PRESS RELEASE 22/11/2005

Without change UCA faces an inevitable Split.

In a statement delivered to the Uniting Church Assembly Standing Committee, Evangelical Members within the Uniting Church (EMU) warned that if the Eleventh Assembly in 2006 does not decide to return to an orthodox position with respect to the matter of sexuality and leadership then a split is inevitable.

EMU National Spokesperson, Rev Stephen Estherby said; “We have decided to change our long standing policy of encouraging people to remain in the UCA. If the Assembly chooses not to resolve this issue then we will no longer with good conscience be able to encourage members to remain within the Uniting Church in Australia as is it presently structured. This is a matter of the integrity of our faith.”

EMU believes that the current situation, which allows those practicing homosexual behaviour to be ordained puts the UCA outside the teachings of the mainstream Christian Church.

Rev Estherby said; “We are in danger of becoming a sect which has traded Jesus’ good news of redemption from sin and judgment for a false message of moral relativism, mutual acceptance and pluralism. Our members are fed up with false teaching, intimidation, misrepresentation and manipulation. “

EMU calls the Eleventh Assembly to adopt the proposal on sexuality and leadership presented by the Queensland Synod and numerous Presbyteries from around Australia. This proposal which originated with the Reforming Alliance within the Uniting Church recalls the church to a biblical position.

Rev. Estherby said: “If the proposal is adopted it will be welcomed by evangelicals as the first step along a path of urgently needed reform which includes theological education, ecclesiastical structures and procedural reforms.”

A full copy of the statement accompanies this press release

Rev. Stephen Estherby is available for comment

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STATEMENT OF EMU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE NOVEMBER 2005

The National Executive of Evangelical Members within the Uniting Church calls on the people of God to a mindset which reflects allegiance to Christ and his Kingdom rather than a loyalty to a specific denominational structure. We believe that:

1. The Uniting Church in Australia has stepped outside the teachings of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church:
   a. Resolution 84 allows for those practicing homosexual behaviour to be ordained.
   b. It has failed to discipline leaders who have declared their homosexual behaviour.
   c. It has traded the gospel of redemption from sin and judgment for a false gospel of pluralism, moral relativism and mutual acceptance.

2. Resolution 84 has undermined the UCA’s ability to invoke the provisions for exemption on religious grounds from the employment of homosexual persons under anti-discrimination legislation.

3. The Uniting Church stepped outside the Basis of Union by:
   a. Assembly failing to be a representative body as specified in Paragraph 15 of the Basis of Union
   b. Assembly failing to seek concurrence of the councils as specified in Paragraph 15 of the Basis of Union
   c. Claiming that the deliberations of a council determine what the church is, (contrary to Paragraph 3 and 5 which describes the church as being built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ, who is known by the biblical witness.)

It is our belief that such actions evoke God’s judgment upon, and within our people. We call upon the Uniting Church to act with utmost integrity and join with us in rejecting false teaching, intimidation, misrepresentation and manipulation.

The National Executive has resolved to inform the Assembly that, if it adopts the Proposal on sexuality presented by the Queensland Synod and numerous Presbyteries which originated with the Reforming Alliance, it will be welcomed as the first step along a path of urgently needed reformation including:
   • Theological Education
   • Ecclesiastical Structure
   • Procedural Reforms

The National Executive has resolved to inform Assembly that if the 11th Assembly in 2006 does not decide to return to an orthodox position with respect to the matter of sexuality, then:
   • In order to retain the integrity of our evangelical faith, EMU will no longer with good conscience be able to encourage members to remain within the Uniting Church in Australia as it presently structured.
   • Immediately following the 11th Assembly we will adopt a policy of assisting those wishing to separate from the Uniting Church in Australia.

Stephen Estherby
EMU National Spokesperson