



Assembly Standing Committee

16 Continuing Witness Proposal

Background

The 16th Assembly (Reconvened) passed the following Resolution (22.05):

22.05.01. 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.

22.05.02. 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.

22.05.03. 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'.

22.05.04. 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.

The Continuing Witness Task Group (the Task Group) was appointed following the decision of the 15th Assembly (Minute 18.31) to explore the possibility of adopting various statements or confessions of faith from other churches in different contexts as part of the Uniting Church's own acknowledgement of "continuing witness[es]" (Basis of Union, #11).

That the Assembly resolve:

1. to approve the Confession of Belhar as a Continuing Witness;
2. to approve Laudato si' as a Continuing Witness;
3. to approve the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification as a Continuing Witness ;
4. to request the Assembly Resourcing Unit to introduce a Continuing Witness page to the Assembly website which:
 - explains the category of "Continuing Witness", its roots in Paragraph 11 of the Basis of Union and its relationship to the historical documents listed in Paragraph 10 of the Basis,
 - introduces the history, content and global reception of each document,
 - contains links to Uniting Church endorsed digital copies of each document;



5. to ask the Standards for Ministry Committee to amend the standards for the various specified ministries to include appropriate forms of engagement with the Continuing Witness documents;
6. to request the Assembly Standing Committee to amend the ordination charge to reference the use of the Continuing Witness documents; and
7. to ask the Assembly Standing Committee appoint a Task Group to explore the possibilities of adopting further Continuing Witness documents/and or other forms of witness, and in doing so, learn from the church's experience of adopting and using these three documents.

Proposer: Rachel Kronberger
Secunder: Geoff Thompson

