

B18 MULTICULTURAL AND CROSS CULTURAL MINISTRY

1. INTRODUCTION

In seeking to fulfil its Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry (MCCM) Mandate, and in order to progress the intention and the content of the core documents (attached):

- a. Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry Mandate
- b. Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry Guidelines
- c. We are a Multicultural Church (A statement adopted by the Fourth Assembly in 1985)

In making this report, the last formal report of this MCCM Reference Committee, we want to acknowledge with appreciation the service given by Chairpersons to the Committee. Chairpersons have normally been nominated from among the previous triennium Committee membership in order to continue the work. Then they serve the three years as Chairperson and commit to a further three years as Past-Chairperson. This then represents a nine-year commitment that these people have made.

We are thankful to the Chairpersons of the last four triennia for their creative and inspired work to further the vision of an integrated foretaste of heaven in the Church.

Rev. Dr Apwee Ting (11th Triennium)

Apwee worked extensively with the then National Director of MCCM, Rev. Dr Tony Floyd, bringing wisdom and reflective questioning to the Committee. Coming from a multi-ethnic personal background with multi-ethnic ministry experience, he was able to juggle the multiple views and styles of thinking that such a diverse group so valued.

Rev. Eseta Meneilly-Waqabaca (12th Triennium)

Eseta's ability to cross between cultures and maintain calm and integrity in a variety of different settings enabled other women to step up and contribute more in Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry. Eseta has also provided some stability to assisting National Conferences develop and convened the National Conference Chairpersons' Gatherings, as required. Under her leadership, the Assembly adopted 'One Body, Many Members'.

Rev. Dr Amelia Koh-Butler (13th Triennium)

As a hyphenated identity, 2nd Gen member, Amelia's focus was on developing ways of working in a hyper-diverse environment. She and Rev. Dr Floyd worked on the 'Space for Grace' material. During the 13th Triennium, MCCM also identified over a hundred emerging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) leaders to encourage into taking up leadership positions around the country. Many of them are now in Presbytery, Synod and Assembly leadership roles and serving on various Councils and Committees.

Rev. Dr Kiso Jang (14th Triennium)

Kiso brought to MCCM gracious faithfulness, deep spirituality, deep experience of and commitment to the life and witness of MCCM and therefore to the national UCA. He has contributed across several Synods through his gifts of understanding of both the UCA and Korean culture and spirituality, insight into Korean life and church membership within the cultural diversity of multicultural and multi-faith Australia.

2. THE WORK OF MULTICULTURAL AND CROSS CULTURAL MINISTRY

In exercising the responsibilities noted in the Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry 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 multi-faith 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
 - Advise 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 coordination 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.

The Assembly's staff and Reference Committee members are committed to developing strategies to encourage and facilitate a healthy, respectful, and genuinely inclusive conversation in the Church and society.

Here are some of the examples of what we have done in the past triennium:

2.1 PROMOTING CROSS CULTURAL LEARNING (MANDATE NO. 1)

Action:

a. Assembly Staff and several members of the MCCM National Reference Committee led the Cross-Cultural Relationship workshop at Georges River Presbytery in the Synod of NSW/ACT, at the Centre for Theology and Ministry in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, and in the Synod of Western Australia.

b. Worked with UAICC, Uniting Justice and the Post-Colonial Network to explore creative ways of doing theology (of marriage), developing and publishing a range of resources around "[Space for Grace](#)" process.

2.2 SUPPORTING MINISTRY OF MIGRANT ETHNIC CONGREGATIONS AND NEW EMERGING CONGREGATIONS (MANDATE NO. 2)

Action:

a. Provided support and a connection point to the wider UCA for a number of CALD congregations and communities. There are now 198 specific language congregations/faith communities (who worship in 30 different languages every Sunday), more than 60 intentional cross-cultural congregations, 1 Korean Presbytery within NSW/ACT Synod and 12 National Conferences (Tonga, Samoan, Fiji, Niue, Indonesia, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino, Tamil, South Sudanese and Middle East National Conference).

b. In 2015, the former National Director and members of the Reference Committee from Western Australia met and discussed with WA Synod several outstanding applications from non-Uniting Church worshipping groups seeking to be a part of the Uniting Church.

c. One positive result of this meeting, the WA Synod accepted a Samoan Congregation in Perth as a UCA Congregation in 2016.

d. The former National Director has worked closely with Synods, Presbyteries and Congregations to assist several worshipping groups who are interested in becoming part of UCA, including:

- i. Burmese Chin Community in Mitcham
- ii. Assyrian Congregation in Perth
- iii. Oromo and Cook Islands Congregations in Dandenong
- iv. Malayalam Congregation in Sydney
- v. Zimbabwe Methodist Fellowship in Australia.

e. Assisted with and coordinated the printing of the Samoan Hymn Book in 2016.

f. Worked with Taiwanese Uniting Church in Brisbane to translate the UCA Constitution and Regulations into Chinese Language.

g. Provided close support to the South Sudanese National Conference established in 2013 and continuing to offer pastoral support to South Sudanese communities in Australia since the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan in 2015.

h. Worked on a discussion paper based on the definition of Congregation in Association.

i. Uploaded Fijian Bible Study to Assembly MCCM Website weekly and exploring the possibility of printing a Fijian Bible Study based on the three years Lectionary reading.

j. Coordinated the Fijian translation of the UCA Constitution.

k. Assisted the Assembly Communication team with the translations and subtitles for messages from the President, including Easter and Christmas.

2.3 **COLLABORATION WITH SYNODS AND OTHER ASSEMBLY AGENCIES (MANDATE NO. 3)**

Action:

a. During the triennium the Director of the Intercultural Unit in the VIC/TAS Synod, the Multicultural Ministry Consultant NSW/ACT Synod and a member from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) accepted the invitation from the MCCM National Reference Committee to join their meeting in 2015 and agreed to attend further meetings. Out of this relationship, there is now a half-day meeting between Assembly and Synod staff before the Reference Committee meeting.

b. Invited the Assembly Worship Working Group, the National Director of Formation Education Discipleship, Royal Commission National Task Group Executive Officer and National Faith Development Consultant Youth and Young Adults to share their work and to explore how to relate more closely with the work of MCCM at the MCCM National Reference Committee meeting in February 2016.

c. Worked closely with ministers, leaders and Congregations from a Middle Eastern background to form the Middle East National Conference in 2016.

- i. The opening service for the Middle East National Conference was led by President Stuart McMillan in Sydney and attended by Middle Eastern representatives from NSW/ACT and WA.
- ii. The Middle East National Conference has a regional focus. Most other conferences are based on shared language, with the exception of the Chinese National Conference.

d. Worked closely with Synods, Presbyteries and the Korean National Conference when tensions emerged over 'Comfort Women Statues' in Sydney and Brisbane.

e. Worked closely with UnitingWorld in regard to Methodist Church in Zimbabwe members who worship at the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Fellowship in Australia who want to explore being part of the Uniting Church.

f. Ongoing intensive meeting and discussion with Assembly Admission for Ministers Working Group on language issues.

2.4 ASSIST THE NATIONAL NETWORKING WITH THEIR SECOND-GENERATION MEMBERS (MANDATE NO. 4)

Action:

- a. Continued to support National Conferences (Tongan, Fiji, Samoan, Niue, Indonesian, South Sudanese, Middle East and Korean) in the terms of discipleship, formation and leadership development.
- b. Organised national Next Generation leaders meeting in Sydney (10-11 March 2017). It was agreed to organise the national Next Generation Conference in Adelaide.
- c. Organised the National Next Generation national consultation in Adelaide (25-27 August). One of the decisions was to organise the next generation national consultation in Brisbane 2019.

2.5 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 (MANDATE NO. 5)

Action:

- a. *We are a Multicultural Church* – marked the 30th anniversary of the Statement with a communications campaign (website, video, social media) and producing copies of the statement for Congregations, Synods and other offices to display.
- b. *One Body Many Members - Living faith and life cross-culturally* (adopted by the Thirteenth Assembly, 2012 in Adelaide) is the key policy for the Church to utilise the gifts of members from culturally diverse backgrounds. Developed a flyer summarising the policy for distribution at Fourteenth Assembly to raise awareness of the document.
- c. *Space for Grace - Living in the 'grace margin' in respectful, empowering and inclusive decision-making*, (received by the Fourteenth Assembly 2015 in Perth and referred to the President and the Assembly Standing Committee for action) is the invitation to embrace diverse communities and foster a culturally sensitive conversation.
- d. Publication of resources to support [Space for Grace](#) in 2017.

Public Profile

1. Supported the Tongan National Conference in responding to the ABC TV program *Jonah from Tonga* which negatively portrayed a stereotype of Tongan youth living in Australia and invited the ABC to attend the Tongan National Conference.
2. Supported the South Sudanese Communities (pastorally and communally) when civil war broke in South Sudan. This included an invitation to prayer communicated throughout the UCA.

3. Actively engaged with the Climate Change issue in the Pacific through the involvement of National Conferences and contributions to the development of statements and resources.
4. Supported refugees from Syria and Iraq settling in Sydney through Middle East National Conference and communities.
5. Represented UCA at the National Day of Unity in Canberra 13 October 2015. A gathering of political, community and religious leaders, attended by the Prime Minister, Opposition Leader and Greens Party Leaders.
6. Represented UCA at the Annual Conference Methodist Church of New Zealand in Blenheim, South Island NZ from 13-18 November 2015.
7. MCCM Blog on cross-cultural activities and events across the life of the Church encouraging and affirming examples of Church members making Space for Grace. The blog has 5210 views and is widely shared on Facebook (Highest number of shares: 506, 20 June 2016 for *Unbreakable Tongan Spirit*)
8. Shared resources and stories of cross-cultural ministry through the MCCM website. Also acted as a point of contact for those seeking to engage with ministry. Communication activities have included MCCM web pages refreshed and updated and 5 Multicultural Minute videos featuring interviews with Church Members engaged in MCCM Ministry.

6. ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE OF MULTICULTURAL AND CROSS CULTURAL MINISTRY IN THE UCA

As this represents the final report from the MCCM NRC, the Committee has identified a number of issues that the UCA faces going forward as it lives out its commitment to being a multicultural church.

1. Loss of the capacity of the Assembly to resource and guide the work of the whole church. This body offers multiple cultures and languages to all of its work rather than a system of having one or two CALD 'reps' on other working groups, which have a very limited base and often become minority voices. The MCCM NRC has challenged the assumption of the token voice acting as an advisory service functioning instead as a body that is truly inter-cultural and contains multiple cultural contexts and differing voices. The MCCM NRC has kept this commitment for concerns at a whole-of-church level as well as in specific areas.
2. Losing the capacity to meet face-to-face for several days each year, which facilitates the communication and relationship building needed in this inter-cultural, multi-context space.
3. Losing the capacity to embody *Space for Grace* and *One Body Many Members*.
4. Loss of the capacity to offer a reflection of the rich diversity of the UCA and holding the UCA accountable to its commitments.
5. Loss of corporate memory held within this Committee.

6. Loss of direct engagement with, and empowerment of, our various cultural groups.
7. Losing a connection between Assembly and National Conferences.
8. Losing the engagement with first generation and next generation migrants in terms of nurturing faith, belonging to the UCA and leadership development.
9. Losing the capacity to support new language worshipping groups to become part of UCA.
10. Losing a good reputation/identity as a Multicultural and Cross Cultural Church in the wider society Australia, among CALD communities and Church partners.
11. Communications breakdowns when default English-language habits do not make room for other inputs.
12. CALD communities can become severely disadvantaged when Property decisions are made without understanding multicultural factors.
13. Reputational risks can arise for the UCA when decisions like property usage or processes involving admission of ministers from other cultural backgrounds are handled badly or slowly.

APPENDIX A

MANDATE - MULTICULTURAL AND CROSSCULTURAL MINISTRY (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 multi-faith 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 multi-faith 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.

APPENDIX B

ASSEMBLY MULTICULTURAL AND CROSS CULTURAL MINISTRY OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry is a unit of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia and sits within the Mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship. It works collaboratively with other units of the team. In 1985 the Uniting Church proclaimed itself a multicultural church, acknowledging the changed context of ministry in Australia and the presence of people from racial, cultural and linguistically diverse background in its membership.

Key challenges in such a proclamation include: nurturing this gift and vision and developing models of ministry and mission, outreach and evangelism that celebrate and express the theological, biblical and liturgical richness that arises from the Uniting Church in Australia's racial, cultural and linguistic diversity within a multicultural and multi-faith environment.

It is our mission to assist the Church in learning to live as people from diverse cultures in worship, witness and service and to foster models of cross-cultural ministry and mission, outreach and evangelism that reflect the hospitality of God. In so doing it is committed to continue developing respectful and reconciling relationships with Indigenous peoples and across the life of the church.

What we do

- vi. Promote cross-cultural learning and sharing across the life of the Church
- vii. Support the ministry of migrant congregations and ministry to new and emerging groups
- viii. Work collaboratively with Synods and other Assembly Agencies to support [and resource] leaders who can minister across cultures and foster the development of multicultural congregations
- ix. Assist the national networking and co-ordination of the work of Synods in exploring ways of discipleship formation and leadership training of second generation [nXtgen] members; and identifying emerging leadership with gifts for multicultural and cross-cultural ministry
- x. 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

Priorities are set and identified through resolutions of the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee, the Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry Reference Committee, the Uniting Faith and Discipleship team, long-term strategic planning, issues arising out of ecumenical cooperation, and urgent political and social issues.

With Uniting Faith and Discipleship, Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry is committed to using the most appropriate strategies to nurture this gift and vision and to developing models of ministry and mission, outreach and evangelism that celebrate and express the theological, biblical and liturgical richness arising from the Uniting Church in Australia's racial, cultural and linguistic diversity and expressions of faith. In a multicultural and multi-faith environment such a faithful corporate life makes a positive difference in the world.

Our ministry makes use of a range of strategies

- Facilitating the development of policies that will enhance the multicultural life of the Uniting Church in Australia, in consultation with the relevant culturally and linguistically diverse

communities (For example, policies on the just and equitable use of Uniting Church in Australia property, 'in language' resource and foundational documents and other resources)

- Encouraging the networking of Uniting Church in Australia communities representative of the racial, cultural and linguistic diversity of the Uniting Church in Australia, particularly through National Conferences
- Translating key documents and providing other appropriate resources in community languages
- Ensuring consultation occurs with Uniting Church in Australia migrant communities when relationships with partner churches may impact on the life of their congregations
- Monitoring and educating on matters relating to the just and equal sharing and use of property and other resources for mission
- Nurturing the participation of migrant members and ministers in the whole life of the Uniting Church in Australia
- Advising and assisting on matters relating to the orientation of ministers coming from overseas, and the settlement and reception of ministers and congregations from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Sharing creative models of cross cultural worship, mission and multicultural ministry with the Uniting Church in Australia
- Organising appropriate national network opportunities that nurture the Uniting Church in Australia's emerging witness and mission, outreach and evangelism in cross-cultural and multi-faith contexts, and provide opportunities to review multicultural policies and practice and the implications of ethnic diversity for the ordering of the Uniting Church in Australia's life.

How we do it

Within the Mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship, the work of Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry will:

- a. be grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ
- b. build upon the inherited tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia
- c. use insights from theological, biblical and mission studies, worship and spirituality that are gifts to the Uniting Church in Australia from our racial, cultural and linguistic diversity to reflect on the shape of witness and mission, outreach and evangelism in cross-cultural and multi-faith contexts
- d. respect and seek understanding and insight from Indigenous people in endeavouring to further develop faith language, images and metaphors appropriate to this land and its environment
- e. work to advance the witness to Christ in 21st century multicultural and multi-faith Australia
- f. reflect the racial, cultural and linguistically diverse life, faith experience and expressions of Christian life of those who share a common faith in Christ and that are consistent with the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia
- g. be undertaken in co-operation with synods and other Assembly agencies, ecumenically and in consultation with 'home' churches
- h. be conducted on the basis of the best research available

Our Reference Committee

A National Reference Committee supports the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry staff team.

Membership of the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry National Reference Committee

Membership of the National Reference Committee will normally consist of Uniting Church members appointed in accordance with the Mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship with the following additions for this specific work area:

- The staff member of Uniting Faith and Discipleship with responsibility for the work area within which the committee operates – National Director Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry;
- The Associate General Secretary;
- The Chairperson appointed by the Triennial Assembly;
- Additional persons appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee at the first meeting after the Triennial Assembly, with expertise in the work area and up to a total of sixteen persons.

Membership is for the Assembly triennium

Care shall be taken to ensure that the list of nominations includes:

1. racial, cultural and linguistic diversity, gender balance and emerging 2ndgen/nXtgen leadership;
 - one person from each of the Working Groups that are established from time to time (in 2009 there are four Working Groups);
 - at least one person from five of the six Synods to assist with national networking;
 - a nominee of the UAICC;
 - the immediate past Chairperson.

The particular perspectives and insights of Synod Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry staff are highly valued. While they are not members of the National Reference Committee they are invited to attend the meetings and costs relating to their attendance are negotiated.

Role of the National Reference Committee - in addition to the Mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship

- a. Focus the activities of Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry on the vision of the Assembly as a whole;
- b. Assist in working to fulfil the Operational Guidelines by providing support and advice to the National Director and staff on such matters as strategic planning, priority setting and the development of policy positions;
- c. Receive and consider matters referred by the National Director;
- d. Assist the National Director and any other staff in the implementation of policies determined by the Assembly and/or the Assembly Standing Committee;
- e. Together with the National Director, assist and provide advice to the President and General Secretary, the Assembly and/or the Assembly Standing Committee on policy matters within their area of responsibility;
- f. With the National Director, make policy decisions where the Assembly or the Assembly Standing Committee has delegated authority for certain policy areas, either through the Operational Guidelines or by resolution;
- g. Ensure that appropriate pastoral support is offered to staff members;
- h. Participate in cross-agency projects and teams established by the Assembly;
- i. Establish working groups for special tasks related specifically to the Operational Guidelines;
- j. Make recommendations to the Assembly Standing Committee to establish other working groups for special tasks related to but not part of the mandate.

APPENDIX C

“THE UNITING CHURCH IS 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.

Additional note - 2013: We still seek after a more appropriate and acceptable description. While the term Anglo/Anglo-Celtic is still often used to describe any person of white/western/European /mostly English-speaking descent, there is increasing discontent with this as many such people are neither Anglo nor Celtic. This also assumes a single such culture and world-view. The rather complex phrase "racially, culturally and linguistically diverse" (CALD) is increasingly used across the broader community and is more accurate and helpful than either of the previous noted terms. However, the simple definitions of First Peoples and Second Peoples as used to differentiate between indigenous peoples and all those who have come later in the Definitions for the 2009 Preamble to the Constitution of the Uniting Church in Australia are most useful of all. They remind the whole Church of the diversity of all migrant peoples and of our

mutual need for reconciliation to and understanding of the unique place and spirituality of First peoples.