of the same culture within the UCA (and sometimes reaching beyond the Uniting Church) for consultation and sharing
- National Conferences are representative bodies for each community
- National Conferences can act as a consultative body in the UCA.

3. Aims

- To establish a national network of solidarity, support and fellowship between congregations of the Uniting Church of the same culture, speaking the same language
- To share common problems, joys and concerns and offer mutual co-operation in solving difficult issues arising in the life of their congregations
- To increase a sense of belonging and understanding about the multicultural Uniting Church
- To review ministry and mission needs of their community and communicate concerns or issues to the appropriate councils of the church.
- To enable the voice of their community to be heard and to help their community make a distinctive contribution to the life of the Uniting Church.
- To assist other councils of the church in matters relating to congregations from their community.
- To give attention to the needs of the first and second generation. Some National Conferences organize parallel youth programs.

- To forward recommendations to the Assembly Standing Committee as appropriate in consultation with the Assembly Multicultural Ministry National Director and Chairperson.
- To be part of the *Working Group, Uniting National Conferences* to help develop Uniting Church processes, policy and polity that is responsive to the needs of our communities.
- The Conference provides nominations to the National Director for the triennial meetings of the Assembly. The Assembly Standing Committee appoints twelve people from nominations brought to it by the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee through the National Director.

4. Frequency of Meetings of the National Conference

Each community decides the frequency for their meeting. For example, it may be annual, biennial or triennial.

5. Funding of Meetings of National Conferences

Each congregation contributes towards the costs of the sending its representatives to meetings of the Conference.

Each Conference can apply through the National Director to receive some financial contribution towards the meetings of the Conference.

6. Formation of a Working Committee or Executive

- It is recommended that the National Conference of each community elect a Chairperson, one or two Secretaries (Minutes to be provided in language and in English) and other office bearers to organise the meetings of the Conference in consultation with the National Director and follow up issues between meetings of the Conference.

7. Accountability

- National Conferences were initiated through Assembly Multicultural Ministry and each Conference is accountable to the National Director and the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee (MMRC). The minutes of each conference comes to the National Director and a report is provided to the MMRC.
- Once in three years, each Conference is invited to submit two nominations (a male and a female) for membership on the *Working Group, Uniting National Conferences*. The Working Group regularly hears updates from each national conference and conveys key issues to the MMRC.

8. Membership of the Meetings of each National Conference

- The National Director for Multicultural Ministry is a member of each Conference and may attend Working Committee/executive meetings of the Conference.

- As a decision-making body the National Conference will have representatives from each congregation.
- The size of each national conference may alter depending on the community and its needs. For example there may be a National Conference that has the ministers and two people nominated from each congregation. Other conferences may choose to have a larger number of voting representatives. In such cases it is suggested that there be:
 - **Six** representatives for the first 50 confirmed members: **Two** representatives for every 50 confirmed members or part thereof after the first 50 confirmed members up to 500 confirmed members: **One** extra representative for every 50 confirmed members if membership is over 500.(e.g.: A congregation of 170 confirmed members will send 12 representatives.) At least one third of the congregation's representatives should be women.
- Conferences are encouraged to nominate women and men and to have younger generation representatives.
- Ministers serving congregations are members of the Conference. English speaking ministers who have a leadership and pastoral oversight role within their community are invited. Retired ministers may be included by decision of the conference. Conferences may choose to invite ministers of their cultural background who may be serving in English speaking or other placements.

9. Guests and Observers at meetings of the Conference

- The Working Committee/Executive of each Conference will decide people to be invited to the Conference. Normally, the President of the UCA, the Chairperson and members of the Reference Committee on Multicultural Ministry, the Associate General Secretary, the General Secretary, staff member(s) of multicultural ministry of the Synods and Presbyteries, staff members of the UIM, and other appropriate local church leaders are invited for particular sessions.
- If the President or Office bearers of 'Home churches' are invited, the President of the UCA will send an invitation letter on behalf of the Conference.
- Each Conference is responsible to decide whether to invite members of the same cultural background who are not members of the UCA. (Such participants shall normally have the right to speak when invited to do so by the chairperson, but not to vote except as determined by the Conference.)

10. Procedure for taking forward recommendations from each Conference

- In consultation with the National Director and Chairperson of the MMRC recommendations may be sent to the Assembly Standing Committee or to the Assembly.
- Any decisions or recommendations of the Conference conveyed to councils or agencies of the church are to be copied to the National Director.
- Recommendations and key decisions are reported to the Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee and the Working Group, *Uniting National Conferences*.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE 2003 ASSEMBLY RELATING TO MM

60. CONFRONTING RACISM

The Assembly resolved:

Trusting that in Jesus Christ God has broken down barriers between all people, and by the Holy Spirit is able to transform lives and heal communities:

- (a) to recognise again that racism is a sin that reflects our alienation from God and one another and is incompatible with the Gospel;
- (b) to reaffirm its commitment to work to overcome racism in Australia and beyond;
- (c) to call on the church to model the inclusive love of Christ, building communities of justice and love and practising respect and equality in all our relationships; and to urge members of the Uniting Church, particularly those in leadership, to attend a Confronting Racism or Looking with New Eyes workshop to explore ways of working to eradicate racism.

Rationale given when the proposal was presented to the 2003 Assembly

Racism is a sin because it destroys the very source of humanity - that all people are created by God, in the image and likeness of God. *“Racial superiority, a failure to understand other cultures and exclusiveness must not have a place in the life of the Uniting Church”* (From *‘Vision of a Multicultural Church’*, 1997). As Christians we believe that there is only one human race and our diversity is not a problem to be solved, but a gift and a blessing. God calls us to be an inclusive church that celebrates the rich diversity of God’s creation. Fear should not characterise our relationships with one another. *Working to overcome racism and building human communities of justice and love is motivated by Biblical and Gospel values. The Uniting Church since its inception has been involved in ministry in ways that affirm the dignity of all people, advocating for social justice and committed to combating racism. At the inaugural Assembly in 1977 the Statement to the Nation included the words “We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond...” During the 1980s the Uniting Church document ‘Justice and Love for all in Australia’, explicitly named racism as a sin and said “Christian commitment against racism stems out of the central tenets of our faith”.*

Relationships in our world are increasingly characterised by mistrust and we have seen a disturbing rise in racism and xenophobia in Australia. It is especially timely that we challenge negative stereotypes and speak up for a culturally and religiously diverse Australia. Along with many other churches worldwide the Uniting Church has found that it has needed to address issues relating to racism and prejudice. A cross-cultural education program, Confronting Racism, has been developed by the Assembly Multicultural Ministry and the NSW Board of Mission in consultation with Assembly Covenanting Committee; Assembly Social Responsibility and Justice; and members of the Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. This workshop is being offered in Synods and Presbyteries, for groups of people and for congregations as a strategy for our church to develop greater cross-cultural understanding and overcome barriers that exist between people because of different cultural backgrounds. The Confronting Racism workshop has also been specially adapted for young people (through the Living in Harmony project of the NSW Board of Education) and helps participants develop greater awareness of how our lives are impacted by racism, reflect on biblical themes and work to eradicate racism. The Social Justice Sunday materials for 2003 are an additional resource that will assist congregations in addressing racism from a Christian perspective. The struggle against racism continues. This resolution invites us to nurture the vision of God’s inclusive love, committing ourselves to work and pray for a process of change, striving to overcome racism, and building communities of justice and reconciliation.

66. MEMBERSHIP IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE CHURCH

The Assembly resolved:

1. to support an increase in the membership of Assembly of people from non-Anglo culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds from 6 to 12 and request the Standing Committee to find the most appropriate means of implementing this desire.
2. to encourage synods and presbyteries to adopt an intentional policy on ethnic diversity for nominations to all councils of the Church, giving consideration to an appropriate cultural mix in the context of each particular synod and presbytery.

Rationale

Increasingly people from many different cultural backgrounds are taking their place in the life of the Uniting Church, offering leadership, vision and a passion for ministry and mission. This is something to celebrate. At the same time we need to be intentional about ensuring that all our decision making committees as a church reflect the vibrancy, colour and cultural diversity of our church and the vision of what we want our church to become.

According to the *National Church Life Survey*, of the estimated 105,000 who attend a Uniting Church congregation on any given Sunday, 14% were born overseas, 8.1% were born in another English speaking country and 5.9% were born in countries where English is not the first language. 10.4 % of attendees have one or both parents born overseas whose first language is other than English. As a church we are still under-represented in relation to the total Australian population in first and second generation migrants however, it is worth noting that the present membership of the Uniting Church has approximately 16 % of its membership coming from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds. 16% is a conservative estimate because *–the number of people from non-English speaking backgrounds could well be understated in the NCLS as we have not yet determined whether all our ethnic congregations participated in the survey*". (Peter Kaldor)

If membership to the 10th Assembly was to reflect the present membership of the Uniting Church then we should have around 42 members from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (not including members from Indigenous communities). Membership of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds at this Assembly is more like 7% than 16%.

It is appropriate to increase the cultural diversity of membership to the Assembly to reflect the diversity of our church, as we seek to increasingly reflect the cultural diversity of Australia's population. We have people with great skill and ability within our different communities who are willing to serve the wider church. The resolution suggests that the National Conferences be involved in nominating people to the Assembly. At the present time the wider church tends to neither know about nor register the presence of the National Conferences though they represent a key development in our Multicultural Ministry over the last 15 years. The first National Conference was held in 1987. Now eight communities have formed National Conferences; the Tongan, Fijian, Samoan, Indonesian, Korean, Tamil, Vietnamese and Chinese communities. The National Conferences, have established a national networking between congregations of the same culture that co-operation in solving issues arising in the life of congregations. The National Conferences also provide opportunities for each community to reflect on how it is developing ministry and mission within the life of the UCA. There is also the intention that the National Conferences will enable the voice of the different communities to be heard as they make their distinctive contribution to the life of the Uniting Church.

Each National Conference represents a gathering of people who offer leadership within their community and whose leadership the Uniting Church can draw on. Involving the National Conferences in the process of identifying nominations to Assembly is one way the Assembly can increase the number of members from ethnic backgrounds, and at the same time give recognition to the development of the National Conferences as a significant part of the life of our church.

The other key way we can increase the number of members from culturally diverse backgrounds to Assembly is if presbyteries and synods, identify people with talent and leadership giving careful consideration to ensuring an appropriate ethnic mix when making nominations to Assembly. Each synod and presbytery's particular context also needs to be taken into account.

In 1985, the Fourth Assembly's Statement *'We are a Multicultural Church'* included the words *"We are a church whose membership comprises people of many races and cultures and languages"*. It went on to say that we need to encourage *"the full participation of all our members in decision making in the councils of the church"* (par 5). Serious consideration of what this affirmation of ethnic and linguistic diversity means for the ordering of our church's life, needs to take place. One way we affirm our diversity is ensuring that all councils of the church have an intentional policy to reflect the cultural diversity of their membership in a proactive way.

40. MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY ISSUES – (Sydney Presbytery & Assembly MM)

That the Assembly:

1. establish a Task Group to review the current policies of the Uniting Church on Multiculturalism and migrant-ethnic congregations, and the effect of these policies on the proper functioning and role of each of the Councils of the Church;
2. authorise the Standing Committee to appoint the Task Group;
3. recommend that the Task Group consist of 7 persons, including 3 representatives from the Assembly Multicultural Reference Committee, and 1 from each of the NSW and Victorian Synod equivalent committees;
4. request that the Task Group report to the March 2005 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee, including the bringing of any recommendations.

RATIONALE presented at the 2003 Assembly

In 1985 the Assembly declared that the UCA is a multicultural church. Over the last 18 years various cross cultural and ethnic specific policies, regulations and guidelines have been developed by the Assembly.

These are limited to:

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)⁶

Guidelines for Biennial National Conferences of Migrant-ethnic Communities of the Uniting Church in Australia⁷

Guidelines for Migrant-ethnic Congregations of the UCA in Relation to the UCA and their Homeland Churches (2000)

In many situations these documents have significantly helped strengthen and develop the UCA as a truly cross cultural church, in some contexts these same policies appear to have been misunderstood, not implemented, or even not known. The Presbytery of Sydney has indicated serious difficulty in implementing these policies in their specific context. It is an appropriate time for the Assembly to review the impact of its multicultural policies upon the life and witness of the whole church – congregations, presbyteries, synods and Assembly. Do these policies effectively empower the church to embrace its vision as an authentic multicultural community of faith and mission? To what degree are presbyteries and synods able to implement these policies and are they adequately resourced to do so? Do these documents adequately express the hospitality of the gospel to those who come from NES backgrounds whilst also facilitating unity with diversity across the whole Uniting Church? Where is the source of our unity today as a group of different language based congregations?

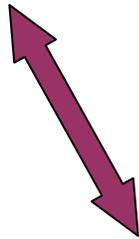
4. ⁶ It is not proposed that at this time a major review of the Alternative Korean Regulations be undertaken by this Task Group

5. ⁷ Presently there is already a Multicultural Ministry Task Group that is looking at these Guidelines and due to report to the 2004 meeting of the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee

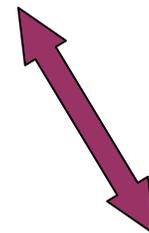
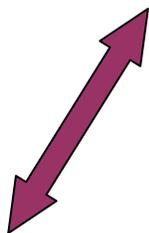
**PRESENTATION TO MARCH 2004 ASC –
MANDATES FOR 4 NEW WORKING GROUPS**

**Uniting National
Conferences**
(Based in Melbourne)

**Intentional
Multicultural
Ministry**
(Based in Sydney)



**MULTICULTURAL
MINISTRY
REFERENCE
COMMITTEE
2003-2006**



**Cross-cultural
Theology and
Education**
(Based in Sydney)

**Second Generation
Youth and
Young Adults**
(Based in Brisbane)

MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

National Director: Rev Helen Richmond
Chairperson: Rev Liva Tukutama

8th Floor, 222 Pitt Street, Sydney 2000
Ph: (02) 8267 4224 Fax: (02) 8267 4222
E-mail: multimin@nat.uca.org.au

The Future shape of Assembly Multicultural Ministry

The Reference Committee for the next triennium will be geared to building on what we have been developing, a National Multicultural Ministry Network, continuing the collaborative approach between Assembly and Synod staff, with national conferences, as well as ensuring that the issues of developing intentional cross-cultural congregations and second generation youth and young adults is given a strong focus.

The new Assembly Reference Committee will have 5 people nominated from different Synods. The other five will be drawn from the proposed new Working Groups. In addition, the three Synod Consultants in the area of Multicultural Ministry also make themselves available to attend the Reference committee.

For the coming three year period the work of Assembly Multicultural Ministry will be assisted through having four new Assembly Working groups. In the mandate of Assembly Multicultural Ministry there is the clause ~~“Power to Appoint”~~ – *“To establish working groups for special tasks related specifically to the mandate.”*

The following Working Groups are being formed.

- *Cross-cultural Theology and Education;* (Based in Sydney)
- *Second generation Youth and Young adults;* (Based in Brisbane)
- *Intentional Multicultural Ministry;* (Based in Sydney)
- *Uniting National Conferences (UNC)* – with representatives from each of the National Conferences (Based in Melbourne)

Working group on Cross-cultural Theology and Education

The Working Group on Cross-cultural theology and Education is a recognised Working Group of Assembly Multicultural Ministry. It meets biannually, or more often as needed. The Working Group is responsible to the National Director and reports to the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee. A member of the Working Group is a member of the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee. Membership includes up to 10 members. A Convenor is appointed for a one year term and may be reappointed for up to three years. A Secretary is appointed for a one year term and may be reappointed for a three year term. The National Director and Chair of the Assembly Multicultural Ministry are ex-officio members. From 2003-2006 the Working Group will be based in Sydney. There may be corresponding members from other Synods.

Role of the Working Group

The purpose of the Working Group on Cross-cultural Theology and Education is to enable the Reference Committee to fulfil its mandate *“to educate the Church in living as people from different cultures in worship, witness and service”* with particular attention to the following:

The Working Group will -

1. Foster theological and biblical reflection on cross-cultural ministry and provide a range of multicultural and cross-cultural educational resources and publication eg workshop assisting presbytery leaders, a workshop on Hospitality and sharing property..
2. Help the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee advise the Church on the theological dimensions of multicultural ministry and mission
3. Have oversight of the *Confronting Racism Workshops* noting the resolution of the 10th Assembly to urge members and leaders of the church to undertake this training.
4. Liaise with the *Working group Uniting National Conferences* to listen to and respond to the specific education needs arising from our different communities and ministers from NESB and with the *Working group on Intentional Cross-cultural Congregations* to look at what resources might assist congregations wanting to develop intentional cross-cultural ministry.
5. Advise on matters relating to multicultural dimensions in theological education and the formation of ministers and lay people ensuring liaison with Coolamon, Theological Colleges and centers of Lay Education and develop lines of communication with the Ministerial Education Commission and the Reception of Ministers Committee.
6. Give attention to the issues involved in the settlement and reception of ministers of non-English speaking backgrounds ensuring mentoring and continuing education needs are being met.

Convenor: **Dr Clive Pearson**

Working Group On Intentional Multicultural Ministry

The Working Group on Intentional Cross-cultural Congregations is a recognised Working Group of Assembly Multicultural Ministry. It meets biannually or more often as needed. The Working Group is responsible to the National Director and reports to the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee. A member of the Working Group is a member of the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee. Membership includes up to 10 members. A Convenor is appointed for a year term and may be reappointed for up to three years. A Secretary is appointed for a one year term and may be reappointed for a three year term. From 2003-2006 the Working Group will be based in Sydney. There may be corresponding members from other Synods. The National Director and Chair of the Assembly Multicultural Ministry are ex-officio members.

Role of the Working Group

1. Develop strategies for the mono-cultural congregations located in multicultural community to embrace the mission opportunity.
2. Develop resources to assist congregations wanting to develop intentional cross-cultural ministry.
3. Liaise with the Working group on Cross-cultural Theology and Education, particularly in relation to the Confronting Racism Workshop.
4. Develop a national network of congregations seeking to intentionally develop cross-cultural ministry
5. Plan activities and publications as might be needed eg a national conference, a workshop that could be offered in Synod and Presbyteries.
6. Have oversight of the developing cross-cultural worship resources (Songbook and CD All God's People)
7. Help the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee in relation to –Study and advise the Church on missional, liturgical, pastoral and educational dimensions for developing new multicultural ministries.”

Convenor: Dr Myong Duk Yang

Working Group On Uniting National Conferences

The Working Group on Uniting National Conferences is a recognised Working Group of Assembly Multicultural Ministry. It meets biannually or more often as needed. The Working Group is responsible to the National Director and reports to the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee. A member of the Working Group is a member of the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee. Membership includes two people from each of the National Conferences and other co-opted members. A Convenor is appointed for a one year term and may be reappointed for up to three years. A Secretary is appointed for a one year term and may be reappointed for a three year term. From 2003-2006 the Working Group will be based in Melbourne. The National Director and Chair of the Assembly Multicultural Ministry are ex-officio members.

Role of the Working Group:

The role of the Working Group is to:

1. Provide a forum for people representing the different national Conferences in the life of the Church of share matters of common and special concern.
2. Enhance, promote, articulate and encourage the ministry of our different communities in the life of the Uniting Church.
3. Develop relationships between the different National Conferences for the purpose of information sharing and support and promote ways for members from different traditions and cultures to share and to learn from each other.
4. Reflect on the implications of the multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of the Church for the ordering of the Church's life and enable the full participation of all members in the life of the church
5. Hear issues that arise from national conferences and reflect on how these impact on the policies and practices of the Uniting Church. Address issues of concern that might arise in our different communities and represent these concerns to the Councils of the Church.
6. Arrange for the translation and interpretation of official documents, liturgies, music and other relevant material as required.
7. Monitor matters relating to resources and property as they affect the ministry of ethnic churches, and refer to synods as appropriate.

Convenor: Eseta Menielly

Working group on Second Generation Youth and Young Adults

The Working Group on Second Generation Youth and Young adults is a recognised Working Group of Assembly Multicultural Ministry. It meets biannually or more often as needed. The Working group is responsible to the National Director and reports to the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee. A member of the Working Group is a member of the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee. Membership includes up to 10 people. A Convenor is appointed for a one year term and may be reappointed for up to three years. A Secretary is appointed for a one year term and may be reappointed for a three year term. From 2003-2006 the Working Group will be based in Brisbane. There may be corresponding members from other Synods.

Role of the Working Group

1. The purpose of the Working Group on Second Generation Youth and Young Adults is to enable the Reference Committee to fulfil its mandate *“to educate the Church in living as people from different cultures in worship, witness and service”* with particular attention to point 10 of the Assembly MM mandate *“To explore ways of discipleship formation with second generation migrant members”*.

The Working Group will

1. Give attention to the issues that arise for second generation youth and young adults.
2. Explore ways second generation young people can network together, share common concerns and receive mutual encouragement and support.
3. Resource the wider church on ministry with second generation youth and young adults.
4. Foster relationships with the *Childrens and Youth National Coalition (CHYNC)* ensuring the issues faced by second generation youth and young adults are on the agenda of our church's children and youth ministry; assisting with the communication of NCYC, About Face, youth leadership events and Synod youth activities

Convenor: Lu Senituli

DOCUMENT PRESENTED TO THE JULY 2004 ASC NATIONAL CONFERENCES THEIR PLACE AND STATUS IN THE LIFE OF THE UCA

Background

Migrant congregations are important for immigrant communities. They spiritually, emotionally and socially, provide a secure base of support, and enable members to remain connected to their cultural heritage while at the same time find their way into Australian life. The 1985 Assembly recognized the reality of being a Church that included members from many different ethnic backgrounds and declared itself a ‘multicultural church’. The Uniting Church recognised the need for migrant communities to have opportunities to meet together for worship, sharing, and discussion in their first language. In 1987, the Tongan community was the first to hold a ‘National Conference’ and since then other communities have followed.

National Conferences

Developing National Conferences has been a key initiative of Assembly Multicultural Ministry. National Conferences provide a place where congregations of the same culture within the UCA (and sometimes reaching beyond the Uniting Church) can come together for consultation and sharing, cultural celebration and reflection. Each community decides the frequency for their meeting which may be annual, biennial or triennial. Each congregation contributes towards the costs of sending its representatives to meetings of the Conference. National Conferences elect a Chairperson and Secretary and other office bearers as needed to organise the meetings and follow up issues between meetings. Conferences are accountable to the National Director and the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee (MMRC). In 2004 the following communities have formed or are in the process of forming National Conferences: Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, Indonesian, Tamil, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese. Some communities are quite small, for example the Vietnamese community (3 congregations) and the Chinese National Conference (five congregations). Others are very large such as the Tongan community that 40 congregations. Some National Conferences are a gathering of key leaders to consult together, others are great cultural and community occasions broadly attended by members of the community, with significant time given to cultural celebration. It is important to remember that the energy, enthusiasm and vibrancy of such celebrations of culture and history are a reminder of the empowerment that comes from maintaining and passing on what is life giving and enriching from peoples’ faith and cultural heritage.

In 2003, Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee set up a task group to review the role of the National Conferences. A survey was used to collect information. The review found that there were many benefits of having National Conferences in the life of the UCA. The National Conferences help build a sense of community and foster a sense of belonging to the UCA. People value the opportunity to share what is happening in the different congregations, giving space to reflect on what is going well and what problems need to be overcome. In this way communities are reflecting on and evaluating ministry needs and mission opportunities. Time spent in worship and bible study is also important. People appreciate the fellowship and support they receive and the opportunities for learning. Most of the National Conferences have an educational component. At the recent Tongan National Conference a morning was spent looking at the newly translated Basis of Union and entering into study groups. National Conferences assist new migrant congregations and new ministers coming to work in the Uniting Church to adapt to and understand the UCA ethos and processes. National Conferences establish a national network of solidarity, support and fellowship between congregations of the Uniting Church speaking the

same language. They provide an avenue to develop leadership, local preachers, young people, and increasingly are providing candidates for ministry.

Assembly Multicultural Ministry revised the Guidelines on National Conferences in March 2004. In the Guidelines accountability of the National Conferences through reporting to the National Director and Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee, continues however the National Conferences may convey decisions and recommendation directly to councils and agencies of the church and may bring recommendations to the ASC or the Assembly. Another initiative is the new Working Group, *Uniting National Conferences* which provides a forum for people representing different National Conferences, with the aim of enhancing, promoting, articulating and encouraging the ministry of the different communities in the life of the Uniting Church and helping develop Uniting Church processes, policy and polity that is responsive to the needs of their communities. National Conferences are seeking for ways they can help make a distinctive contribution to the life of the Uniting Church and enable the voice of different communities to be heard.

Some obstacles

1. The survey found concern expressed at the lack of funding for the National Conferences with the cost of travelling proving to be one of the obstacles. At the present time each National Conference biennially requests from Assembly Multicultural Ministry up to \$2000 towards meeting the costs of holding their National Conference meeting. Communities themselves show great commitment by raising additional funds however the financial burden is the reason the Samoan National Conference has decided they can only afford to meet once every three years.
2. National Conferences are expressing the hope that Presbyteries would consult with them and see them as potential partners in offering pastoral care, particularly in situations where there is communication break down, fragmentation or conflict occurring in congregations. The review affirmed the potential role National Conferences could have working with other Councils of the church in a supportive and collaborative way. The National Conferences do not take the place of other Councils, but want to work with those Councils. They want the wider church to recognise the National Conferences as significant national networks.
3. The desire to be given more recognition in Uniting Church structures is expressed in this quote from Rev Apwee Ting, Chair of the Indonesian National Conference. *"It seems to most of us that the National Conference is mainly for sharing and gathering not having an authority in decision making, and not well known by other bodies in the Uniting Church."* National Conferences are wanting the wider church to consult with them on issues that have a major impact on their community. This concern lies behind the sentiment expressed in the *Guidelines for Migrant-ethnic churches in relation to Homeland churches* passed by the ASC in November 2000. *"When any Council or Agency of the UCA (e.g. Synods, UIM) has official discussions with an overseas Church about matters which affect a migrant-ethnic community in the UCA from the same country as that Church, the Council or Agency must consult the migrant-ethnic community or the Reference Committee on Multicultural Ministry."* There is some concern that decision making process do not always reflect this commitment. The Tongan National Conference meeting in June 2004, passed a resolution requesting that National Conferences be given a voice in the decision making processes of the Uniting Church and requested the Assembly *"recognise the Tongan National Conference and the other Ethnic Conferences as an important part of the UCA"*. Assembly Multicultural Ministry sees the National Conferences as very important but there is a need to assist the rest of the Church to understand and value the National Conferences.

Some reflections

Asian American theologian, Eric Law in *The Bush Was Blazing but not Consumed* (Chalice Press, 1996) writes:—*We need to respect the need for all cultural groups to have their own monocultural environment in which they can do the work of building up their self esteem and community identity.*” For Law, multicultural community is not a melting pot but a dynamic process in which the various cultural groups maintain their identities while engaging in cross-cultural conversation and constructive dialogue. Such community groupings may sometimes be considered ‘bad or not politically correct’, especially if we have worked hard to create inclusive communities. Law suggests we should not feel threatened or see as negative the times a community separates to share within the ‘comfort of their own cultural boundaries.’ Giving people space to share in this way means that people are often able to speak more freely and express themselves better. It is important to realise that ‘times apart’ are not to create and maintain an ethnic divide, but to give people the opportunity to share in the safety of their affinity groups, creating a stronger sense of self understanding and group identity. This *intracultural dialogue* can be an important part of the overall process of furthering intercultural relations and multicultural vision, says Law. People are able to more fully enter into relationship with others when they feel secure in their own identity. *Intracultural* dialogue can enhance rather than detract from cross-cultural sharing. When different groups of people come together for cross-cultural sharing and *intercultural dialogue* it is more likely that there will be genuine dialogue and more in depth sharing.

It is possible to see the development of National Conferences in the life of the Uniting Church as an important step of enabling *intracultural dialogue* which enhances the multicultural nature of our church and which leads, not to a separation, but an affirmation of identity and deeper engagement and sense of belonging to the Uniting Church.

In the last few decades, the Australian Christian landscape has seen the emergence of some migrant communities forming their own denominations in Australia. There is sadness and a sense of regret that the Uniting Church has not managed to provide a home for all of those coming from partner and sister churches who have migrated to Australia. The Samoan Methodist Church in Australia, the Chinese Methodist Church in Australia; the Korean Presbyterian church and the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga in Australia reflect a trend whereby some communities wish to establish their own ethnic and denominational allegiances and church structures in Australia and organize their life in ways that are familiar and over which they feel a sense of control and ownership. The Uniting Church cannot force these members of partner and sister churches to join the Uniting Church but through the National Conferences, the UCA provides a secure place for belonging where there is understanding of and affirmation of cultural heritage. People are able to participate freely, and have gifts and skills recognized and utilized, even if their English is limited. National Conferences are passing on faith and culture to their young people and are involved in intergenerational sharing in a way rarely seen within the Uniting Church.

03.10.03 Assembly Membership in a Culturally Diverse Church

The 2003 Assembly agreed to an increase of membership of Assembly of people from non-Anglo cultural and linguistic backgrounds from 6 to 12 and requested the Standing Committee to find the most appropriate means of implementing this desire.

“Having the National Conferences involved in nominating people to the Assembly is one way the Assembly can increase the number of members from non-English speaking backgrounds as well as recognise the place of the National Conferences in the life of our Uniting Church.”

(Extract from the Rationale provided to the Assembly when Proposal 66 was being presented)

It is suggested that National Conferences be invited to submit nominations (a male and a female) to the National Director for Multicultural Ministry and Reference Committee. 12 nominations will be brought to the Assembly Standing Committee that reflect a balance between lay and ordained, women and men, and youth representation. Of the 12 nominations at least six nominations would come from National Conferences. The suggested nominations for example could be:

National Director

Chairperson MM Committee

6 nominations from National Conferences

2 nominations from Working Group--Second Generation Youth and Young Adults

1 nomination from the Working Group - Intentional Multicultural Ministry

1 nomination from Working Group -Cross-cultural Theology and Education

Whilst it is very important to recognise National Conferences it is also important that people offering leadership who come from smaller communities that do not have National Conferences, can be included. Having nominations from Working Groups is a way to ensure there are young people and key people from these significant committees.

JULY 2004 ASC RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO NATIONAL CONFERENCES

- 04.57 It was resolved to:
- 04.57.01 recognise the important place of National Conferences within the life of the Uniting Church as national networks that bring together representatives of congregations of the same culture (and sometimes reaching beyond the Uniting Church) for consultation and sharing and to enable them to communicate issues and concerns to the appropriate councils of the Church;
- 04.57.02 request the General Secretary convey information about the National Conferences to Presbyteries, Synods, and the Assembly, encouraging them to consult with National Conferences, particularly when they are making decisions that may impact these communities;
- 04.57.03 request the General Secretary write to National Conferences conveying the decision of the ASC and affirming their place in the life of the Uniting Church;
- 04.57.04 request the General Secretary and the National Director of Assembly Multicultural Ministry to:
- a) give further consideration to how it may be possible to fulfill the Assembly's desire that 12 Assembly Standing Committee appointments be made from migrant communities to the Assembly, especially in the light of Regulation 3.6.2(f);
 - b) return to the November ASC with recommendations.