

MEDIA RELEASE

Reforming Alliance First National Conference.

The Reforming Alliance has called on the UCA to rescind Resolution 84 and adopt the Queensland Synod statement on sexuality, which was reaffirmed at a Special Synod in November 2003.

This was one of eight resolutions made by the Reforming Alliance at its first national conference, attended by more than 130 people in Brisbane during July.

Other resolutions included:

- To provide written public responses to Resolution 84 and the forthcoming Assembly booklet on "Sexuality and Leadership in the Uniting Church."
- To establish non-geographic Presbyteries in as many Synods as necessary to enable congregations to group together based on a common theological confession.
- To develop proposals for constitutional reform within the UCA that will ensure Presbyteries and Synods can refer matters they deem vital to the life of the UCA to congregations for ratification.
- To make reformed, orthodox and evangelical theological education available to ministry candidates and other members of the UCA.
- To reaffirm the "crucial importance" of ecumenical relationships in the hope that it will strengthen the UCA's commitment to the faith of the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church."

The Reforming Alliance has also decided that, if orthodox Christian reform does not occur at the 2006 Assembly, it will facilitate an amicable separation from the UCA.

Reforming Alliance Chairperson, Rev Dr Max Champion, said the conference was a vital time of encouragement for many disenfranchised members of the UCA who have found themselves in strong disagreement with the Assembly. "Together we spent time in worship, prayer, biblical study and lengthy discussion about the various issues confronting the Uniting Church. Many members were given an opportunity to share their grief and find solidarity and hope with other Christians."

"Our aim is to bring reform to the Uniting Church in conformity to the lordship of Christ, "the one Word of God whom we must hear, trust and obey in life and death" (Preamble).

Overwhelming support for the conference resolutions clearly indicates that there is a significant body within the UCA who will not accept a departure from orthodox Christian doctrine and values and will fight to preserve the integrity of the gospel of Jesus Christ as authoritatively attested in Scripture.

There was great sadness that it had become necessary for many evangelical and orthodox Christians within the Uniting Church to band together in protest against the recent decisions of Assembly. At the same time, there was hope that our unity in Christ will bring about reconciliation.

The conference was attended by both lay and ordained members of the UCA from every State in Australia, including the Chinese, Tongan and Korean congregations and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. "It was highly significant," said Rev Dr Max Champion, "that the ethnic and aboriginal representatives insisted that their opposition to Resolution 84 was for theological and biblical reasons – not, as is often said by others, for "cultural reasons."

At a large public rally the Chairperson spoke on "Sex and Society: The Reforming Agenda" and Mrs Mary Hawkes, National Chairperson of EMU, spoke on "Hope, Healing and Holiness."

Rev Dr Max Champion
Chair
Reforming Alliance within the UCA

Mrs Mary Hawkes
Vice-Chair
Reforming Alliance within the UCA