



muylothina takila-ti Le:wun tunk-ungai tuldangk tunk-ungai
Ola ma tumau i le alofa' 사랑 안에서 살기 Tinggal di dalam Kasih
Nofoma'u i he Ofa 愛中合居



Assembly Standing Committee

34 Continuing Witness

That the Assembly resolve:

- 1. To approve the following documents for consideration by the Uniting Church between the 16th and 17th Assemblies, for reception as continuing witnesses:**
 - (a) The Confession of Belhar,**
 - (b) Laudato si', and**
 - (c) The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.**
- 2. That the process of consideration should involve an invitation for all Presbyteries within the Church, and such other Councils of the Church as desire to participate, to commit to discussing each document for a period of at least one hour, using resource materials provided by the Continuing Witness Task Group, and reporting the results of this discussion to the Task Group.**
- 3. To request the Assembly Standing Committee to oversee the Task Group in the work of providing ongoing support and resourcing of these conversations, and gathering responses from Presbyteries; and bring a report to the 17th Assembly along with proposals for the official adoption of documents as 'Continuing Witnesses'.**
- 4. That the Assembly Standing Committee request the Task Group continue its work of identifying further continuing witnesses, with a special focus on the variety of forms of witness from Asia and the Pacific and report to the 17th Assembly.**

Proposer: Rachel Kronberger

Seconder: Geoff Thompson

Rationale:

The 'Continuing Witness' Report and proposals are brought to this Assembly responding to the resolution (18.31) of the 15th Assembly. This resolution called upon the Church to "listen anew for words of continuing witnesses from recent and contemporary contexts by which our own witness might be challenged, renewed and strengthened." The resolution also directed the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) to establish a Task Group to do the work required in order to bring relevant proposals to the 16th Assembly.

The ASC now brings the report of the Task Group to this Assembly along with the proposals above. The Task Group commends to the 16th Assembly the three documents for engagement and reflection, and looks forward to bringing the Church's feedback to the 17th Assembly.



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The Task Group believes that each of the selected documents is worthy of consideration as a 'Continuing Witness'. It also believes that regardless of the outcome, the process of wrestling with a document's claims and witness to the gospel will be a life-giving and energising experience for Presbyteries and members of the Church. The focus of such engagement is not to endorse the particular selected documents as definitive statements of our own theology. Rather, by becoming permanent points of reference for the Uniting Church, they provide recognised resources from which we can learn and thereby deepen the Uniting Church's engagement with the gospel. By deliberately listening to the words of other Christians, and asking them what they have heard and experienced of the gospel that we might not have heard, our own response to the gospel can be strengthened.

As the Report details, the documents chosen by the Task Group for this engagement and potential adoption as 'Continuing Witnesses' include both rigorous engagement with biblical material and the tradition of the church universal, as well as prophetic calls to action addressed to the church or even to "every person living on this planet" (Laudato si', paragraph 3). It is the belief of the Task Group that engagement with these voices from beyond our context will enrich, illuminate, challenge, and even disturb the theological categories and groupings that have emerged in the Uniting Church and may provoke, encourage, challenge and comfort us as a church.

The proposals above will enable this engagement to occur in a structured way, as well as prepare the Church for the possibility of further engagement with even more diverse voices in the future.