

THE BRANCHES COMMUNITY CHURCH

“Christomorpha”

PO Box 910
St Agnes, SA 5097
office@branches.org.au

Colleen Geyer
Assembly General Secretary
Uniting Church in Australia

Dear Colleen,

RE: Marriage Discussion

It is with sorrow that we, the members of The Branches Community Church, find it necessary to address and oppose the proposal by the Assembly Standing Committee to the 15th Assembly to change the UCA's doctrine of marriage.

The doctrine of the Christian Church in general, and the UCA in particular, is founded on an historic understanding of Truth based on Scripture, which understanding has been communicated to you by many others, and expanded by the various creeds and confessions of the Church. Part of this doctrine is that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. This has been so fundamental that it was seldom defined. Nevertheless it was defined in two documents, the Westminster Catechism and the Savoy Declaration, both of which are embedded in the Basis of Union, and both stating “Marriage is to be between one man and one woman”.

Historically, adjustments to doctrine have been necessary to move the Church away from error back to Scriptural Truth. But any shift from the historic doctrine of marriage is not a correction of doctrinal error but quite the opposite. Such a decision can only have a significant and detrimental impact on the UCA, firstly and most importantly on its relationship with the Holy and Sovereign Lord God, whose Word on marriage is crystal clear, secondly on relationships within the UCA that are already being tested, and thirdly on external ecumenical relationships.

The Branches Community Church will not accept a change to the doctrine of marriage by Assembly. While no decision has been made about how The Branches Community Church would respond to an Assembly decision to approve change, we advise that there will be a response that would significantly change the status quo. For Assembly to either change the definition or to again defer a decision would be interpreted as a rejection of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture, as well as a move away from the doctrine of the UCA and the Basis of Union.

We therefore request that the 15th Assembly acknowledge that the doctrine of marriage is one of “vital interest” to the UCA and once and for all agree to retain the definition of marriage as accepted and confirmed by previous Assemblies.

Yours in our Saviour's Name,

Chris Tirimacco
Chairperson of The Branches Community Church Ministry Team
Endorsed by the members of the Branches Community Church
6 May 2018