Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

A theological response to comments made by Dr Francis Macnab, *The Age*, 16 September 2008

The Uniting Church in Australia is committed by its *Basis of Union* to living and working 'within the faith and unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church' [§2]. For this reason it receives the ancient creeds of the Church (the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed) as 'authoritative statements of the Catholic Faith, framed in the language of their day and used by Christians in many days'. [§9]

Since the same *Basis of Union* also welcomes the contributions of 'faithful and scholarly interpreters of Scripture' and engagement with contemporary thought [§11], there will be a range of opinion on questions of biblical interpretation and on the historical background to the theological narratives of Holy Scripture. In itself, this is neither surprising nor problematic.

The Uniting Church is committed to an understanding of God as the Holy Trinity and to Jesus Christ as Son of God, Saviour and Lord. To describe him as 'just a Jewish peasant' falls very far short of the church's classic statements of belief in him. Similarly, to reduce God to 'a presence beyond ourselves' is a serious under-statement of the church's belief in the God who is creator, redeemer and perfecter of all things.

The church's faith is both old and new. It begins thousands of years ago with the call of the Israelites to be God's covenant-people; its centre is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, 'the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb 13:8); and it is renewed again and again as it receives the nourishment of Word and Sacrament, through which the risen, crucified one equips it for its mission in a changing world and for its engagement with new questions and issues.

The Uniting Church is strongly committed to respectful and constructive relationships with people of other faiths. It honours the seriousness of its dialogue with other religions by participating in such conversation on the basis of its understanding of God as revealed in the particularity of God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ.

Rev Professor

Chris Mostert

Professor Systematic Theology

Uniting Church Theological College,

Melbourne

- The above is a theological response to comments made by Dr Francis Macnab in *The Age*, 16 September, 2008. The response was requested by the Acting Moderator of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. The author of the document, the Rev Professor Chris Mostert, has been authorised to speak publically to its contents.