

For Immediate Release

UNITING CHURCH LOSES 6500 ATTENDERS OVER THE HOMOSEXUALITY ISSUE

More than 6500 people have left the Uniting Church and 110 congregations have split over the homosexuality issues since 1997, according to the Reforming Alliance, an evangelical reform movement within the Uniting Church.

Resolution 84, which addresses the issue of sexuality and leadership within the Uniting Church, was passed at the denomination's 10th Assembly in July 2003 after more than 10 years of debate. Since then there has been an acceleration of attenders leaving the Uniting Church.

Research undertaken by the Reforming Alliance shows more than 40 ministers have resigned or retired in protest over the issue and 40 new congregations have formed outside the Uniting Church by ex-Uniting Church attenders.

“Unfortunately, Uniting Church national leaders don’t seem too concerned,” Chairperson of the Reforming Alliance, Rev Dr Max Champion, said. “If there were such unrest in a multinational corporation or a political party they would be the first to demand explanations and reform. The fact that they have not done so in the present crisis within the Uniting Church ranks is hypocritical and self-serving.”

Mary Hawkes, Deputy Chairperson, said the Reforming Alliance believed the significant decline in numbers since Resolution 84 had further weakened the future of the Uniting Church. “The Uniting Church is rapidly losing many of its dynamic leaders and parishioners, including many young families, from both rural and urban congregations. It is deeply saddening to have lost so many people over an issue the Uniting Church National Assembly deemed was not vital to the life of our denomination,” she said.

“This is at best farcical, and at worst devastating to an already declining church community. This is particularly concerning when you consider that the Uniting Church is already the fastest declining of all the major denominations, according to the most recent National Church Life Survey.”

“The Reforming Alliance is concerned that if the Uniting Church does not uphold biblical truth, it will lose relevance and numbers will continue to fall.”

A 2004 survey undertaken by the Reforming Alliance showed that of the 27000 attenders surveyed, the vast majority agreed that celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in marriage was a requirement for exercising leadership in the Uniting Church. The Reforming Alliance within the Uniting Church in Australia was formed by concerned members of the Uniting Church in September 2003 following the passing of Resolution 84, and currently has 180 congregations throughout Australia who are members.

For further information visit www.reformingalliance.org.au or contact:

Rev Dr Max Champion
Chairperson. Reforming Alliance
Mrs Mary Hawkes
Deputy Chairperson. Reforming Alliance

Ph: 0423 805 815

Ph: 0439 619 824