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Introduction

The aim of this document is to act as a comprehensive reference of the social justice and international mission resolutions of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, supplemented by resolutions from the Assemblies of the Uniting Church.

The resolutions included in this document generally reflect the areas of work of the Justice and International Mission Unit and associated bodies (and their previous incarnations) at the time of the resolution. As such, resolutions that may have been deemed under the category of "social justice" or "international mission" in the past may not be included now.

In almost every case, the resolutions are supported by more or less substantive reports and rationales. In many cases these need to be viewed as a background to the resolutions. Such reports are available from the Commission for Mission or the Synod Secretariat.

Sections of this document can be reprinted with due acknowledgment of the source and date of resolution. We ask that in reprinting, care be given in not quoting the resolutions out of context.

As far as possible, the resolutions have been reproduced just as they were minuted.

Justice and International Mission
January 2007

Updated

1994 Stuart Reid
1996 Jenni Walker
2007 Jesse Cain
2008 Marylou Delloso

STATEMENT TO THE NATION

Inaugural Assembly, June, 1977

People of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches have united. A new church has been born.

We, who are members of the first Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia address the people of Australia in this historic moment. The path to unity has been long and at times difficult, but we believe this unity is a sign of the reconciliation we seek for the whole human race.

We acknowledge with gratitude that the churches from which we have come have contributed in various ways to the life and development of this nation. A Christian responsibility to society has always been regarded as fundamental to the mission of the Church. In the Uniting Church our response to the Christian gospel will continue to involve us in social and national affairs.

We are conscious of our responsibilities within and beyond this country. We particularly acknowledge our responsibilities as one branch of the Christian church within the region of South-East Asia and the Pacific. In these contexts we make certain affirmations at the time of our inauguration.

- * ***We affirm our eagerness to uphold basic Christian values and principles, such as the importance of every human being, the need for integrity in public life, the proclamation of truth and justice, the rights for each citizen to participate in decision-making in the community, religious liberty and personal dignity, and a concern for the welfare of the whole human race.***
- * ***We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond. We affirm the rights of all people to equal educational opportunities, adequate health care, freedom of speech, employment or dignity in unemployment if work is not available. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms.***
- * ***We will challenge values which emphasise acquisitiveness and greed in disregard of the needs of others and which encourage a higher standard of living for the privileged in the face of the daily widening gap between the rich and poor.***
- * ***We are concerned with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources for their use and enjoyment.***

Finally we affirm that the first allegiance of Christians is God, under whose judgment the policies and actions of all nations must pass. We realise that sometimes this allegiance may bring us into conflict with the rulers of our day. But our Uniting Church, as an institution within the nation, must constantly stress the universal values which must find expression in national policies if humanity is to survive. We pledge ourselves to hope and work for a nation whose goals are not guided by self-interest alone, but by concern for the welfare of all persons everywhere - the family of the One God - the God made known in Jesus of Nazareth the One who gave His life for others.

In the spirit of His self-giving love we seek to go forward.

Aboriginal Affairs

1979 re: Aboriginal Affairs

79.45 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) recognize the injustice done to Aboriginal people through the dispossession of their lands, the importance of ties with their land for the maintenance by Aboriginals of their culture, and the economic importance of land; and affirm its support for Aboriginal groups seeking to obtain freehold title to traditional lands or land to be used for housing and economic support, and compensation for land which has been expropriated.
- (b) recommend to Synods, Presbyteries and parishes and members that they enter into dialogue with local groups of Aborigines to ascertain whether suitable properties owned by the Church may be made available to them in perpetuity so as to meet some of their needs for housing and land;
- (c) acknowledge that, by such action, they will acknowledge the injustice that has been done to Aboriginal people and the complicity of the Churches in it;
- (d) encourage further consultation and dialogue with Aboriginal groups which may be needed to determine whether additional assistance is required to ensue that they can use the land they wish;
- (e) acknowledge that such an action will challenge the acquisitiveness, covetness, and materialism of our society which made the dispossession possible and has for so long delayed compensation, thus setting an example of the willingness to dialogue with local Aboriginal groups, and to make the sort of sacrifice required of the white Australian community in natural justice.

1980 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Land Rights

80.1.13 The Synod resolved:

To request the Synod Co-ordinating Commission to appoint a task group:

- (a) to promote debate of the matter of land rights for Aboriginal people;
- (b) to bring a recommendation to Synod 1981 on the best way to use the proposal on the boycott of the Bicentennial celebrations as a means of highlighting the debate and achieving satisfactory resolution to the call for Land Rights.

1980 re: Aboriginal Affairs

80.5.12 The Synod resolved:

To receive the petition concerning Noonkanbah submitted by the Rev. A Hardie with three pages of signatures of persons not members of Synod, and refer it to the Division of Social Justice to consider and bring a report with recommendations to the Standing Committee.

1981 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Land Grants

81.5.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To acknowledge corporately and individually, that the land of Australia was and is an integral part of the life of the Australian Aboriginal people and that Australia has never recognized this fact nor the prior ownership of Australia by the Aboriginal people.
- (b) To approve the following categories of resources and land grants as signs of commitment of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria, to Aboriginal people in response to the Assembly's decision (Minute 79.45):
 - (i) Straight out land grants of land, manse, church, campsite, etc. to specific groups of Aboriginal people, giving freehold title to the land involved;
 - (ii) Appropriate leasing of land, manse, church, campsite etc. on peppercorn rental to specific groups of Aboriginal people;
 - (iii) Sale of land or property and the proceeds being made available as a grant to groups of Aboriginal people;
 - (iv) The allocation of funds by Synod as a capital fund, with Aboriginal trustees, to be available by grant or loan to Aboriginal communities/co-operatives for the purpose of acquisition of land or such other purposes as decided by the trustees.
- (c) To adopt the following guidelines:
 - (i) That the land and other grants of whatever kind are the responsibility of the whole Synod and not necessarily of one Parish or Presbytery. This, however, does not preclude Presbytery or Parish grants of land.
 - (ii) That such above mentioned grants should not be seen as a token gesture but as part of an ongoing dialogue with, and commitment to Aboriginal people.
 - (iii) That any grant would be to an established Aboriginal group with legal entity; e.g. to an incorporated Aboriginal Co-operative, or such a body as the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship.
 - (iv) That grants would be available to all Aboriginal people, not only to those who have Church affiliation (Many Aboriginal people have no Church connections because the Churches have not been willing to receive them). Aboriginal people with Church connections should be advised of the possibility of such grants.
- (d)
 - (i) That, before any decisions on the earmarking of a specific amount of resources for transfer to Aboriginal communities are made, the Division of Ecumenical Mission consult with the members of the Synod's Parishes in order to ascertain the views of the members with respect to this matter;
 - (ii) To request the Division to bring a report with recommendations to Synod 1982.
- (e) To request the Division of Ecumenical Mission, in consultation with all appropriate bodies, including the Board of Property and Finance and the Division of Resources, to pursue the implementation of resolution (b) and report to Synod 1982 and future Synods.
- (f) To request the Theological Hall Faculty and the Commission on Continuing Education for Ministry respectively to explore the possibility of including studies of Aboriginal culture in the preparation of candidates for ministry and in the continuing education of Ministers and report to Synod 1982.
- (g) To request congregations and members of the Church to include regular and informed prayer for Aboriginal people in worship services and personal devotions.
- (h) To request the Division of Ecumenical Mission to encourage and facilitate the building of a regular dialogue between Parish Councils and Aboriginal co-operatives within their bounds.

1982 re: Aboriginal Affairs

82.4.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To instruct the Standing Committee to appoint a working Group representative of Resources Commission, the Presbyteries and the Division of Ecumenical Mission to prepare detailed mechanisms, whereby a program of transfer of property to Aboriginal groups can take place, for submission to the Standing Committee for consideration and approval.
- (b) To instruct the Division of Ecumenical Mission, in consultation with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and appropriate Presbyteries and Parishes, to develop specific proposals for transfer of property to groups of Aboriginal people in the light of the Assembly decision (Minute 79.45) and Synod decisions (Minute 81,5.8/5,6) and the Report and Supplementary Report of the Division of Ecumenical Mission to Synod 1982, and to submit these proposals to the Standing Committee for consideration and approval.
- (c) To endorse \$750,000 as an appropriate target figure of value for the program of transfer of property during the triennium 1983 to 1985 and to authorize the Resources Commission and the Division of Ecumenical Mission to work toward the implementation of such a figure.

1982 re: Aboriginal Affairs

82.48 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) urge the Heads of Churches and/or the Australian Council of Churches in connection with the proposed Bicentennial Celebrations:
 - (i) to press the Prime minister and the Bicentennial Authority to return to the original proposed theme "Living Together" instead of "Australian Achievement";
 - (ii) to stress that the theme "Living Together" would give proper and meaningful participation to all people of Australia, especially Aboriginal and other minority groups, based upon a commitment to build an Australian community in which all people belong and are respected;
 - (iii) to stress that such a theme encourages all Australians to include in their celebrations a recognition of the shame and injustices of the past, while at the same time celebrating and working at the present and the future;
 - (iv) to stress that the original theme avoids views of Australian achievement seen mainly in material development and sectional interests often at great cost to social and environmental relationships.
- (b) acknowledging our call to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries, urge all people of the Uniting Church to accept primary responsibility to respond 'to the urgent and clamant need to ensure for all people of this land that full and abundant life which is their divine heritage'. To this end we pledge ourselves to prepare a timetable of action in each Synod aimed at achieving appropriate government legislation which honours the Aboriginal plea for land justice and the Assembly's constant affirmation of that plea; so that, by the 1988 Bicentennial the Uniting Church can join together with all Australians to celebrate our real achievements.
- (c) determine that the Uniting Church participate in planning for the Bicentennial Celebrations, joining in various committees and presenting programs, at the same time making it clear that the Uniting Church is committed with the Australian Council of Churches to "only take part in these celebrations if sufficient progress has been made towards the just claims of the Aboriginal people for land rights, freedom to rebuild their society, and financial compensation".

- (d) in preparation for the Bicentennial, encourage Uniting Church members, parishes and organisations to give thought to projects which affirm and support Aboriginal people.
- (e) Appoint a group of people to:
 - (i) develop a general strategy to achieve our objective in the six years leading up to the Bicentennial;
 - (ii) determine what substantial steps we wish to take in each Synod area;
 - (iii) liaise with the Australian Council of Churches and other churches or other church organisations with similar objectives.

1982 re: Aboriginal Affairs

82.49 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) give thanks to Almighty God that "He has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and..has enlisted us in the service of reconciliation". (II Cor.5.18, NEB);
- (b) acknowledge that reconciliation which is of God is not human togetherness based on appeasement or sentimentality. It is renewal of life based on God's Word of judgment and forgiveness. It is a costly and joyous process of change, of personal and social conversion in which God sets His people free to become fit instruments for His will;
- (c) commit the people of the Uniting Church to use every opportunity during the Commonwealth Games to proclaim the Gospel of peace and reconciliation which is addressed to all peoples of earth;
- (d) declare that for such reconciliation to become fully effective in our own nation there must be the right of every Australian of whatever race, age or sex to live a life of human dignity and equality;
- (e) call upon the Australian community to recognise the hopes and aspirations of its Aboriginal and Islander people, and strongly support them in their legitimate seeking after social, legal and economic justice and equality;
- (f) commit itself to a ministry of reconciliation, recognising the injury inflicted on the Aboriginal and Islander people of Australia by the injustices and exploitation that have accompanied 200 years of colonisation of their land, and call on all Australian Christians, black and white, to participate in this ministry.
- (g) re-affirm the call to the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments to grant secure title to the present Aboriginal and Islander reserve lands, and to recognise the right of the Aboriginal and Islander people to determine their own future as Australians.

1982 re: Aboriginal Affairs

82.4.5.5 The Synod resolved:

To convey to the Prime Minister, the Federal Parliament and the Bicentennial Authority its support for the request by the Assembly to return to the original theme "Living Together" instead of "The Australian Achievement".

1982 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Land Rights

82.50 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) affirm again its commitment to support the Aboriginal and Islander people of Queensland in their just demand for legislation which guarantees them corporate ownership of Queensland reserve lands;
- (b) affirm that the vesting of title to land must be accompanied by appropriate legal entities which ensure Aborigines and Islanders exercise administrative and economic control over all activities on their communities;
- (c) express its support for and offer assistance to Aboriginal organizations in their continuing effort to explain the position of Aboriginal and Islander people, to raise awareness concerning the intentions and actions of the Federal and Queensland Governments and to organize their people for their struggle for corporate ownership of Queensland reserve lands;
- (d) regrets that the Commonwealth Government, by supporting the Queensland Government's recently enacted legislation on land tenure for Aboriginal and Islander communities, has failed to honour its commitment to the Aboriginal and Islander people of Queensland to support them in their quest for secure land tenure;
- (e) urge the Commonwealth Government to exercise the powers it possesses in Aboriginal affairs to ensure that the Aboriginal and Islander people of Queensland are guaranteed permanent corporate ownership of their land and control of their communities;
- (f) rejoice with the Pitjantjatjara Council and people on gaining title to their land and express appreciation to the South Australian Government for the Act of Parliament by which this has been achieved, and ask the South Australian Government to give serious consideration to the land and social needs of other Aboriginal groups and communities in South Australia.

1982 re: Aboriginal Affairs

82.51 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) express deep appreciation for our fellowship within the World Council of Churches, and give thanks to God for the members of the WCC team who responded to the invitation from this and other churches to come and assess the situation of Aboriginal Australians, who listened with love and concern to Aboriginal people around Australia, and who left us with the prayer that 'their visit may call us all to deeper commitment to combat the evil of racism, so that God's will may be done on earth'.
- (b) note the enthusiastic involvement of Aboriginal people in the team visit, and the endorsement of the report entitled 'Justice for Aboriginal Australians' by many Aboriginal people, communities and organizations.
- (c) note the report's challenge to our councils, agencies and congregations to persevere in efforts towards
 - (i) combating racism in Australia;
 - (ii) pursuing the intent of resolution 79.45 of the Second Assembly which recognizes the injustice done to Aboriginal people by the dispossession of their land and asks the white Australian community to make the sacrifices required by natural justice;
 - (iii) acting on our conviction that all people must be free to make the critical decisions of their own lives and, therefore, supporting the Aboriginal people and organizations who seek control of their own lives; who act to provide their community with the services it needs; who exercise their initiative in attempting new enterprises; who struggle to bring new hope and a new age for Aboriginal Australians;

- (iv) encouraging Aboriginal congregations and ministers to develop a theology which is related to their own culture and which arises from within Aboriginal people's experience of the Gospel;
 - (v) supporting Aboriginal people and organizations who share the WCC team's concern over those mining activities which seek to utilize resources located on land which Aboriginal Australians know to be essential to the survival of their community life.
- (d) acknowledge the serious institutional disadvantages Aboriginal people suffer in health, housing, education, employment and the legal system which have been high-lighted in the report and:
- (i) offer its support and encouragement to those Aboriginal people seeking greater involvement and closer control of the education of their children;
 - (ii) request the Commission on Social Responsibility and the Commission for World Mission to prepare well researched material on each major area of disadvantage to provide a basis for action by the councils, agencies and members of the Church, and provide immediately notated information about existing material.
- (e) Endorse the action of the Australian Council of Churches in establishing a combined churches committee to advise and encourage the churches in their response to the report; and commend the Synods for the steps they have already taken to study and act on its recommendations.

1985 re: Aboriginal Affairs

85.78.1f The Assembly resolved:

To endorse the establishment of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and confirm its responsibility for the work of the Uniting Church among Aboriginal and Islander people in Australia.

(There followed the outline of the charter...)

1985 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Land Rights

85.106 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To request the Commission for World Mission to prepare a study document on land rights and send it to Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes for their study and consideration as a part of their preparation for the bicentennial year.
- (b) To request Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes to convey their responses to the documents to the Commission for Mission.
- (c) To request the Commission for Mission to continue to exert every effort, in co-operation with Aboriginal organizations, other churches and community groups, to achieve land rights for Aboriginal and Islander people.
- (d) To note the present land rights debate ignores many rural and urban Aboriginal people who have been totally dispossessed and whose links with their land have been totally destroyed, and to request the Commission for Mission to give particular attention to their situation.
- (e) To convey to the Australian Government its commitment to land rights for Aboriginal people as stated in resolution 85.40.1 and to urge the Government to take all necessary steps to achieve this goal.
- (f) To assure the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, the National Aboriginal

Conference and other major Aboriginal organizations of its support in the struggle for land.

1985 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Land Rights

85.40.1/6 The Assembly resolved:

To declare its conviction that the 'substantial steps towards establishing justice for Aboriginal people' envisaged by the 1982 Assembly would include meaningful land rights of which basic elements would be:

- (i) provision for a title which cannot be alienated to development or other purpose without an Act of Parliament, i.e. secure tenure to the land;
- (ii) protection of Aboriginal sites;
- (iii) legally guaranteed process of participation in negotiations with any body (including mining companies) who propose to utilise the land, including the necessity to gain the consent of the Aboriginal people concerned;
- (iv) the right to control access to the land and to protect their community, i.e. control job permits;
- (v) access to any royalty equivalents and compensations, and participation in negotiation regarding levels of payments;
- (vi) provision of procedures which enable Aboriginal people totally dispossessed and unable to claim land to obtain compensation, and access to finance and housing, community projects and to meet basic community needs.

To declare that the legislative action taken since 1982 including land rights legislation in New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland, proposed legislation in Victoria, attempted legislation in Western Australia and the failure of the Tasmanian Government to consider any legislation, cannot be construed as the 'substantial steps' envisaged at the 1982 Assembly in that they fail to make 'sufficient progress ... towards the just claims of Aboriginal people for land rights, freedom to rebuild their society, and financial compensation'.

To reaffirm its hope that the Bicentennial may be celebrated without reserve by all Australians and, to this end, to urge all members of the Uniting Church to involve themselves in working for a more just and humane society, giving priority to justice for and reconciliation with Aboriginal Australians.

To encourage the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to take initiatives that may help the Uniting Church as a whole to deepen its witness to justice and peace.

To encourage all members of the Uniting Church in Australia to become fully involved in preparing for and in celebrating the Bicentennial, asking them:

- (i) to recognise that the history of Australia over the last 200 years, along with its achievements is marked by injustices, particularly to Aboriginal Australians and other marginalised and deprived groups in our society;
- (ii) to seek within the Bicentennial celebrations ways of expressing their commitment to work for the growth of harmonious relationships between Aboriginal and other Australians, to bear witness to the reconciling grace of God in the public life of the nation and to their hope for justice among the people of Australia;
- (iii) to celebrate the opportunities which have been given to millions of migrants (including refugees) to share new liberties, educational, social and economic opportunities for themselves and their families.

1987 re: Aboriginal Affairs

87.4.2.4/5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Moderator and all Synod staff be requested to refrain from participation in any bicentennial event which lacks a due sensitivity to the Aboriginal role and experience in Australian history.
- (b) That Parishes be requested to encourage all members and congregations to take seriously the Aboriginal people's history and their cry for justice when considering whether to participate in a bicentennial event.
- (c) That Parishes be requested to encourage all members and congregations to plan and participate in activities, including worship, which will, during the bicentennial year, recognize and draw attention to:
 - (i) The Aboriginal contribution to Australia;
 - (ii) Aboriginal suffering and struggle as a result of Australia's recent history;
 - (iii) Aboriginal perspectives on the bicentenary;
 - (iv) Aboriginal visions and aspirations for a just future for all Australians.
- (d) That the Australian Government be requested to establish in 1988 effective processes involving Aboriginal people which are designed to lead to a treaty which recognizes prior Aboriginal ownership of Australian land, and which will begin to address the continued dispossession and needs of Australian Aboriginal people.
- (e) That the Synod Commission be requested to prepare and distribute a reading list of readily available material related to issues canvassed in part (d) of this resolution.

1987 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Poverty, Economic Justice

87.4.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the theme for the 1988 Synod, including the Bible Studies, take seriously the history of Australian Aboriginal people, look penitently at the role of the missions of our Church in that history and enable the Church to move towards a more just and equal society.
- (b)
 - (i) To commend the Federal Minister for Social Security, the Rev. Brian Howe, for his work towards alleviating poverty in Australia by instituting the first review of more equitable pensions.
 - (ii) To assure Mr. Howe of its prayerful support of his work in the area of social security towards a more just and equal society.

1988 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Covenant

88.22.20/21 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To encourage the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to proceed with its proposal to work for a covenant between the Aboriginal members and the white membership of the Uniting Church and:
 - (i) To urge all Presbyteries to consider the proposals of the Congress and report back to the Congress by August 1989.
 - (ii) To request the Congress to revise its proposals in the light of comments from the Church and to arrange for a National Consultation in November 1989 to reflect on the process of covenanting.

- (iii) To encourage Presbyteries and the Congress, in the light of the developments to this point, to explore the possibility of sharing together in local covenanting ceremonies.
 - (iv) To request the Congress to initiate discussions with Synods in early 1990 to explore creative ways of covenanting together in the Synod meetings, and to request Synods to give consideration to covenant making at their 1990 Synod meetings
 - (v) To request Synod meetings in 1990 to make proposals to assist in planning for a national covenant at the Assembly in May 1991.
 - (vi) To request the Congress to organize a national workshop to shape proposals for a national covenant to be celebrated at the Sixth Assembly in 1991.
- (b) That a committee comprising three persons appointed by the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and three persons appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee be established to facilitate, encourage and lead the Uniting Church as it works towards the fulfillment of hopes of covenanting together.

1988 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Land Rights

88.22.22 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To declare its deep disappointment that, in abandoning its commitment to national land rights legislation, the Australian Government removed any hope that Aboriginal people could:
 - (i) gain access to secure tenure to land through title which cannot be alienated to development or other purposes;
 - (ii) obtain legally guaranteed processes of participation in negotiations with any body (including mining companies) who propose to utilize the land, including the necessity to gain consent of the Aboriginal people;
 - (iii) gain the right to control access to the land and to protect their community;
 - (iv) gain access to royalty equivalents and compensations, and participation in negotiation regarding levels of payments.
- (b) To deplore the abrupt abandonment of land rights as a policy by major government and opposition parties at both national and most state levels, leaving Aboriginal people without hope that these claims which they have sought, and every Assembly has supported, will be met.
- (c) To demand that the Australian Government and each State Government properly recognize the prior occupancy of the Australian continent by Aboriginal people and acknowledge the immense and continuing destruction of their people imposed by the adoption of the doctrine of Terra Nullius.
- (d) To support efforts to work beyond the concept of the compact proposed by the Australian Government towards a form of treaty - that is an enforceable agreement obtained through formal and full negotiations between Aboriginal political structures and those of the wider Australian community, an agreement which Aboriginal people can use to protect their interests.

1988 re: Aboriginal Affairs

88.18 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To adopt the proposed Statement to the Nation.
- (b) To encourage Uniting Church papers throughout Australia to publish in full the Statement to the Nation as soon as possible so that the members of the Uniting Church have opportunity to be aware of the complete text.

1988 re: Aboriginal Affairs

88.5.3.7 The Synod resolved:

That the program of further transfers to Aboriginal groups in Victoria through the Aboriginal Affairs Fund, arising from Synod Minute 82.4.5, be re-affirmed.

1991 re: Aboriginal Affairs

91.14.12 The Assembly resolved:

To invite the leaders and members of the Uniting Church in Australia:

- (a) to enter into dialogue with local Aboriginal people to discover the issues that frustrate and lead to despair, and commit themselves to struggle hand in hand to find solutions;
- (b) to adopt a personal and communal lifestyle which reflects our solidarity with those who struggle against alcohol and other drugs and which declares to all that alcohol and other drugs are not essential elements for fulfillment or satisfying living.

1991 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Land Rights

91.14.15 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) That at the request of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, who have worked with the Worora, Ngarinyin, and Wunumbal tribes since the beginning, the efforts of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress on behalf of these people to safeguard their traditional land and their access to it be supported.
- (b) that the Prime Minister, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and the Premier of Western Australia be informed of the Church's long association with the people, of its concern for their spiritual and social welfare, and the Assembly's strong support for the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in its stand with the people of the three tribes living at Derby/Mowanjumb.

1991 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Education

91.3.7.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm that, Aboriginal retention rates match those of the rest of the community, all Aboriginal students should be funded at level 12 irrespective of their geographic and/or social setting.
- (b) That the Australian Government be advised of resolution(a) hereof.

1993 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Land Rights

93.5.1.4-7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That it supports the decision of the High Court of Australia to reject the legal fiction of "terra nullius".
- (b) To affirm that the decision of the High Court referred to in 93.5.1.4 presents opportunities to facilitate ongoing processes of reconciliation founded on justice.
- (c) That the Australian Government be requested, in its response to the Native Title decision, to enact legislation totally consistent with the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975.
- (d) That the Victorian Government be requested to rescind the Land Titles Validation Act, 1993, and in its further responses to the Native Title decision to enact legislation totally consistent with the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975.

1993 re: Aboriginal Affairs, Education

93.5.8.7 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to seek information from the Victorian Government on:

- (a) The reasons for its refusal to sign the Triennial Agreement with the Commonwealth Government (1993-1995) on funding for Aboriginal education.
- (b) The Government's policy on permanency for positions in Koori education within the Directorate of School Education.
- (c) The current status of the document "Partnership in education - Koori Education Policy" (prepared February - March 1990).

1996 re: Aboriginal Affairs

96.6.4.14 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm the profound importance of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families.
- (b) While recognising that for the most part our forebears acted in good faith in their time and age to provide protection against dangers to the welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, acknowledge and apologise to Aboriginal communities throughout Australia and Torres Strait Islander communities for:
 - (i) its complicity with government policies and programs which separated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their parents;
 - (ii) the personal and social trauma and on-going harm caused to individuals, families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
 - (iii) any physical violence and sexual abuse perpetrated by staff who should have been trustworthy.
- (c) To acknowledge the faithful staff, house parents, foster carers and adoptive parents who provided secure, safe and loving environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth.
- (d) That the Synod encourage its child, youth and family service agencies:

- (i) to seek discussions with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress with a view to making available appropriate agency facilities, resources and expertise to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
 - (ii) to support, initially for three years, a Project sanctioned by the Koori Reference Group formed by the Minajalku Centre, recognising that the Project will:
 - research the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth who were placed by agencies of the Synod of Victoria; and
 - enable the provision of information and counselling to those children, youth and their families.
- (e) In the light of the evidence presented to the National Inquiry of the damage caused by the policies of the Victorian Government with regard to the separation of Aboriginal children from their parents, to urge the Victorian Government:
- (i) to acknowledge and apologise to the Aboriginal community for the racist assumptions that underlay the policy and practice of taking Aboriginal children from their parents;
 - (ii) to support the provision of compensation for those who as Aboriginal children were separated from their parents and thereby lost the possibility of access to land or forfeited their land rights; and
 - (iii) to provide additional support to community-based support service staffed by Aboriginal counsellors for people who have been affected by these policies and practices.

1997 re: The Stolen Generation

97.6.6.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the “Bringing Them Home” Report published by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (April 1997):
 - (i) is a document of national significance for all Australians;
 - (ii) exposes the deprivation and despair suffered by Aboriginal people because of their removal from their families as a result of Government policies; and
 - (iii) makes a disclosure of truth which is essential if reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians is to be achieved.
- (b) To request parishes, agencies, schools and presbyteries to reflect on the report, the historical involvement of the church and the Assembly resolutions, and to determine their own response; and
- (c) To request the members of the Uniting Church in Australia in Victoria:
 - (i) to support the establishment by the Federal Government of a National Compensation Fund;
 - (ii) to support actively by the writing of letters and in personal promotion in church and community networks, the proposal to introduce a national “Sorry Day”; and
 - (iii) to inform the Federal Government of these decisions.
- (d) To inform the Federal Government of these decisions.

1997 re: Native Title

97.6.6.5 The Synod resolved:

Following the decisions of the 1997 Assembly

- (a) To affirm Native Title as a fundamental common-law right for indigenous people;
- (b) To call on the Federal Government:
 - (i) to acknowledge the importance of Native Title as a means for seeking justice and reconciliation for indigenous people;
 - (ii) to support the decision of the High Court of Australia in the case of *The Wik Peoples/the Thayorre People v. The State of Queensland and Ors (1996)*;
 - (iii) not to proceed with the *Native Title Amendment Bill 1997* (known as the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan legislation); and
 - (iv) to begin a process for negotiation with indigenous people, pastoral lease holders and miners based on their current legally recognised rights of co-existence; and
- (c) To request presbyteries, in consultation with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Commission for Mission, to run public forums on Native Title issues in order to counter the disinformation in our community concerning Native Title.

1997 re: State Government Apology

97.6.9.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To congratulate the Premier and the State Parliament for their willingness to offer a unanimous apology to the Aboriginal people of this state in relation to the assimilation policies of the past that separated Aboriginal children from their families.
- (b) To call upon the Prime Minister, Mr. John Howard, to open his heart to the Aboriginal people of this country, to acknowledge the pain and suffering caused by past government policy, and to apologise on behalf of the nation, that true reconciliation might begin.

1997 re: The Stolen Generation

97.6.9.8 The Synod resolved:

To urge church members, congregations, agencies, schools and presbyteries in their consideration of possible responses to the "Bringing them Home" report (1997), to investigate ways of making their own apologies.

2000 Re: Towards Reconciliation

00.11.02 The Assembly resolved:

noting that during 2000 the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation has presented to the nation documents for reconciliation:

- (a) to endorse the Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation and commend it to all councils of the church for study and endorsement as a further step in covenanting and reconciliation;

- (b) to endorse the idea of a legislated process of negotiation between the leaders of the Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Australia towards a formal agreement (treaty) dealing with the “unfinished business” of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation’s process for reconciliation;

2000 Re: Action to advance Covenanting and Reconciliation

00.11.03 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to urge Assembly agencies, Synods, Presbyteries and Congregations to study the Roadmap for Reconciliation, and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress suggested Strategies for Reconciliation (see section 6.3 of the report) and to report extensively to the church;
- (b)
 - (i) to implement, in partnership with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, an Indigenous Employment Program whereby at least 2% of the staff of the Assembly and Assembly agencies are Indigenous people;
 - (ii) to commit to maintaining and developing programs which provide young people with cross-cultural experience of each others’ communities and extend to all people of all ages as the opportunity arises;
- (c)
 - (i) to request each Synod to establish a process for monitoring the progress of the UAICC *Strategies for Reconciliation*, including within their schools and community service agencies, and to report annually to the UAICC, the Assembly Standing Committee, and the Covenanting Reference Committee on their progress;
 - (ii) to request each Synod to implement, in partnership with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, an *Indigenous Employment Program* whereby at least 2% of the staff of the Synod and Synod agencies are Indigenous people;

2000 Re: Ministerial education

00.11.04 The Assembly resolved:

to request the Ministerial Education Commission, in partnership with Covenanting and the UAICC, to:

- (a) facilitate the further development of cross-cultural awareness and anti-racism programs as compulsory elements for candidates for the specified ministries of the Uniting Church and as church-wide continuing education programs for ministers in placement;
- (b) facilitate the development of theologically based community development training programs to support the ministry of the UAICC;
- (c) facilitate the development and recognition of Internships with the UAICC as field education and licensed year placements during education for ministry courses;
- (d) continue to foster, support and encourage the ongoing development of Indigenous theology and its contextualisation in each state;
- (e) organise a theological educators’ conference to explore the above issues with the aim of developing a process for implementation;

2000 Re: Government action

00.11.05 The Assembly resolved:

to call on the Federal Government to:

- (a) adopt the *Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation*;
- (b) support and implement the Roadmap for Reconciliation in consultation with Indigenous organisations and communities;
- (c) support and provide funding on request for Reconciliation Australia;
- (d) establish a consultative body consisting of equal numbers of Indigenous leaders and non-Indigenous leaders which will create a legislated framework agreement (treaty) which will:
 - (i) provide constitutional acknowledgment and recognition of the status of Indigenous peoples of Australia as 'First Peoples';
 - (ii) provide constitutional recognition of Indigenous rights and remove aspects of the constitution which can be used to discriminate on the basis of race;
 - (iii) provide constitutional protection to the Racial Discrimination Act;
 - (iv) provide for a process of Indigenous representation in the parliament;
 - (v) affirm and recognise native title, land rights, customary law and Indigenous heritage protection;
 - (vi) respect the right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples within the life of the nation;
 - (vii) provide the foundation for the co-existence of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems of land ownership;
 - (viii) acknowledge traditional Indigenous economies and Indigenous rights as the basis for economic empowerment of Indigenous communities;
- (e) ensure that all Australian laws, policies and practices which impact on Indigenous people meet the requirements of relevant UN conventions to which Australia is a signatory;
- (f) apologise to Indigenous Australians for the negative consequences of all Australian governments' past laws, policies and practices that led to the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and establish a reparation and compensation tribunal for those negatively affected;

2000 Re: Australia's National Day

00.11.06 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to reaffirm the Assembly policy of moving Australia's national day away from the 26th January;
- (b) to ask Covenanting, in consultation with UAICC, to produce study guides in support of the Reconciliation process which include the Christian understanding of reconciliation between God and God's creation, including the reconciling work of Jesus Christ. And that these materials be in a suitable cross-cultural form and accessible to people of all ages including children;
- (c) to affirm the value of face to face meetings and of sharing stories in fostering reconciliation;
- (d) to apply to its own life the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report;

2000 UAICC

00.31.03 The Assembly resolved:

to request the Standing Committee to consult with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress with a view to:

- clarifying the meaning of Regulation 3.6.40, particularly the use of the term “oversight”, to ensure that the Congress has real management and administrative control of the Church’s ministry with and for Indigenous people;
- amending Regulation 3.6.40 as determined by Standing Committee (with any other consequential amendments), following the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, to express more clearly the Congress’ responsibility for management and administrative control of the Church’s ministry with Indigenous people and to clarify the relationships between the Congress and councils, agencies and Congregations of the Church;
- ensuring that where councils, agencies and Congregations of the Church initiate or undertake ministry with Indigenous people it is done in partnership with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress;

negotiating written protocols on how Regulation 3.6.40 is to be followed, particularly in relation to partnerships in ministry with Indigenous people between the Congress and councils, agencies and Congregations of the Church.

2000 re: Treaty

00.4.4.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To stand with the indigenous people of this land in their call for a treaty — a foundational document that will move the process of reconciliation forward and take indigenous people further along the path of self-determination.
- (b) To repeat our call to the Australian Government to support and work toward a formal treaty with Australia’s indigenous people.

2003 re: Apology to the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

03.44 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to apologise to the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) for the hurt caused by the Assembly’s failure to listen adequately to the UAICC’s voice in the Assembly’s consideration of Ministry and Membership in the Uniting Church (Minute 03.12.04);
- (b) to assure the UAICC of the strong desire of the UCA to continue to live under God in the covenant relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous members of the Church;
- (c) to request the President to ensure that steps are taken as soon as possible to participate with the UAICC in response to their and our concerns for the future of the covenant relationship;
- (d) to request the Standing Committee to consider ways in which the Assembly’s decision-making procedures may become more culturally sensitive and more informed by our cultural diversity

2006 re: Renewal of the Covenant

06.07 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To note the work undertaken by the Assembly Standing Committee in the “renewing the covenant process”;
- (b) To give thanks to God for the covenantal relationship that exists between Congress and the rest of the church;
- (c) To express its ongoing commitment to exploring what the covenant between the UAICC and the rest of the church means for our life together;
- (d) To commend the booklet “Covenant as an expression of the relationship between the UAICC and other parts of the Uniting Church”, and the foundational theological document on which it is based, to the church for study and exploration of its practical implications for the relationship between Congress with the wider church;
- (e) To request the Standing Committee to arrange for the resource to be developed into a short series of studies for use in the church;
- (f) To encourage synods, presbyteries and relevant agencies to hold discussions about the way in which they can enhance the practical expression of the covenant in their relationship with Congress and to monitor the progress of these conversations;
- (g) To request the Standing Committee, as necessary, to facilitate any national discussion that needs to take place, and to bring any proposed changes to the regulations that might arise from this process to the 12th Assembly.

2007 re: Northern Territory Intervention

07.4.37.3 The Synod resolved (by agreement):

- (a) To affirm the recommendations of the Little Children are Sacred Report from the Northern Territory Government;
- (b) To acknowledge the devastating impact of the sexual, alcohol and drug abuse as described in the Little Children are Sacred Report;
- (c) To acknowledge the pain this matter raises in Australians as we stand together, first peoples of this land and more recent Australians;
- (d) To call upon the Federal Government to involve Aboriginal people in decision making about their future including:
 - (i) Consultation with Aboriginal community leaders in relation to community access and the development of improved services;
 - (ii) Respect for self-determination in the implementation of measures to address community violence;
 - (iii) Consultation with Indigenous controlled services in communities, including programs that are customised to the local context; and
 - (iv) The development of meaningful partnership between Federal, State and Territory Governments and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous agencies in an overall plan for addressing violence and abuse in Indigenous communities;
- (e) To call upon the Federal Government to commit to long-term investment in reform including:
 - (i) Treatment and rehabilitation services that will provide culturally appropriate support, education and training for individuals and communities affected by drug and alcohol

abuse;

- (ii) Recruitment and training of suitably skilled, culturally aware child protection staff and police;
 - (iii) Development of culturally appropriate justice approaches with restorative justice principles to address systemic abuse within Aboriginal communities;
 - (iv) Training and infrastructure to provide adequate health services for Aboriginal communities; (v) The development and implementation of improved education and training services for Aboriginal communities; and
 - (vi) Appropriate housing investment including new housing stock and improvement to existing housing stock;
- (f) To call upon the Federal Government to uphold the cultural and legal rights to Indigenous land including:
- (i) Abandoning plans to remove permits and the compulsory acquisition of Indigenous land; and
 - (ii) Guaranteeing the recognition of Aboriginal land ownership and Indigenous governance in relation to land access;
- (g) To write to the Australian Prime Minister, the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs and the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs to inform them of this resolution and to request a rigorous review of the Federal Government's intervention one year after it began; and
- (h) To request that all congregations and bodies associated with the Uniting Church support the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress by actively supporting this resolution by the writing of letters and in personal promotion in church and community networks.

Abortion

1992 re: Abortion, Euthanasia

92.5.1.1 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to ensure that the issues of euthanasia and abortion are appropriately addressed, and report to Synod 1993.

1994 re: Abortion

94.4.2.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the report of the Committee on Bioethics on abortion be commended to the presbyteries and parishes and to their members as a contribution to their thinking, and their decision making;
- (b) In the light of paragraph 2.2.5, Biblical and Theological Framework to adopt the following as a statement of the Synod's position on abortion:

"In dealing with the issue of abortion, we have faced the question of whether in an imperfect world there are situations in which responsible moral action may involve taking human life. We have concluded that such situations do exist. However, they ought to be regarded as exceptions. Such action cannot be taken with an absolutely clear conscience, for although we may believe we are acting responsibly and make these decisions as carefully and prayerfully as we can, we recognise that we may be wrong. We acknowledge our continuous need for God's grace and forgiveness, knowing that eventually we will be answerable to God in our actions.

In the light of this understanding, we affirm:

- (i) that we reject two extreme positions in regard to abortion: one, that abortion should never be an available option; the other, that abortion should be always available on request.

We recognise that there are circumstances in which the decision to have an abortion is a responsible decision for a woman to make.

We cannot take a position of absolute rejection of abortion. Moral decisions cannot be made on the basis of one value, even the right of the foetus to life. There are always other values, other claims which must be identified and taken into consideration.

- (ii) that, after consulting those whom she trusts, the pregnant woman has the responsibility to make the final decision, either to have an abortion, or not to have an abortion, assuming that her decision is within the law;
- (iii) that there are many cases in which, on balance, termination of pregnancy would seem to be the most loving and responsible course of action. The reasons that lead to this decision may be varied. On the other hand there are many problematic cases in which the continuation of the pregnancy would seem to be the most loving and responsible course of action;
- (iv) that all steps should be taken to ensure that sensitive, mature and non-judgemental pastoral care is readily available within the Church community, for those who are - or who have been - involved in the difficult decision as to whether or not to have an abortion."

1994 re: Abortion, Euthanasia, Genetic Engineering

94.4.2.10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to reproduce and distribute to each Presbytery and Parish in the Synod the report on Euthanasia and Abortion of the Bioethics Committee for the information of members of the Church, together with a study guide.
- (b) To encourage Presbyteries and Parishes to respond to the Bioethics Committee no later than 30th June 1995.
- (c) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to ensure that in the future work of the Bioethics Committee, particular attention is given to ways in which genetic engineering and genetic mapping relate to bioethics.

Adoption

1991 re: Adoption

91.5.3.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the following principles for inter-country adoption be adopted:
 - (i) That inter-country adoption is a service for children, and should not be designed as a programme for infertile couples.
 - (ii) That inter-country adoption should only be considered after it has been identified that it would not be possible within the country of origin to adopt, find foster care, or make any other arrangement for the permanent care of the child.
 - (iii) That inter-country adoption should be based on standards set by the Victorian Adoption legislation, which incorporates the principle of continuing links between the birth parents and their families by way of ongoing exchange of information and the openness to access where possible.
 - (iv) That Victoria should continue to provide an inter-country adoption service centrally through Community Services Victoria only, and that this service be completely separate from all other Victorian providers of adoption and permanent care services.
- (b) That the Victorian Government and parishes of this Synod be advised of Minute (a) hereof.

Aged Care

1995 re: Aged Care

95.6.9.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To acknowledge the significant contribution which is made by the existing aged care agencies to the Uniting Church's ministry with elderly people.
- (b) To approve the establishment of an Aged Care staff team within the Synod Commission for Mission, in accordance with the Report "The future of Aged Care: A model for the 90s" (Page B3.7).
- (c) That the establishment and recurrent costs for the Aged Care staff team be funded by a contribution from the existing aged care programs and bequests funds which have been earmarked for general aged care.
- (d) That the Aged Care staff be accountable to the Synod Commission for Mission through the Director of Justice and Social Responsibility.
- (e) That in consultation with the existing aged care agencies, the Synod Commission for Mission establish an advisory group with representatives from aged care programs and presbyteries.

1996 re: Aged Care

96/25.10 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

to request the Federal Government to provide a written assurance that no elderly person will be denied access to an aged care facility because of her or his capacity to pay.

Aid (Overseas)

1977 re: Aid (Overseas)

77.2.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To encourage parishes to highlight the 2% issue during Lent.
- (b) To instruct the Division of Field Services 2% Task Group to prepare relevant material for worship during Lent.

1977 re: Aid (Overseas)

77.5.3 The Synod resolved:

To request the Board of Budget Planning to make provision in the 1979 Budget for the setting aside of 2% for Development as a first priority.

1978 re: Aid (Overseas)

78.2.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the 2% for World Development fund be declared a Budget Activity for 1980.
- (b) That the 2% for Development Fund receives 2% of what is appropriated through the Budget for that year.
- (c) To request the Division of Field Services, in consultation with the Assembly Commission for Mission, to prepare a statement, for circulation to Parish Councils and Parish Ministers, concerning the history, theology and aim of 2% for Development, the aims of the agencies through which funds are channelled, and brief details of representative projects which receive funds.

1978 re: Aid (Overseas)

78.5.5 The Synod resolved:

To ask the parishes as a priority actively to seek increased understanding and support for the Christmas Bowl Appeal this year, as an indication of the Synod's strong commitment to the humanitarian aid program of World Christian Action, as an expression of the compassion of the Uniting Church in ecumenical action, and to lessen the negative effect on this vital work of current ambivalence to some activities of the World Council of Churches.

1979 re: Aid (Overseas)

79.23 It was resolved that the Assembly:

Commend the Christmas Bowl Appeal as an important overseas outreach of the Church and ask parish councils to promote it in their congregations.

1979 re: Aid (Overseas)

79.3.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Name of the Committee be "2% for Development and Discipleship Committee".
- (b) That, after consultation with the Board of Property and Finance, the Division of Resources and the Division of Ecumenical Mission, the 2% for Development and Discipleship Committee bring to the Standing Committee an agreed formula for determining what funds under the control of the Synod will attract the 2% levy for the future; and recommendation for its implementation.
- (c) To authorize the formula for the dispersal of 2% money received in future, as follows:
 - 40% Ecumenical Development Fund (Geneva), paid through World Christian Action.
 - 45% Commission for World Mission, for Aboriginal and Pacific Development Projects and Emergency Relief.
 - 15% For Development Education in Australia:
 - 5% to World Christian Action (Victoria);
 - 5% to Action for World Development (Victoria);
 - 5% to Division of Field Services for Education and Promotion.

1981 re: Aid (Overseas)

81.2.5 The Synod resolved:

To transfer responsibility for Development Education and 2% for Development and Discipleship from the Division of Field Services to the Division of Social Justice, as from the 1st January 1982.

1984 re: Aid (Overseas)

84.5.16 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To acknowledge the action taken by the Australian Government in the years 1983 to 1984 and 1984 to 1985 to provide relief for the millions of victims of the prolonged famine in Africa.
- (b) To note with dismay the lack of progress in successive Federal Budgets towards the United Nations target of 0.7% of G.N.P as overseas aid.
- (c) To request the Australian Government urgently to review its support for victims of the African famine with a view to making a significant additional contribution in the immediate future.
- (d) To assure the Australian Government of the support of the Synod in the community for such actions.

1987 re: Aid (Overseas)

87.4.2.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To re-affirm its confidence in the Australian Council of Churches in its promotion and operation of the Christmas Bowl Appeal.

- (b) To encourage members of the Uniting Church in the Synod of Victoria to give generous support to the Christmas Bowl Appeal.
- (c) To encourage Presbyteries and Parishes to use resources from the Australian Council of Churches and the Synod Commission for Mission Division of Ecumenical Mission to promote greater understanding of the Christmas Bowl Appeal.

1988 re: Aid (Overseas)

88.19.4 The Assembly resolved:

To call upon members of the Uniting Church to a renewed support of the Christmas Bowl Appeal conducted by the Australian Council of Churches on behalf of its member churches.

1990 re: Aid (Overseas)

90.3.3.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Australian Government and Opposition Parties be advised of this Synod's concern at the inadequate level of Australia's overseas aid.
- (b) That the Australian Government be requested to take immediate steps to increase the percentage of non-military aid to not less than the level suggested by the United Nations, namely 0.7% of the Gross National Product.

1992 re: Aid (Overseas)

92.1.10.1 The Synod resolved:

To inform the Australian Government, the Federal Opposition, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau:

- (i) That the Synod considers that, despite the present recession, overseas aid should be raised from the present level of 0.36% of GNP to 0.4% of GNP by 1995 and to 0.7% of GNP by the year 2000.
- (ii) That the Synod opposes the Development Import Finance Facility (DIFF) scheme being included in the Overseas Aid Budget, and calls for the development of a separate budget for the DIFF Scheme by the year 2000.
- (iii) That the Synod welcomes the increased funding of overseas aid programs related to women and the environment in the last Federal Budget.
- (iv) That in view of the special needs of Africa, it is the Synod's view that aid to Africa should be given a higher priority than the present (7.5%).
- (v) That the Synod encourages them to base aid priorities on the alleviation of hard core poverty, rather than programs which are of commercial advantage to Australia.

1992 re: Aid (Overseas)

92.4.8.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) As a matter of urgency, to direct the Synod Commission for Mission to allocate \$10,000 from the 2% for Development Fund to the alleviation of human distress in Africa.

- (b) That this money be channelled through the Australian Council of Churches' Commission for World Christian Action for distribution through agencies of the World Council of Churches.
- (c) That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to review the situation in 1993 with a view to an additional allocation.
- (d) To recommend to parishes that they give serious consideration to the allocation of 2% of their income in 1992 for the above purpose, using the same agency of distribution.

1996 re: Aid (Overseas)

96/25.11 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

- (a) to inform the Federal Government of our opposition to its decision to cut the overseas aid budget by 10%; and
- (b) to request that the Federal overseas aid budget be raised from the current level of 0.29% of Gross National Product (GNP) to 0.4% of GNP by the year 2000 and to 0.7% by the year 2005.

2006 re: Response to the Tsunami Relief Appeal

06.21.06 The Assembly resolved:

To express great appreciation to the people, congregations and other Councils of the Uniting Church for the very generous response to the Tsunami Relief Appeal which was conducted on behalf of the church through Uniting Church Overseas Aid.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

1987 re: AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

87.3.4.8 The Synod resolved:

That the Moderator's Committee on AIDS be requested to prepare a submission to the Victorian Government seeking that curriculum developers on AIDS education include a "positive promotion of the traditional moral values of permanent heterosexual relationships" as has been advocated by heads of churches in Tasmania to the Tasmanian Government.

Alcohol

1977 re: Alcohol, Drugs

77.5.12 The Synod resolved:

That the following recommendations:

- (a) That congregations be encouraged to give one week to specific action/reflection on issues of alcohol and drug abuse in the community.
- (b) That Presbyteries be requested to convene regional seminars involving specific integration of Church and community resources.
- (c) That the Division of Social Justice be requested to prepare and make available a resources kit on the subject of the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs in our community.
- (d) That the Theological Hall and those responsible for continuing education be requested to include a specific focus on the issues of alcohol and drug abuse in training and continuing education.
- (e) That the Division of Social Justice be asked to make recommendations to the Standing Committee or to the next Synod regarding future responsibility.

be referred to the Division of Social Justice for action and/or report to Synod 1978.

1978 re: Alcohol, Drugs

78.3.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That in view of the extent and severity of the problems resulting from drug abuse and the need for adequate information on all aspects of these problems, Synod request Presbyteries to organize, within their bounds, a series of meetings at all levels of the Church's life, within a one week period suitable to each Presbytery. That Presbyteries exercise flexibility and autonomy in planning such a series, and that the Division of Social Justice be informed of the proposals and of the outcome of the meetings.
- (b)
 - (i) That the attention of Uniting Church members be drawn to the concepts of total abstinence and of disciplined drinking as responsible Christian attitudes to alcohol. Each member is asked to exercise sensitivity and responsibility, for themselves and for others, in making their decision on this matter. It is recognized that some people suffer from hereditary or other inabilities to control their intake of alcohol, and no condemnation of such people is intended. Clearly all possible support and caring is needed in such cases.
 - (ii) That all possible support be given to agencies working with those suffering from the abuse of drugs, including alcoholics.
- (c) That the Federal and State Governments be requested to ban all advertising of alcoholic drinks except at the locations where they are sold, and that all containers of alcoholic drinks be clearly marked to indicate that the contents are a health hazard.
- (d) That the Federal Government be requested to relate the excise on beer to the alcoholic strength (at least 30% lower on beer with not more than 2.5% alcohol content defined by weight) instead of the quantity brewed, in the hope that the resultant price differential will persuade drinkers to consume lower alcohol strength beers, with the possibility of less

sociological damage through alcoholism, road toll, crime and family breakdown.

- (e) That the Synod recognize that, with the exception of residences, it is the prerogative of the Parish Council or agency administering the property in the name of the Church to determine the matter of alcohol on church property.

Apartheid

1981 re: Apartheid, South Africa

81.5.2 The Synod resolved:

To refer the recommendations concerning divestment of investment in companies doing business in/with South Africa, to the Resources Commission, for inclusion in the consideration of the question of divestment of certain classes of shares as required by resolution 2(b).

1985 re: Apartheid, South Africa

85.2.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That Synod call upon its members to pray for the people of South Africa and Namibia.
- (b) To note that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches has declared that apartheid is a heresy and that any support for it is sinful.
 - (i) To reaffirm the Synod's commitment to monitor investments "in companies doing business in/with South Africa" for inclusion in "the consideration of the question of divestment". (Minute 81.5.2)
 - (ii) To monitor investment held in the name of the Synod with a view to divesting itself, where legally possible, of shares, trusts, debentures and other investments:
 - 1. in any South African company;
 - 2. in companies operating in South Africa or whose subsidiaries operate in South Africa;
 - 3. in companies whose trade with South Africa affects significantly their operation.
 - (iii) To request the Resources Commission to report on the implementation of this divestment to Synod 1986 and to subsequent Synods.
 - (iv) To ask the Moderator to inform the companies involved of the passage and implementation of these resolutions and to encourage their withdrawal, and the withdrawal of their financial resources, from South Africa.
- (c) To request members of the Uniting Church to divest themselves of investments in companies operating in South Africa.
- (d) To recognize the African National Congress (ANC) as a legitimate representative organization of the people of South Africa.
- (e) To write to the Prime Minister of Australia commending:
 - (i) the actions concerning sanctions against South Africa taken by the Australian Government at the United Nations over recent years, and
 - (ii) the August 1985 announcement concerning sanctions against South Africa;
 - indicating support for
 - (iii) the termination of landing rights in Australia for South African Airways, and

- (iv) the closure of the Australian Trade Commission in South Africa; and
 - requesting
 - (v) that the Government establish Trade Commissions in sovereign states bordering South Africa;
 - (vi) that the Government educate the Australian public on social conditions in South Africa and Namibia as the basis for actions concerning South Africa;
 - (vii) that the Government take up more fully its responsibilities as a member of the United Nations Council of Namibia.
- (f) To appeal to the Pretoria Government:
- (i) To abandon apartheid, release all political prisoners and seek a peaceful, just, multiracial form of government in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
 - (ii) To recognize the African National Congress (ANC) and the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) as legitimate political representative organizations of the people of Southern Africa.
- (g) To send greetings and a copy of resolutions 85.2.1 (a) - (f) to the:
- South African Council of Churches;
 - United Congregational Church of Southern Africa;
 - Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa;
 - Methodist Church of Southern Africa;
 - Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa;
 - Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk.
- (h) That a copy of resolutions 85.2.1 (a) - (d) and 85.2.1 (f) be sent to the Prime Minister of Australia.
- (i) That a copy of resolutions 85.2.1/2-8 be sent to the leaders of the:
- Liberal Party of Australia;
 - National Party of Australia;
 - Australian Democrats; and to
 - the State President of South Africa.
- (j) To write to Mr. Bruce Francis, organizer of the tour of South Africa by Australian cricketers:
- (i) condemning the proposed tour because of its implied support for the oppressive regime in South Africa, and
 - (ii) asking that the tour be abandoned forthwith.
 - (iii) That a copy of the letter to Mr. Francis be forwarded to the:
 - South African Council of Churches;
 - United Congregational Church of Southern Africa;
 - Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa;
 - Methodist Church of Southern Africa;
 - Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa;
 - Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk;
 - Prime Minister of Australia;
 - Liberal Party of Australia;
 - National Party of Australia;
 - Australian Democrats;
 - State President of South Africa.

1988 re: Apartheid, South Africa

88.22.14/19 The Assembly resolved:

To request Uniting Church members to study and, where possible, to respond to the Karios and Lusaka documents as a step towards increasing the Church's solidarity with our Christian sisters and brothers in South Africa in their struggle.

To request Parishes to support the "material aid campaign for victims of apartheid" which is assisting refugees in the frontline states.

To request Synods to make money available to the African National Congress and South-West African Peoples' Organization offices in Australia for their anti-apartheid education programs.

To call on the Australian Government as a matter of urgency to implement comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

To stand for two minutes silent prayer for the many people of Southern Africa who have given their lives to the struggle for liberation and contributed so much in faith and love.

To communicate its dismay at and protest the action of the South African Government in its recent banning of the Rev. Dr. T. Simon Gqubule, Principal of John Wesley College, Pietermaritzburg, Ex President of the Methodist Church in South Africa, and request his immediate release.

That it further deplores the South African Government's apparent indifference to the cries of those individuals and organizations committed to peace and social change in society.

1988 re: Apartheid, South Africa

88.5.3.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Australian Government be requested to vote at the United Nations in favour of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa, and to comply in all respects with that United Nations' resolution.

1988 re: Apartheid, South Africa

88.1.9.4 The Synod resolved:

That, in response to Assembly Minute 88.22.16:

- (a) an Appeal be launched to raise funds for the African National Congress and the South-West African People's Organisation offices in Australia for their anti-apartheid education programs;
- (b) that such Appeal be underwritten up to \$10,000 from unearmarked Synod Funds.

1990 re: Apartheid, South Africa

90.4.7.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) The Synod pause:
 - for prayer for the people of South Africa and,

- for reflection on,
 - the joy felt throughout the world that there is hope for South Africa
 - the pain felt as a result of recent events in South Africa.
- (b) That the South African Council of Churches be advised that the prayers and support of this Synod are with the Council and its members at this crucial time.
- (c) That the Moderator be requested to write to the African National Congress (ANC)
 - (i) expressing the Synod's delight at recent events in South Africa including the un-banning of the ANC and the release of some political prisoners including Nelson Mandela;
 - (ii) recognizing that suffering continues, and these events are only the beginning of a long process towards creating a free and just South Africa.
- (d) That a copy of resolution (c) hereof be forwarded to the South African Ambassador to Australia.

Miss Penny Foley led the Synod in prayer for South Africa.

1991 re: Apartheid, South Africa

91.5.3.4 The Synod resolved:

To convey to the Australian Foreign Minister the Synod's support for the ongoing pressure being applied by the Australian Government to the South African Government.

Autopsies

1991 re: Autopsies, Organ Donation

91.5.5.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Committee on Bioethics be requested to prepare and forward to the Standing Committee for adoption a theological and ethical statement regarding the practice of donating organs and permitting autopsies.
- (b) That the Standing Committee be requested then to encourage members of the Church to donate organs and to consent to autopsies being performed.

1992 re: Autopsies, Organ Donation

The Synod Standing Committee resolved:

That the following statement be adopted for the guidance of members of the Uniting Church within the Synod of Victoria:

Whereas we believe:

- that the developments in modern medicine that make possible a growing range of organ and tissue transplants are to be welcomed, because they offer hope of renewed life to people who face sickness and the possibility of early death;
- that the knowledge gained from autopsies in hospitals can contribute significantly to the quality of medical care available to us;
- that becoming an organ donor, or agreeing to a hospital autopsy when requested, can be an expression of the love which is part of our Christian discipleship;
- that such actions are also expressions of our solidarity with other members of the human family, and of the ties which bind us together.

We recommend:

- (a) that members of the Uniting Church be encouraged to volunteer to become organ donors and to consent to an autopsy (post mortem examination) when a hospital seeks permission to carry out this procedure;
- (b) that those who are willing to become organ donors, and those who have no objection to being the subject of an autopsy, take appropriate action to make their wishes known, in ways such as the following:
 - (i) most important of all, having frank and specific discussions within the family, so that other members of the family, specifically next of kin, understand the wishes of the person or persons concerned, and are prepared to see that these wishes are carried out, when the opportunity arises;
 - (ii) taking action to make these wishes known (specifically in regard to organ transplants) in some durable, written format, which may include:
 - carrying a donor card;

- adding a donor sticker to a driver's license, when possible;
- making a declaration of intent in a will;
- registering with the National Organ Donor Registry of Australia, or some other registry for specific organs, such as The Australian Kidney Foundation;
- completing any form which offers the opportunity to make personal wishes publicly known and requesting next of kin to keep a copy of such a form.

The Standing Committee further resolved that the Background Paper, prepared by the Committee on Bioethics, be made available to parishes and interested persons.

Bougainville

1994 re: Bougainville

94.18.04 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to express its concerns to the Papua New Guinea and Solomon Island Churches, the Solomon Island Christian Association, the Papua New Guinea Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches in Australia about the continued struggle and suffering of the people of Bougainville;
- (b) to encourage the Commission for Mission to continue to seek ways as to how the churches in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Australia may more effectively seek a peaceful resolution of the conflict;
- (c) to send a delegation to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to:
 - (i) express the Assembly's concern about Australia's role in the Bougainville situation, particularly the use of Australian helicopters for military operations in Bougainville, and the alleged participation of Australian military advisers in Papua New Guinea military operations in Bougainville;
 - (ii) discuss the convening of a meeting of government and church representatives from Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Australia and the Bougainville Interim Government with the aim of seeking a peaceful and just solution to the Bougainville conflict.

Cambodia

1979 re: Cambodia

79. 5.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To express our very deep concern for the people of Kampuchea.
- (b) To note that the CFWM has decided to send \$10,000 from its Disaster Relief Fund to Kampuchea immediately.
- (c) To give immediately a sum of \$4000, through the Christian Conference of Asia, for the relief of the desperate plight of Kampuchea.
- (d) To commend to Presbyteries and Parishes the CFWM Disaster Relief Appeal for Kampuchea, and request our people to give generously.
- (e) To acknowledge with gratitude the action already taken, and request the Government, because of the desperate need in Kampuchea, and the affluence which Australia still enjoys as a nation, substantially to increase aid.

The passing of the motion was followed by the singing of a hymn during which members of the Synod spontaneously gave \$2250 towards the \$4000 required to implement Resolution (c) above.

Capital Punishment

1989 re: Capital Punishment

89.3.6.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To oppose vigorously all calls for the re-introduction of capital punishment, re-affirming the stance of complete opposition to the death penalty adopted by the Methodist Conference of Victoria and Tasmania (1961, 1962, 1975) and the Presbyterian Assembly of Victoria (1962, 1967).
- (b) That a copy of resolution 89.3.6.2(a) be forwarded to the Premier of Victoria and to the Leader of the Opposition.

Child Abuse

1994 re: Child Abuse

94.2.4.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod call on the Victorian Government to provide additional funding for preventative services to assist children "at risk" of child abuse.
- (b) That the Synod request the Victorian government to develop a "holistic" strategy to respond to child abuse which ensures that once reports are investigated that families receive long term support.
- (c) That the Synod encourage Ministers and Parish leaders to attend the "Strengthening Vulnerable Families" day and/or use the resources developed.

Child Labour

1995 re: Child Labour

95.34.23 The Synod resolved:

- (a) to request the Synod Commission for Mission to publish (for distribution to parishes) a list of products made with child labour;
- (b) to encourage Uniting Church members and their families to not purchase products made with child labour.

2006 re: Child Labour

06.4.4.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To oppose all forms of exploitive child labour and any form of labour for children that interferes in their spiritual, moral, social, mental or physical development, health or education (noting that the international definition of a child is anyone below the age of 18);
- (b) To support all Governments around the world ratifying and implementing the International Labour Organisation Convention No.182: Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour;
- (c) To call on the Australian Government to ratify the International Labour Organisation Convention No.182: Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour without further delay; and
- (d) To write to the Prime Minister of Australia and the Commonwealth Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations to inform them of this resolution.

Child Prostitution

1994 re: Child Prostitution, Prostitution

94.18.06 The Assembly resolved:

given the large involvement of Australians in child prostitution:

- (a) to strongly support the ECPAT campaign;
- (b) to encourage church members to use the ECPAT information to become fully aware of the serious effects of child prostitution in tourism and to facilitate public discussion on the issues;
- (c) to encourage church members to be active in bringing about just changes by working with the proper authorities to change structures and bring individuals, travel agencies, sporting and social clubs to be accountable before the law in relation to child prostitution in tourism;
- (d) to encourage the Australian Government to ensure that sufficient resources are provided for enforcement of the Crime (Child Sex Tourism) Amendment Act 1994 to make it effective.

China

1989 re: China

89.3.6.4 The Synod resolved:

To convey to the Australian Chinese Students Federation, the Crisis in China Committee, the Phoenix Foundation (Chinese Professional Business Association), and Students for a Democratic China, representing students and others from the Peoples Republic of China, at present residing temporarily in Victoria, its sympathetic concern for them and willingness to consider practical support.

Communication

1977 re: Communication, Social Justice - General

77.5.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Division of Social Justice to convene a meeting of the Faith and Order Committee and the Board of Communication to examine how the Uniting Church can best express its mind on matters of importance within the community.
- (b) That the communication received from the Deepdene Parish Council be referred to the above mentioned meeting.

1992 re: Communication, Social Justice - General

92.2.2.2 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested:

- (i) to give more attention in its future reports to Synod to the initiatives it has taken to bring questions of social justice to the attention of governments, and
- (ii) to make known to the Church how it has consulted on public questions,

in order that in future meetings the Synod is enabled to recognize and discuss the issues.

Community Services

1990 re: Community Services

90.3.1.6 The Synod resolved:

That the Moderator be requested:

- (a) To write to the Prime Minister of Australia and the Leader of the Opposition
 - (i) communicating the deep concern of the Synod at the increasing difficulties being faced by the poor and other disadvantaged people in the community;
 - (ii) indicating the increasing difficulty Uniting Church community service programs are facing in ministering to those who come into care;
 - (iii) highlighting that changes in government policies and practice are profoundly affecting Uniting Church community service programs to the extent that many may have to cease operations in the medium term; and
 - (iv) requesting the opportunity for a delegation to meet with him to discuss these issues.
- (b) To write to the Premier of Victoria and the Leader of the Opposition
 - (i) communicating the deep concern of the Synod at the Victorian State Government's shift in priorities, and the budget strategies of reducing monies available to people facing major disadvantage;
 - (ii) expressing profound disappointment concerning broken agreements between Community Service Victoria and the non-government agencies delivering services to children and families;
 - (iii) indicating that the Uniting Church agencies are looking closely at whether they will continue to deliver such services; and
 - (iv) requesting urgently the opportunity for a delegation to meet with her/him to discuss these issues.

1991 re: Community Services, Housing

91.5.3.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To thank those Uniting Church agencies providing alternate accommodation care programs for children and young people in Victoria for the quality of services provided.
- (b) To advise the agencies, (as per (a) hereof) that Synod is aware of the inadequacy of the current level of State Government funding to provide these essential services.
- (c) That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to engage in regular dialogue with the agencies as per (a) hereof, with respect to the effect of present Government policy on:
 - (i) the financial viability of the agencies;
 - (ii) the quality of service deliver;
 - (iii) the development of urgent strategies for seeking an early increase in the level of government subsidy.

1991 re: Community Services

91.5.5.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To convey to the Leader of the Opposition the dismay of the Synod of Victoria at his recently reported comments regarding the value and purpose of work performed by Australian Council of Social Service, churches and other agencies seeking justice for and the welfare of those who suffer deprivation in our society.
- (b) To offer to facilitate a visit by Dr. Hewson to appropriate Uniting Church agencies of this Synod to examine, for himself, the rationale, value and necessity of the work performed.

1992 re: Community Services

92.2.2.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to present to Synod 1993 a statement on the involvement of the church in community service agencies, with particular reference to the relationship between the community service agencies and the councils of the Church, including a theological and scriptural rationale for that relationship.

Conscientious Objection

1988 re: Conscientious Objection, Peace and Disarmament

88.5.3.3/4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare that the decision to participate or not participate in armed conflict must be a matter of conscience.
- (b) To urge the Church to offer its fellowship and pastoral care in full measure to all those who:
 - (i) conscientiously object to involvement in or training for armed conflict, whether of a combatant or of a non-combatant nature;
 - (ii) conscientiously object to involvement in or training for a particular armed conflict;
 - (iii) conscientiously serve in the armed services.

To establish, as an expression of pastoral concern to all those wishing to establish their status as Conscientious Objectors, a Register of Conscientious Objectors on the basis of guidelines as printed in the Supplementary Report of the Synod Commission for Mission (S/B 4/57).

2000: re: The Right to Protest Peacefully

00.4.4.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a)
 - (i) To support the right of people to protest peacefully.
 - (ii) To support the call for an independent investigation into tactics used by police against protestors and into allegations of breaches of the law by police during the Melbourne World Economic Forum meeting.
 - (iii) To call on the police to use the minimum use of force necessary in all circumstances in line with UN standards on law enforcement.
 - (iv) To call on the police to ensure that procedures and training be modified to emphasise the principle of minimum use of force in line with the UN High Commission for Human Rights, Professional Training Series, No. 5 Human Rights and Law Enforcement.
 - (v) To inform the Police Ombudsman, the Minister for Police and Correctional Services, and the Premier of Victoria of this resolution.
- (b) To request the Justice and World Mission Unit of the Victorian Synod to:
 - (i) Develop a biblically-based resource on non-violent protesting
 - (ii) Run workshops on non-violent protesting.

Corruption

2007: re: Global Corruption

07.4.37.1 The Synod resolved:

Recalling the Statement to the Nation of the Inaugural National Assembly in 1977 committing the Uniting Church in Australia to seek the eradication of poverty in the world, and that in 2004 the Synod committed itself to support the Micah Challenge campaign to halve global poverty by 2015;

- (a) To acknowledge that:
 - (i) there is a need to address corruption within developing countries in order to work towards the eradication of poverty;
 - (ii) some wealthy countries continue to maintain laws and practices that foster, reward and allow them to benefit from corruption in developing countries;
- (b) To repent of the fact that it and its members have been beneficiaries, both unwittingly and also at times with indifference, of corruption in developing countries largely through the purchase of goods from developing countries where those involved in the production of the goods have been exploited and cheated through corruption;
- (c) To commend the Australian Government for the efforts it has made so far in addressing corruption, especially by:
 - (i) The introduction of comprehensive domestic legislation and regulations on anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing;
 - (ii) Being a party to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the OECD anti-bribery Convention;
 - (iii) Tightening the Criminal Code with regard to bribery by Australian companies in foreign countries;
 - (iv) The Australian Taxation Office being part of the OECD's Forum on Harmful Tax Practices; and
 - (v) Issuing the AusAID anti-corruption policy 'Tackling corruption for growth and development';
- (d) To call on the Australian Government to take further measures to tackle global corruption, specifically by:
 - (i) Continuing to fund anti-corruption and good governance projects within developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including support for anti-corruption campaigners;
 - (ii) Encouraging more countries and corporations to sign up to and implement appropriate multilateral agreements to combat corruption such as the UN Convention against Corruption, the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative;
 - (iii) Supporting an international approach to eradicating tax evasion and sharing information on tax administration;
 - (iv) Supporting programs which enhance the protection of journalists and whistleblowers in developing countries;

- (v) Introducing guidelines that discourage lending or insurance of lending by EFIC (Australia's Export Credit Agency) towards projects where there is dubious development benefit, where there is an unacceptable risk of non-repayment or where there are not adequate human rights or environmental safeguards;
 - (vi) Supporting the promotion of a global culture of respect for basic human rights, so that those seeking to tackle corruption do not become the targets of human rights abuses;
 - (vii) Advocating for reforms of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) that enhance democratic representation and transparency;
 - (viii) Pressuring the World Bank, IMF and the Asian Development Bank to deal promptly with companies found to have engaged in corruption, and with sufficient penalties to deter other companies from engaging in corruption; and
- (e) To write to the Australian Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Treasurer, the Attorney General, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Shadow Attorney General to inform them of this resolution.

Covenant

1988 re: Covenant, Aboriginal Affairs

88.22.20/21 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To encourage the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to proceed with its proposal to work for a covenant between the Aboriginal members and the white membership of the Uniting Church and:
 - (i) To urge all Presbyteries to consider the proposals of the Congress and report back to the Congress by August 1989.
 - (ii) To request the Congress to revise its proposals in the light of comments from the Church and to arrange for a National Consultation in November 1989 to reflect on the process of covenanting.
 - (iii) To encourage Presbyteries and the Congress, in the light of the developments to this point, to explore the possibility of sharing together in local covenanting ceremonies.
 - (iv) To request the Congress to initiate discussions with Synods in early 1990 to explore creative ways of covenanting together in the Synod meetings, and to request Synods to give consideration to covenant making at their 1990 Synod meetings
 - (v) To request Synod meetings in 1990 to make proposals to assist in planning for a national covenant at the Assembly in May 1991.
 - (vi) To request the Congress to organize a national workshop to shape proposals for a national covenant to be celebrated at the Sixth Assembly in 1991.
- (b) That a committee comprising three persons appointed by the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and three persons appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee be established to facilitate, encourage and lead the Uniting Church as it works towards the fulfillment of hopes of covenanting together.

2000 NCCA covenanting

00.35.05 The Assembly resolved:

to commend the covenanting proposals of the National Council of Churches to the councils of the Church, drawing particular attention to the plan for the celebration of our common baptism at Pentecost 2001, and its potential for specific local covenants;

Deinstitutionalisation

1991 re: Deinstitutionalisation

91.2.3.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod Commission for Mission present a statement of up to ten minutes on its stand on the issue of deinstitutionalisation of disabled people and the involvement of the Uniting Church in Australia agencies in the care of deinstitutionalised people.
- (b) That for the remainder of the time members be allowed one minute speeches on the issue.

Dementia

1993 re: Dementia

93.4.3.9-10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Uniting Church aged care agencies be requested to give priority to the needs of people with dementia and their careers
- (b) That the Minister of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services be requested to address urgently the difficulties created for providers of care for people with dementia by the Australian Government's formula.

1994 re: Dementia

94.2.4.2 The Synod resolved:

That members be encouraged to write to their local members of Parliament expressing concern for the inadequate level of funding for people with dementia and to request that funding be made available to ensure that people with severe cognitive impairment are able to receive adequate care.

1995 re: Dementia

95.6.9.12 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To encourage the Federal Government to fulfil its responsibility to provide appropriate and adequate care for all elderly people regardless of their support needs.
- (b) To strongly urge the Federal Government to meet with Uniting Church representatives to discuss ways in which the Federal Government will provide immediate financial support for not for profit agencies caring for people with advanced dementia.
- (c) To encourage all parishes and agencies to participate in the Rally which is to be held on Sunday, 26 November 1995, at 2.00 p.m. on the steps of the Victorian Parliament House, to urge the Federal Government to provide adequate funding for dementia care.

Dental Services

1996 re: Dental Services, Health Care

96/25.6 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

to inform the Federal Government of its outrage at the Government's decision to abolish the Commonwealth Dental Health Scheme which services some of the most vulnerable members of the Australian community, and to request its immediate reinstatement and to encourage members of the Uniting Church to write to the Minister for Health and to local Federal politicians.

Disability

1980 re: Disability

80.3.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm that Synod has a Christian responsibility to recognize and be sensitive to the needs of the disabled person.
- (b) To direct the Business Committee to determine the most appropriate location, and make all necessary arrangements, for a barrier-free venue for Synod 1981.
- (c) To request all Parishes to study the accessibility to their churches and other church property with regard to the needs of the disabled person.
- (d) To encourage Parishes to make the necessary changes for accessibility in each particular situation within the year of the Disabled Person, 1981.
- (e) To urge the appropriate Parish Committees to be active within the year of 1981 to bring an awareness of the needs of the disabled person to the local community and, wherever possible, to initiate or enable accessibility to the disabled person in all areas of community life.

1981 re: Disability

81.3.1 The Synod resolved:

To request the Standing Committee to consider designating a particular Sunday in 1982 as Access Sunday on the recommendation of the International Year of Disabled Persons Committee.

1982 re: Disability

82.5.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To adopt the policy statement in the report amended (S/D1a.2) as a declaration of its attitude towards all persons with disabilities.
- (b) To urge Presbyteries, Parishes and Congregations to recognize the experience, expertise and sensitivity of persons with disabilities, physical, emotional or mental, and actively seek their full participation in the worship, learning, pastoral and service activities of the Church.
- (c)
 - (i) To request each Presbytery to appoint persons to promote and advocate the rights of disabled persons within the Presbytery.
 - (ii) To request Parishes to commend to each of their members a personal and sensitive advocacy of the rights of disabled persons within the Church and the community.
- (d) To refer to the Faculty of the Theological Hall the matter of awakening in theological students an awareness of their attitudes to disability, the needs of the disabled persons, and the rich possibilities which arise out of a ministry and congregational life that includes disabled persons.
- (e) That the Commission on Continuing Education for Ministry be urged to provide occasions at which Ministers and Lay leaders may be aware of the special needs of disabled persons and the contribution they can make in the life and ministry of the Church.

- (f) To request the Division of Community Services to establish a library and resource centre so that Parishes and Presbyteries may have access to current thinking and action regarding the Church and disability.
- (g)
 - (i) That all planning for new buildings and for major renovations to existing buildings take into consideration the needs of disabled members of our community in order that all may enter into our fellowship.
 - (ii) To direct the Resources Commission to seek confirmation that the needs of disabled persons have been taken into consideration before approving plans.
- (h) That all Parishes be encouraged to modify their centres of worship, meeting rooms, car parks, and toilets so that they are accessible to, and suitable for, persons with disabilities and, where this is achieved, to display access signs prominently at the main entrances and other appropriate places.
- (i) That Parishes be requested to consider how they might establish or foster caring services in the community, appropriate to the needs of persons with disabilities.

1996 re: Disability

96/25.12 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

- (a) to endorse a process of intentional interaction with people with disabilities through 1997, with the aim of developing a clearer vision for ministry with and involving people with disabilities;
- (b) to ask congregations to consider ways in which people with disabilities can be more fully involved in the life and mission of the church, as part of their co-operation with the program of interaction.

1996 re: Disability

96.6.4.9 The Synod resolved:

To request the Victorian Government to exercise its responsibility and honour its duty of care to disabled persons and provide immediate funding for adequate chaplaincy services at Kew Cottages.

1998 re: The Development of a UCA Action Plan under the Disability Discrimination Act

98.5.4.5 The Synod resolved:

In keeping with the spirit of resolutions made in the International Year of Disability Persons, and in the light of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (Cwth: 1992):

- (a) To affirm its commitment to creating a Church that is for all people with disabilities (as defined in the DDA) and in all aspects of its life, free from discrimination.
- (b) To appoint a Task Group to develop and implement an Action Plan under the DDA, in compliance with Section 61 of that Act. The initial phase would be to undertake an audit of current practices within the life of the Church that may discriminate (including unintentionally) against people with a disability including, but not limited to, physical or sensory barriers, informational or attitudinal barriers, and any other elements of proclamation, teaching, fellowship or service.

- (c) That the Standing Committee be asked to appoint members of the Task Group.
- (d) That the Task Group report to the 1999 Synod with its recommendations, including financial and staffing implications, and a schedule of action.

Disaster Response

1977 re: Disaster Response

77.5.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To support the Australian Dried Fruits Association (A.D.F.A) in their attempts to have the water rate remissions made effective for growers who suffered damage in the hail storms of 4th October, 1977 in Sunraysia. That the remission of the rates be on a pro rata basis according to damage as assessed by the Victorian Agricultural Department.
- (b) To send a team of visitors to again visit the Red Cliffs Parish, at the request of the local people if they believe it would be helpful.
- (c) That the responsibility of the above matters be in the hands of the Co-ordinating Commission and that through the Commission the Division of Field Services take the information so far gathered and review it in order to establish a model whereby the Synod may act in any further disaster within its bounds. That these discussions be ecumenical in nature if at all possible.
- (d) To request the Division of Field Services to guide congregations on the most appropriate response in relation to the crisis facing many families because of the power strike.

Discrimination

1985 re: Discrimination, Homosexuality, Equal Opportunity

85.2.1 The Synod resolved:

To call upon all political parties in Victoria to support an amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act to ensure that individual homosexual citizens are not discriminated against in employment, housing or the provision of goods and services solely on the grounds of their homosexuality.

Note: The following members asked that their dissent from the motion be recorded - Mrs. C. Coulter, Rev. R.L. Maddigan, Rev. K.H. Moorhead, Rev. R.C. Outhred, Mr. J.H. Strickland, Mr. H. Trevenen.

1992 re: Discrimination, Equal Opportunity

92.4.8.2 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested:

- (i) to consider the issue of the perceived inconsistency of the acceptance by the Uniting Church of exemption from equal opportunity and discrimination provisions of state legislation whilst taking an active role in opposing acts of discrimination, and
- (ii) to report, with recommendations, to Synod 1993.

1993 re: Discrimination, Equal Opportunity

93.5.1.1-3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm that persons should not be discriminated against on the basis of their gender, marital status, disability, race or age in matters of employment, education, church membership or access to accommodation and other services provided by the Uniting Church in Australia.
- (b) That all presbyteries, parishes and agencies be advised of the above resolution.
- (c)
 - (i) To support the maintenance of Clause 38 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984, in order to protect the freedom of religious groups to practise their beliefs.
 - (ii) That the Victorian Government be informed of resolution (i) hereof.

1994 re: Discrimination, Homosexuality, Equal Opportunity

94.3.3.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod request the Commonwealth Government to enact anti-discrimination legislation prohibiting discrimination against gay men and lesbians in areas of housing, employment, education and the provision of goods and services.
- (b) That the Synod request the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to initiate public enquiries into the nature and extent of public violence and abuse directed at lesbians and gay men in Australia.

Drugs

1977 re: Drugs, Alcohol

77.5.12 The Synod resolved:

That the following recommendations:

- (a) That congregations be encouraged to give one week to specific action/reflection on issues of alcohol and drug abuse in the community.
- (b) That Presbyteries be requested to convene regional seminars involving specific integration of Church and community resources.
- (c) That the Division of Social Justice be requested to prepare and make available a resources kit on the subject of the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs in our community.
- (d) That the Theological Hall and those responsible for continuing education be requested to include a specific focus on the issues of alcohol and drug abuse in training and continuing education.
- (e) That the Division of Social Justice be asked to make recommendations to the Standing Committee or to the next Synod regarding future responsibility.

be referred to the Division of Social Justice for action and/or report to Synod 1978.

1978 re: Drugs, Alcohol

78.3.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That in view of the extent and severity of the problems resulting from drug abuse and the need for adequate information on all aspects of these problems, Synod request Presbyteries to organize, within their bounds, a series of meetings at all levels of the Church's life, within a one week period suitable to each Presbytery. That Presbyteries exercise flexibility and autonomy in planning such a series, and that the Division of Social Justice be informed of the proposals and of the outcome of the meetings.
- (b)
 - (i) That the attention of Uniting Church members be drawn to the concepts of total abstinence and of disciplined drinking as responsible Christian attitudes to alcohol. Each member is asked to exercise sensitivity and responsibility, for themselves and for others, in making their decision on this matter. It is recognized that some people suffer from hereditary or other disabilities to control their intake of alcohol, and no condemnation of such people is intended. Clearly all possible support and caring is needed in such cases.
 - (ii) That all possible support be given to agencies working with those suffering from the abuse of drugs, including alcoholics.
- (c) That the Federal and State Governments be requested to ban all advertising of alcoholic drinks except at the locations where they are sold, and that all containers of alcoholic drinks be clearly marked to indicate that the contents are a health hazard.
- (d) That the Federal Government be requested to relate the excise on beer to the alcoholic strength (at least 30% lower on beer with not more than 2.5% alcohol content defined by weight) instead of the quantity brewed, in the hope that the resultant price differential will persuade drinkers to consume lower alcohol strength beers, with the possibility of less

sociological damage through alcoholism, road toll, crime and family breakdown.

- (e) That the Synod recognize that, with the exception of residences, it is the prerogative of the Parish Council or agency administering the property in the name of the Church to determine the matter of alcohol on church property.

East Timor

1991 re: East Timor

91.5.2.1 The Synod resolved:

To call upon the Australian Government to promote talks, without preconditions, under the auspices of the United Nations, between the East Timorese people (including the resistance movement), representatives of Indonesia and of Portugal, in order to explore a lasting solution to the future of East Timor.

1994 re: East Timor

94.18.05 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) in light of the ongoing repression and human rights violations inflicted on the East Timorese people by the Indonesian Government, to call on the Australian Government to recognise the right of self determination of the East Timorese people and to work to ensure the presence of East Timorese representatives at any international talks on the future of East Timor;
- (b) that the Assembly request the National Council of Churches in Australia to:
 - (i) call on the Prime Minister of Australia to ensure that human rights principles are included in the conduct of foreign policy with the Indonesian Government in relation to trade, military and economic aid, and weapons sales;
 - (ii) call on the Australian Government to halt military aid and weapons sales to Indonesia until the Indonesian Government ends all forms of inhumane treatment of persons in East Timor including torture, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment and until the Indonesian Government allows unrestricted access to East Timor by such organisations as Amnesty International and Asia Watch; and until it complies with the United Nations Security Council resolutions in relation to East Timor;
 - (iii) encourage the leaders of the Catholic and Protestant Churches in East Timor in their desire to work for social justice, and in their efforts to achieve meaningful participation by East Timorese indigenous people in decisions that affect their future;
 - (iv) communicate resolutions (a) and (b) to leaders of the Protestant and Catholic churches in East Timor.

1995 re: East Timor

95.6.9.17 The Synod resolved:

Noting that, since 1975, the Uniting Church in Australia, independently and as a member of the World Council of Churches, has maintained its support for the people and the Church of East Timor during their struggle against Indonesian occupation and also noting that the Church of East Timor and other non-government agencies continue to report ongoing repression and human rights violations:

- (a) To request parishes to pray for an end to the human rights abuses, that justice and peace may prevail through a United Nations talks process, ending with an internationally supervised act of self-determination;
- (b) to request the Federal Government to grant asylum to those East Timorese in Australia who

are fearful of returning to East Timor; and

- (c) to request the Federal Government to halt military aid and weapons sales to Indonesia until the Indonesian Government allows international aid and human rights groups unrestricted access to East Timor and respects the human rights of the East Timorese.

2002 Re: East Timor's Self-sufficiency

02.6.4.6 The Synod resolved:

Noting Assembly resolution 94.18.05 which called upon the Australian Government to recognise the right to self determination of the East Timorese people and noting the significant development needs of East Timor:

- (a) To request the Federal Government to ensure that East Timor receives sovereignty over all of the oil and natural gas deposits in the Timor Sea that it would be entitled to under the international law governing maritime boundaries;
- (b) To request the Federal Government to allow East Timor to have any maritime boundary dispute with Australia resolved through the International Court of Justice or the compulsory dispute resolution mechanisms of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- (c) To inform the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs of this resolution.

Economic Justice

1981 re: Economic Justice, Poverty

81.4.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To welcome the proposals for a national and ecumenical poverty awareness program in 1982, sponsored by the Anglican Commission on Social Responsibility, the Uniting Church Assembly Commission on Social Responsibility, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the Australian Council of Churches' Church and Society Commission, and other national church bodies.
- (b) To request the Division of Social Justice to keep Presbyteries and Parishes informed of the programme and to encourage them to provide support.

1984 re: Economic Justice, Poverty

84.4.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To adopt the Statement as set out in the Supplementary Report of the Division of Social Justice (para.4.2.2, page S/D4.15).
- (b) That the Synod express its support of, and participation in, the joint-church venture "A Fair Share" movement, in its call to the Australian Government and the Australian people to seek to shape policies which include:
 - (i) employment strategies for the sound creation of permanent jobs;
 - (ii) that the provision of adequate income security for all Australians;
 - (iii) fundamental taxation reform;
 - (iv) access to affordable housing for all.
- (c) To request Parishes to call upon members of the Church:
 - (i) to study the statement contained in the Supplementary Report of the Division of Social Justice (Para.4.2.2, page S/D4.15);
 - (ii) to examine their own attitudes and commitments in order that they may be open to the changes called for;
 - (iii) to enter actively into programs of support for those who are unemployed and to support actively the "A Fair Share" movement in its aims and programs.
- (d)
 - (i) To direct the Resources Commission, in consultation with the Division of Social Justice, to prepare a submission for the Priorities conference which critically analyses the financial and property resources held within the Synod of Victoria, which could be redirected to fulfilling the Synod's commitment to the "fair share" movement.
 - (ii) To direct the Synod Co-ordinating Commission to present specific proposals and projects to the 1985 Synod which will help Presbyteries and Parishes to direct their resources towards the fulfilling of the aims of the "A Fair Share" movement.

1985 re: Economic Justice, Poverty

85.4.6 The Synod resolved:

To request the Resources Commission to provide a grant of up to \$15,000 to the Joint Churches Action Group, A Fair Share Movement.

1985 re: Economic Justice, Poverty

85.77.1/7 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To submit the theological statement about poor people and the Gospel (see Report) to Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes for study so that as a Uniting Church we might struggle with its implications for our life and witness in the Australian community.
- (b) To urge parishes and congregations to develop ways to listen and identify with the poor and marginalized in their community and together struggle to discover the Good News and the Signs of the Kingdom.
- (c) To declare its belief that in a nation as wealthy as Australia, poverty should not and need not exist.
- (d) To call upon the various Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes to a re-examination of the Church's economic priorities and use of resources.
- (e) To urge the parishes, as a step in the journey towards economic justice, to set aside 2% of all income for projects aimed at eliminating poverty, both in Australia and the rest of the world.
- (f) To encourage the people of Australia, and Christians in particular, to respond to poverty by joining ecumenical initiatives on poverty.
- (g) To urge the Australian Government to ensure that poor and disadvantaged people, especially those dependent on Commonwealth benefits and pensions, are adequately represented at the tax summit, and other processes of consultation on issues of the economy, poverty or tax. That is:
 - (i) by representation in numbers which reflect their numbers in the Australian community;
 - (ii) by specific representation for specific groups, which include:
 - unemployed people
 - children
 - invalid pensioners
 - aged pensioners
 - single parents
 - Aborigines
 - recent refugees and migrants from Asia
 - recent refugees and migrants from Latin America;
 - (iii) such representation should include a high proportion of women, since more women than men are affected by poverty and are at risk of poverty.

1986 re: Economic Justice, Poverty

86.4.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To encourage parishes and presbyteries, in the light of the increasing inequity of the distribution of wealth within Australian society, to inform themselves about the distribution of wealth and its consequences, in order to engage in informed debate on economic and social policy.
- (b) To urge parishes and presbyteries to study the Commission on Social Responsibility's statement on Poverty and the Gospel.

1987 re: Economic Justice, Poverty

87.3.2.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Australian Government be requested, as a matter of urgency, to implement its longstanding commitment to establish a Wealth Inquiry.

1987 re: Economic Justice, Poverty, Aboriginal Affairs

87.4.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the theme for the 1988 Synod, including the Bible Studies, take seriously the history of Australian Aboriginal people, look penitently at the role of the missions of our Church in that history and enable the Church to move towards a more just and equal society.
- (b)
 - (i) To commend the Federal Minister for Social Security, the Rev. Brian Howe, for his work towards alleviating poverty in Australia by instituting the first review of more equitable pensions.
 - (ii) To assure Mr. Howe of its prayerful support of his work in the area of social security towards a more just and equal society.

1988 re: Economic Justice, Poverty

88.22.11/13The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To commend the paper "Economic Justice - the Equitable Distribution of Genuine Wealth" to all members of the Uniting Church for study.
- (b) To request Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes to offer responses to the Commission for Mission which would assist it in ongoing involvement in the debate about economic justice in Australia.
- (c) To call upon all members of the Uniting Church to work together for the elimination of poverty through a more equitable distribution of wealth, including access to services and resources.
- (d) To request the Australian Government and State governments to adopt social justice policies and strategies which:
 - (i) ensure the protection, development and equitable distribution of Australia's true wealth, giving serious consideration to the issues raised in the report "Economic Justice - the Equitable Distribution of Genuine Wealth";
 - (ii) discourage business development and government programs which maximize profits at the expense of such wealth;
 - (iii) recognize that privatisation is not simple a matter of current budgetary decisions, but

an issue of government responsibility for ensuring accessible services and equitable distribution of and access to wealth, and involving serious questions about the role of government in influencing the shape of Australian society;

- (iv) reform the taxation system in ways which will ensure that taxation becomes a means of redistributing income and wealth so that all people gain a more equitable share, and so that those on lower incomes do not bear a disproportionate percentage of the taxation burden.

1992 re: Economic Justice, Poverty

92.4.8.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To compliment the Catholic Bishops for their joint publication "Common Wealth for the Common Good".
- (b) That congregations be requested to study the Bishops' publication and the report "Economics and Faith" as described in par.2.5 (page B4.2) of the report of the Synod Commission for Mission.

1994 re: Economic Justice

94.5.2.1 The Synod resolved:

To make strong representation to the Victorian Government, urging that the devastating personal, social and economic effects of the closure without adequate consultation of transport services, schools and other government utilities and agencies be taken into account when formulating government policy.

1995 re: Economic Justice, National Competition Policy

95.6.9.6 The Synod resolved:

To communicate a note of caution to the Australian Government about adopting the National Competition policy as detailed in the "Hilmer Report" because of the need to balance economic, social and environmental goals.

1996 re: Economic Justice

96/25.4 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

- (a) to encourage presbyteries to run forums on issues of economic globalisation and the effects of international trade on the powerless and request the Commission for Mission to provide resources for such forums;
- (b) to urge the Federal Government to support the use of a "Social Clause" attached to trade arrangements to protect the rights of workers, including child workers, provided that:
 - (i) there is a well defined role for the International Labour Organisation in monitoring its implementation and highlighting breaches, and
 - (ii) there is a mechanism whereby unions and Non-Government Organisations can bring complaints of breaches by companies to the home government of the companies concerned for appropriate action.

1998 re: Privatisation of Water

98.5.8.1 The Synod resolved:

To express to the Victorian government its opposition to the possible privatisation of water supply in Victoria, and:

- (a) To request the Commission for Mission to undertake detailed research on the privatisation of water supply, including research into the experiences of other states in Australia and authorities overseas, with a view to informing the church, the wider community and the government of the known and potential consequences of the privatisation of water supply and paying particular regard to the theological, health and social aspects of the availability of clean safe water;
- (b) To request the government of Victoria to maintain the integrity of Victorian water catchment areas, so as to ensure the continued provision of water of excellent quality;
- (c) To request state and federal governments to continue research and development programs in the problems of salination in rural areas of Victoria and the nation.

1999 re: Jubilee 2000 Debt Relief Campaign (Report B2.29)

The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare its support for the Jubilee 2000 Debt Relief Campaign to conditionally cancel the unpayable component of Third World debts through a transparent process involving representatives of civil society.
- (b) To call on the Federal Government:
 - i. to support the Jubilee 2000 Campaign and to encourage other countries to do likewise,
 - ii. to do all in its power to ensure that the debt relief promised is not funded through cuts to aid budgets; and
 - iii. to cancel the \$5.7 million owed by Nicaragua to Australia and the unpayable components of other debts owed to Australia by developing countries.
- (c) To inform the Federal Treasurer, Mr Peter Costello, of this resolution.
- (d) To request that presbyteries and congregations continue to support the campaign.

Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue

2000 Relations with other Faiths

00.20.02 The Assembly resolved:

to encourage Congregations and groups to refer to and use the resources available on “Living with the neighbour who is different” and “So you want to worship together: Guidelines for multi-faith gatherings for members of the Uniting Church in Australia”;

2000 re: Roman Catholic/Uniting Church dialogue

00.35.02 The Assembly resolved:

to express its appreciation to the Roman Catholic Church/Uniting Church Dialogue group for their work in producing the report *Interchurch Marriage: their ecumenical challenge and significance for our Churches* and to commend it to all ministers and lay people, and especially to interchurch couples;

2000 re: The Lutheran Church of Australia

00.35.03 The Assembly resolved:

- (e) to approve the *Declaration of Mutual Recognition by the Uniting Church in Australia and the Lutheran Church of Australia*;
- (f) to welcome its potential for shared and co-operative ministry;
- (g) to refer it to Presbyteries for implementation;
- (h) to note that this approval is without prejudice to ongoing discussions on sexuality;

2000 re: Conciliarity and Episkope

00.35.04 The Assembly resolved:

to request the Standing Committee in consultation with Unity and International Mission to develop a process to re-examine the relationship between conciliarity and episkope in the context of international and national developments and of our dialogues with Anglican, Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches;

2003 re: Interfaith Religious Affairs

03.11 The Assembly resolved:

to request the Relations with Other Faiths Committee, working with the President and General Secretary, in consultation with the National Council of Churches in Australia and dialogue partners, to progress the development of a national interfaith advisory council to advocate to government on interfaith matters as they impact on domestic and foreign policy.

2006 Contribution to Christian-Muslim Relationships within Australia

06.21.03 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to note that many of the Uniting Church Partner Churches in Asia have significant experience in inter-religious dialogue and particularly Christian-Muslim relationships; and
- (b) to request UIM to develop a process with other relevant Assembly agencies to make these insights available to the Uniting Church in Australia.

Education

1977 re: Education

77.4.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To accept the principle that non-fee paying, community and other alternative schools should be established with public funds on the initiative of interested local bodies secular and non-secular.
- (b) That the Education Committee be requested to report to the next Synod as a means by which the principle may be brought into effect.

1978 re: Education

78.3.4 The Synod resolved:

That the Education Committee prepare a report and recommendation for discussion by Presbyteries and Synod of 1980 concerning the involvement of the Uniting Church in primary and secondary education in both Independent and State School systems.

1981 re: Education

81.4.5 The Synod resolved:

(The General Educational Policy of the Synod was resolved. Because of the length and detail of the resolution it has not been reprinted here. It is suggested that those interested refer to the Minutes of the 5th Synod 1981).

1982 re: Education

82.3.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To direct the Education Committee to establish a Task Group to:
 - 1. investigate the development of programs which would:
 - (i) encourage Church parents to involve themselves in the development of policy in the Schools to which they relate;
 - (ii) assist Parishes to consider an educational role in terms of informing members on educational matters so that they may participate knowledgeably in the development of policy in Schools with which they are concerned;
 - (iii) encourage Parishes to assist local communities through the provision of educational support for special needs such as those of the educationally disadvantaged - those with physical or emotional needs, the unemployed, migrants, aborigines, adult men and women, other groups against which the education system has discriminated;
 - 2. bring a report with recommendations, including an indication of the resources required to implement the recommendations, to the Standing Committee.

- (b) That, recognizing that the initiative for establishing of new schools related to the Uniting Church is, in general, the responsibility of Parishes and Presbyteries (Minute 81.4.5), a copy of the report of the Special Committee to this Synod, and any corresponding resolutions, be forwarded to Presbyteries and Parishes for their consideration and whatever action is considered appropriate.

1983 re: Education

83.4.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request Uniting Church Schools to make daily opportunity for staff to gather for worship.
- (b) To request Uniting Church Schools to develop programs with these guidelines:
- (i) Each student will individually choose a project for himself/herself.
 - (ii) Students are to learn about the project, make a personal contribution (time, effort, money) to it, and prepare a report on their involvement, thereby developing attitudes and patterns of selfless community participation.
 - (iii) Projects will be in community service or social justice, with Synod Divisions making suggestions if requested.
 - (iv) Each year different projects will be selected.

1990 re: Education

90.2.1.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the policy "Statement on Equity in Education" (as printed in the Supplementary Report of the Education Committee page S/C7.4), be adopted.
- (b) That the Victorian Government:
- (i) be advised of the Synod policy "Statement on Equity in Education".
 - (ii) be requested to provide guaranteed, on-going public funding to all schools for the fair implementation of the integration of children with intellectual, physical and psychological impairments and disabilities.
- (c) That the Australian Government
- (i) be advised of the Synod policy "Statement on Equity in Education";
 - (ii) be requested to institute an immediate review of existing educational programs for aboriginal people, particularly with regard to:
 - sufficient places for all children;
 - provision of fully-funded boarding facilities for all students where required;
 - (iii) be requested to give a lead to the States by providing funding and appropriate teaching materials to enable the teaching of aboriginal culture and history in all schools throughout Australia.
- (d) That the Assembly be requested to establish a national Education Committee to address the

issues of equity and justice in education with a view to producing a national statement on these and other issues.

- (e)
 - (i) That the Uniting Church schools and colleges within the Synod of Victoria be requested to develop strategies for implementing the Synod policy on Equity in Education and report progress to the Education Committee of the Synod by December 31, 1991
 - (ii) That the Education Committee be requested to report progress in terms of resolution (e)(i) hereof to the Synod 1992.
- (f) That a copy of Minute 90.2.1.1 be forwarded to each Uniting Church school and college within the Synod of Victoria and to all synods.

1991 re: Education

91.3.7.2/3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Victorian and Australian Governments be requested to fund additional places in both Higher Education and T.A.F.E. to meet the need for a higher participation rate in post-secondary education.
- (b) That the Victorian Government:
 - (i) be requested to increase support for the integration, within government and non-government schools, of students with disabilities;
 - (ii) be advised of the concern of the Synod at the cuts in the School Support Center services in schools.

1991 re: Education

91.3.7.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Education Committee be requested to investigate how the Uniting Church can best relate to ecumenical schools and report to Synod 1992.

1991 re: Education, Aboriginal Affairs

91.3.7.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm that, Aboriginal retention rates match those of the rest of the community, all Aboriginal students should be funded at level 12 irrespective of their geographic and/or social setting.
- (b) That the Australian Government be advised of resolution(a) hereof.

1993 re: Education

93.5.8.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To express to the Victorian Government its deep concern regarding the extent of funding and staff cuts to the state education system.
- (b) That the Victorian Government be requested to re-examine its education policy paying

special attention to the way in which its current economic policy is affecting the health of staff and the provision of quality education for children and young people.

- (c) That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to maintain contact with and pressure on the Victorian Government regarding the issues (a) and (b) hereof.

1993 re: Education, Aboriginal Affairs

93.5.8.7 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to seek information from the Victorian Government on:

- (a) The reasons for its refusal to sign the Triennial Agreement with the Commonwealth Government (1993-1995) on funding for Aboriginal education.
- (b) The Government's policy on permanency for positions in Koori education within the Directorate of School Education.
- (c) The current status of the document "Partnership in education - Koori Education Policy" (prepared February - March 1990).

1994 re: Education

94.5.1.2 The Synod resolved:

That in the light of 93.5.8.5, the Synod write to the Victorian Government expressing its continued deep concern at the consequences of the ongoing severe and excessive cutbacks in education spending, drawing particular attention to:

- (a) the Government's apparent unwillingness to consult with teacher union and parent groups;
- (b) the tendency for those students and schools which are already disadvantaged to suffer most from the loss of staff and programs;
- (c) the serious effects these cuts are having on the educational opportunities of students, and on the morale and health of a great number of professional teachers;
- (d) the potential for increased divisiveness between Government School Communities and Government subsidised private schools.

and stating:

that this Synod strongly affirms the value of free and public education as a right for all in the community, regardless of race, religion or socio-economic background.

Emergency Relief

1995 re: Emergency Relief, Unemployment

95.6.9.14 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To inform the Australian Government that this Synod is opposed to any reduction in funding for labour market programs as detailed in the 1994-95 Federal Budget.
- (b) To strongly urge the Australian Government to review its decision to reduce emergency relief funds in Victoria by \$1,153,290.00.

Employment

1979 re: Employment

79.2.7 The Synod resolved:

To note with appreciation the summary (p.112) of the Report entitled "Disadvantaged Workers and Employment: Policies, Programs and Jobs," prepared by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence and commissioned by the Victorian Social Welfare Department (now called "Community Welfare Services"), and commend it to Presbyteries, Parishes, groups and individuals in the Uniting Church, for consideration and, where possible, action.

1997 re: Injured Workers

97.6.6.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That all workers in Victoria should have access to a fair and just rehabilitation and compensation system which includes:
 - (i) access to common law damages where an injury has been caused by employer negligence;
 - (ii) access to the general practitioner of their choice for the ongoing management of their illness/injury; and
 - (iii) access to a court of law if conciliation between the worker and the Work Cover insurer does not resolve a dispute.
- (b) To notify the Hon. Roger Hallam, Minister for Finance and Gaming, the Opposition spokesperson on Work Cover, the Hon. Theo Theophanous, the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Trades Hall Council of the above resolution.
- (c) To request congregations to observe an annual commemoration, on the last Sunday in October, of workers who died of work-related illnesses, or injuries from work-related or workplace accidents with appropriate prayers and/or liturgies.
- (c) To encourage Uniting Church people who as workers or employers have stories of their experiences with work-related illnesses or injuries, or of the death of workers, to participate in a Year of Listening project facilitated by the Commission for Mission.

2001 Re: Uniting Church as Employer

01.6.4.4 The Synod resolved:

To adopt the principles included in the document titled 'Uniting Church as Employer'.

2006 Re: Integrity and Justice in Employment Relationships

06.20.02 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to affirm that all people are entitled to just remuneration and equitable conditions of employment in their working lives, and dignity in unemployment;
- (b) to note the Inaugural Assembly's 1977 Statement to the Nation, which committed the Church "to challenge values which emphasise acquisitiveness and greed in disregard of the needs

- of others and which encourage a higher standard of living for the privileged in the face of the daily widening gap between the rich and poor”;
- (c) to affirm Assembly Resolution 91.14.17 which stated that trade unions are of importance in the overall democratic process and play a role in protecting those who are vulnerable in society, and to remind members of its statement that “synods, Assembly agencies, and other Church bodies be requested to encourage employees to join and be active in an appropriate trade union and/or professional association”;
 - (d) to affirm the importance of bearing witness to the Uniting Church’s public role in the life of the nation by conducting our actions as an employer in line with our public affirmations of principle;
 - (e) to request the Assembly Standing Committee to appoint a task group to progress the development of a national approach in the area of just and ethical employment within the Uniting Church by
 - a. convening a consultation among the synods and Assembly to
 - i. share together the way in which each is seeking to ensure that their employment practices are consistent with Uniting Church statements on the role of employers and the rights of employees,
 - ii. consider identifying minimum expectations of employing bodies in the church and/or guidelines by which the employment practices of the church may be measured against our commitment to social justice principles and our public statements on the role of employers and the rights of employees;
 - iii. determine an appropriate timeframe for this undertaking, taking into account the immediate need created by the entry into effect of the *WorkChoices* legislation in March 2006; and
 - b. reporting to the ASC on the results of the consultation and related actions and bringing any recommendations for further action.

Energy

1978 re: Energy, Environment - General

78.5.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To instruct Synod Agencies and Divisions as follows:
 - (i) when new buildings are being planned, to ensure that they are designed so that maximum efficiency in the use of energy is achieved;
 - (ii) to provide insulation for all residences owned by the Synod;
 - (iii) to consider seriously the installation of solar water heaters in all residences.
- (b) To request Presbyteries that they recommend to Parish Councils that:
 - (i) all new buildings be designed to ensure maximum efficiency in the use of energy;
 - (ii) insulation be provided in all manses; and
 - (iii) the installation of solar water heaters in manses be considered seriously.
- (c) That the Standing Committee be requested to appoint a Committee on Solar Energy to be related to one of the Divisions.
- (d) That the advice of the Synod Committee on Solar Energy be sought in relation to 4(c) and 5(c) above.
- (e) To recommend to church members that they give serious consideration to setting a personal/family goal to reduce their consumption of domestic energy resources - oil, gas, electricity, petrol, etc. - by at least 10% in 1979.

1979 re: Energy, Environment - General

79.2.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To commend the "Statement on Energy" for discussion within Presbyteries and Parishes, and request that comments be forwarded to the Division of Social Justice.
- (b) To reaffirm the resolutions of Synod 1978 in relation to the provision of insulation and solar hot water services in manses and new buildings.
- (c) To request the Division of Resources to provide funds for incidental expenses of the Committee on Solar Energy for 1979 and 1980.

1980 re: Energy, Environment - General

80.2.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To call upon the State Government immediately to instruct the S.E.C. to pursue policies which will not necessitate the introduction of nuclear power into Victoria.
- (b) To call upon the State Government to amend the S.E.C. Act so that nuclear power will not be an option for the future.

- (c) To advise the State Government of its concern with the agreement which the State Government has made with Alcoa in relation to the building of an aluminum smelter at Portland, because the project will take such large quantities of electricity that it may provide a justification for the establishment of a nuclear power plant in Victoria.
- (d) To inform the State Government that it questions the wisdom of the proposal to establish coal liquefaction plants in the Latrobe Valley, because of the environmental problems and the rapid depletion of brown coal reserves, thus providing a possible justification for the introduction of nuclear power for electricity production in Victoria.
- (e) To call on the State Government to encourage the development of decentralized energy systems using renewable sources, and to introduce measures by which industries, as well as households, may be encouraged to conserve energy from fossil fuels.
- (f) To request, as a matter of urgency, at all levels of the Church's life, the study and discussion of the use of energy and to encourage participation of members in community discussion and debate, making use of resources available from the Division of Social Justice.

1980 re: Energy, Environment - General

80.4.2 The Synod resolved:

That as a matter of policy all new buildings approved for construction by, or for, the Uniting Church or any of its agencies be designed and constructed incorporating the best available low-energy technology.

1981 re: Energy, Environment - General

81.2.3 The Synod resolved:

To direct the Board of Property and Finance:

- (a) to instruct the Architectural Panel:
 - (i) to investigate the impact of continued rises in the cost of energy upon the economic viability of the application of solar energy to the heating of manses and church buildings.
 - (ii) to liaise to the fullest possible extent with the Division of Social Justice.
- (b) to report to Parish Councils, relevant Divisions and Committees of Synod, in relation to (a)(i) above.

1981 re: Energy, Environment - General

81.4.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To note recent encouraging developments in the fields of basic and applied research into alternative sources of energy, and, in particular, solar energy developments at the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney.
- (b) To request the Division of Social Justice to enquire into viable practical application of these continuing developments, and bring such information and/or recommendations to appropriate Councils of the Church, with a view to the Church providing community leadership in their use, as a means of conserving God's creation.

1981 re: Energy, Environment - General

81.5.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Division of Resources to provide resources of up to \$1000 in 1982 to enable the Solar Energy Committee to fulfill its responsibilities.
- (b) To direct the Division of Social Justice to include the expenditure of this Committee in its application for appropriation from the Synod Budget in 1983 and future years.

1993 re: Energy, Environment - General

93.5.1.8-10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That parishes and agencies be requested to study the booklet "Work Greenhouse Saver" published by the Victorian Government Office of the Environment with a view to implementing energy saving measures.
- (b) That parishes and agencies managing Uniting Church property be requested to conduct energy audits of church buildings, including manses.
- (c) That parishes and agencies be requested, when installing or replacing hot water systems in residences, to give serious consideration to the installation of solar hot water systems.

1999 re: Energy Audit

99.4.4 The Synod resolved:

Having genuine concern for the effect of increased greenhouse gas emissions on global climates and the need to use renewable but less polluting energy sources:

- (a) To direct that an energy audit be done by December 1999 of Synod buildings at 130 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, and at the corner of Cotham Road and Highbury Grove, Kew, to ascertain their efficiency with regard to electricity consumption;
- (b) To request the General Secretary, in consultation with the Commission for Mission, to investigate options for reducing electricity consumption, and report, with recommendations to the Standing Committee; and
- (c) To request the General Secretary to consider the feasibility of purchasing through Eco Power, a green power scheme administered through Citi Power, or some similar scheme.

2002 Re: Energy - Kyoto

02.6.4.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To call on the Federal Government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.
- (b) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to work with at least five congregations to develop ways of reducing their energy consumption and report to the 2004 Synod about the progress made.

Environment - General

1977 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

77.4.12 The Synod resolved:

(a) That the first Synod of the Uniting Church in Victoria does not feel free to be silent about a most important issue which is now before the Australian nation: the matter of the mining and exporting of uranium.

- (i) Christ's disciples are called to be "the salt of the earth" and a "city on a mountain" by what they are among themselves and also in their concern for the world. They have heard Christ's commandment to love God and their neighbour and they are called to obey Him in His Lordship over God's creation and his protest against all forces that endanger and damage it.

They look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, indeed a new universe that glorifies God's name, a universe where all that is receives God's gracious gifts in harmony, abundance, safety and security.

- (ii) In this context the Uniting Church feels constrained to express concern about the policy of the Australian government to mine and export uranium.

The Uniting Church wants to speak to its own membership and to the nation, to all men and women, irrespective of their political affiliation.

1. We do not share a popular belief in the inevitability of the use of uranium as a source of energy. Many people argue that the world has entered the nuclear age - that a number of nations are mining and exporting uranium, making handsome profits and also serving the world in its energy needs. They argue that we in Australia cannot put the clock back; that we should not stay behind in the development of the world. We do not share such a belief. We do believe that Australia and the world need a thorough study of the energy problem in its totality in connection with our standards of life; and the glaring differences in the use of energy in the wealthier and poorer parts of the world.

2. We do not share the optimistic belief in man as a being who could overcome all the risks connected with the use of nuclear energy if he only set his mind to it. We have witnessed in our century that man can become a dangerous monster, led by demonic forces to destroy humanity. There are no absolute safeguards against the use of uranium and its waste products for destructive purposes.

3. We share the widely held anxiety in regard to the dangers of waste products - plutonium and others. We feel that present-day generations have no right at all to impose on future ones the enormous cost of human resources to care for the wastes and obsolete installations they leave behind them, to say nothing of the continuous risks this involves.

The 20th century is already, in many respects, bearing the burden of guilty decisions and attitudes of former periods of history. We must not increase that burden.

The life-style of the wealthier parts of the world would only be prolonged for a very small period of time, without helping the under-developed nations to have the bare necessities of life.

- (iii) The above mentioned concerns are only a few of the many reasons which make us believe that it is the primary duty of the Australian Government to continue studying

the use and possible mis-use of uranium as a source of energy.

We plead for the Government to pause again on the decision to mine and export uranium. It should try to involve the whole nation at all levels in the study and discussion of these problems.

The uranium issue is a matter of life and death. It must not become a matter of party-politics; the nation as a whole is responsible.

In this context we believe in the right of every man and woman, young and old, to express an opinion in this matter in public. Endeavours to limit or suppress public demonstrations can only create explosive situations. "Children should obey their parents, but parents should not provoke their children to anger".

- (b) That members of the Synod and members of the Uniting Church in Victoria be requested:
- (i) to study material produced by the Australian Council of Churches, the Commission for World Mission, and the Northern Synod concerning the ethical and social issues involved; the effect on Aboriginal communities and the future implications of the decision to mine and export uranium.
 - (ii) to respond by continuing participation in the public debate, and as individuals to take appropriate action according to the request of the Australian Council of Churches, the Commission for World Mission and the Northern Synod.
 - (iii) to responsibly review our use of personal and church resources and lower our standard of living;
 - (iv) to convey to the Government that we believe no mining of uranium should take place in Australia for a five year period from the publication of the second part of the Fox report.
- (c)
- (i) That resolutions (a) to (b) be forwarded to the leaders of all Federal political parties, and to the Premiers of the various States, and their responses be sought in writing;
 - (ii) that the replies received be published in "Church and Nation" with the consent of the Editor.

1977 re: Environment - General, Solar Heating

77.5.14 The Synod resolved:

To appoint an Ad Hoc Committee on Solar Heating to advise the Church on the use of solar heating in manses.

1978 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

78.5.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To reaffirm the statement of the 1977 Synod on the mining and export of uranium.
- (b) To remind the Federal Government of the recommendations of the first report of the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, viz.
 - (i) to take immediate steps to institute full and energetic programs of research and development into alternative energy resources; and
 - (ii) that there be a national program for energy conservation.

- (c) To request the Government to implement these resolutions as a matter of urgency.

1978 re: Environment - General, Energy

78.5.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To instruct Synod Agencies and Divisions as follows:
- (i) when new buildings are being planned, to ensure that they are designed so that maximum efficiency in the use of energy is achieved;
 - (ii) to provide insulation for all residences owned by the Synod;
 - (iii) to consider seriously the installation of solar water heaters in all residences.
- (b) To request Presbyteries that they recommend to Parish Councils that:
- (i) all new buildings be designed to ensure maximum efficiency in the use of energy;
 - (ii) insulation be provided in all manses; and
 - (iii) the installation of solar water heaters in manses be considered seriously.
- (c) That the Standing Committee be requested to appoint a Committee on Solar Energy to be related to one of the Divisions.
- (d) That the advice of the Synod Committee on Solar Energy be sought in relation to 4(c) and 5(c) above.
- (e) To recommend to church members that they give serious consideration to setting a personal/family goal to reduce their consumption of domestic energy resources - oil, gas, electricity, petrol, etc. - by at least 10% in 1979.

1979 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

79.26 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) receive the statement on uranium;
- (b) print the statement; and
- (c) refer the statement to Synods and Presbyteries.

1979 re: Environment - General, Energy

79.2.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To commend the "Statement on Energy" for discussion within Presbyteries and Parishes, and request that comments be forwarded to the Division of Social Justice.
- (b) To reaffirm the resolutions of Synod 1978 in relation to the provision of insulation and solar hot water services in manses and new buildings.
- (c) To request the Division of Resources to provide funds for incidental expenses of the Committee on Solar Energy for 1979 and 1980.

1980 re: Environment - General, Energy

80.2.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To call upon the State Government immediately to instruct the S.E.C. to pursue policies which will not necessitate the introduction of nuclear power into Victoria.
- (b) To call upon the State Government to amend the S.E.C. Act so that nuclear power will not be an option for the future.
- (c) To advise the State Government of its concern with the agreement which the State Government has made with Alcoa in relation to the building of an aluminum smelter at Portland, because the project will take such large quantities of electricity that it may provide a justification for the establishment of a nuclear power plant in Victoria.
- (d) To inform the State Government that it questions the wisdom of the proposal to establish coal liquefaction plants in the Latrobe Valley, because of the environmental problems and the rapid depletion of brown coal reserves, thus providing a possible justification for the introduction of nuclear power for electricity production in Victoria.
- (e) To call on the State Government to encourage the development of decentralized energy systems using renewable sources, and to introduce measures by which industries, as well as households, may be encouraged to conserve energy from fossil fuels.
- (f) To request, as a matter of urgency, at all levels of the Church's life, the study and discussion of the use of energy and to encourage participation of members in community discussion and debate, making use of resources available from the Division of Social Justice.

1980 re: Environment - General, Energy

80.4.2 The Synod resolved:

That as a matter of policy all new buildings approved for construction by, or for, the Uniting Church or any of its agencies be designed and constructed incorporating the best available low-energy technology.

1981 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

81.4.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Board of Property and Finance act as follows:
 - (i) By Synod 1982, dispose of any shares, debentures, stock or notes or any other marketable security held by the Board, being an investment of the Common Fund or the specific investment of any other fund held by the Board, which represent an investment in any company whereby any part of the business of that company as at October 1981, is engaged in the actual mining of uranium or a substantial part of the business of that company as at October 1981, is involved in the processing, export, transport, transshipment or handling of uranium or its derivatives.
 - (ii) To report to the Standing Committee by June 1982, the action being taken pursuant to the above resolution including any capital profits or losses which may have resulted from its actions, and whether the board considers that all companies believed to be involved in the uranium industry, and whose marketable securities were held by the Board, are being suitably researched and the necessary action being taken in terms of the above resolution.

- (iii) To refrain immediately from the purchase of new securities, extensions to present holdings, or option of rights to any marketable security in any company involved in the uranium industry as defined in resolution (i).
- (b) That any company, as defined in resolution (i), whose sole business involvement in the handling of uranium, or its derivatives, is in the area of medical research or for medical purposes, be exempted from action under resolution (a).
- (c)
 - (i) That a Task Group of seven persons be established to carry out an investigation of all companies whose marketable securities are held within the Common Fund or any other fund held by the Board, to ascertain their involvement through financing or secondary investment or otherwise in any way whatsoever in any company which is deemed to be involved with the uranium industry, and to bring a report of such third party involvement in the uranium industry to Synod 1983.
 - (ii) That the Task group comprise three members appointed by the Property and Finance, one of whom shall act as Convener, two members appointed by the Division of Resources, and two members appointed by the Division of Social Justice.
- (d) To encourage all members, agencies, institutions of the Uniting Church to study their involvement through financial investment in the uranium and nuclear industries, in the light of the decisions of this Synod, and to act accordingly.
- (e) To urge strongly the Federal Government to review and reconsider its stated intention of transferring the control and operation of the uranium and nuclear industries to individual State Governments of this country.

1981 re: Environment - General, Energy

81.2.3 The Synod resolved:

To direct the Board of Property and Finance:

- (a) to instruct the Architectural Panel:
 - (i) to investigate the impact of continued rises in the cost of energy upon the economic viability of the application of solar energy to the heating of manses and church buildings.
 - (ii) to liaise to the fullest possible extent with the Division of Social Justice.
- (b) to report to Parish Councils, relevant Divisions and Committees of Synod, in relation to (a)(i) above.

1981 re: Environment - General, Energy

81.4.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To note recent encouraging developments in the fields of basic and applied research into alternative sources of energy, and, in particular, solar energy developments at the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney.
- (b) To request the Division of Social Justice to enquire into viable practical application of these continuing developments, and bring such information and/or recommendations to appropriate Councils of the Church, with a view to the Church providing community leadership in their use, as a means of conserving God's creation.

1981 re: Environment - General, Energy

81.5.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Division of Resources to provide resources of up to \$1000 in 1982 to enable the Solar Energy Committee to fulfill its responsibilities.
- (b) To direct the Division of Social Justice to include the expenditure of this Committee in its application for appropriation from the Synod Budget in 1983 and future years.

1982 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

82.56 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) note the following resolution adopted by the Standing Committee of the Synod of Victoria:
 - (i) that an amount equivalent to the profits of the sale of E.R.A. shares in November, 1980, be transferred to the Commission on Social Responsibility for establishment of a Nuclear Action Fund;
 - (ii) that the terms of reference for this fund be as follows:

Grants to be supplied to projects of an educational nature on the issues of the Nuclear Disarmament Debate and the Nuclear Fuel Cycle including the debate on Uranium Mining in Australia and support for Aboriginal people most directly affected by uranium mining;
 - (iii) that grants from the fund be available to both Church and community groups;
 - (iv) to request the Commission on Social Responsibility to appoint a committee, comprising no fewer than three persons, to authorize the disbursements from this fund, which is to be held within the Assembly Fund, and to report annually to the Commission;
- (b) establish the Fund as proposed and request the Commission to:
 - (i) encourage further contributions from Synods and individuals; and
 - (ii) operate the Fund in accordance with the above resolution.

1982 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

82.2.8 The Synod resolved:

To support the concept of declaring Victoria a zone free of the mining of uranium, the processing of fissionable material, the storage, transport and waste disposal of fissionable material, and inform the Victorian and Federal Governments accordingly.

1982 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

82.5.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To endorse the action of the Task Group in carrying out its work under the minutes of 1981 Synod.

The identification of eight levels of involvement as follows:

- (i) Companies solely engaged in uranium mining;
- (ii) Companies directly engaged in uranium mining as part of their total operations;
- (iii) Companies holding a substantial or controlling interest in a company in categories (i) and (ii);
- (iv) Companies providing services to companies involved in uranium mining e.g. banking, insurance, transport;
- (v) Companies supplying capital equipment to companies involved in uranium mining;
- (vi) Companies having an indirect involvement with the uranium industry not identified in any one of the above categories;
- (vii) Companies providing ancillary services to communities established at uranium centers;
- (viii) Companies with no identifiable involvement in the uranium industry.

The classification of companies within the Synod Portfolio according to the above levels of involvement.

- (b) That the Synod cease to hold shares in companies as described in the first three categories listed above:
 - (i) Companies engaged solely in uranium mining;
 - (ii) Companies directly engaged in uranium mining as part of their total operations;
 - (iii) Companies holding a substantial or controlling interest in a company in categories (i) and (ii).
- (c) That the task of reviewing the Uniting Church portfolio be the responsibility of the Investment Review Committee established by the Resources Commission.
- (d) That the Task Group be thanked and discharged.

1985 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

85.78.1/3 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To receive the Statement on Uranium as a basis for discussion.
- (b) To request the Commission on Social Responsibility to print the Statement, without the final paragraph on Disobedience, and appropriate study material.
- (c) To encourage Congregations, Parishes and Presbyteries to study the Statement, to initiate more informed debate in the community, and to keep the Commission on Social Responsibility informed of their work on this issue.

1986 re: Environment - General

86.5.4.1 The Synod resolved:

That the Resources Commission be requested to study mud brick construction for buildings and the financial, social and environmental advantages of that form of construction, and report back to Synod 1987.

1991 re: Environment - General

91.14.18 The Assembly resolved:

To adopt the resolution on the rights of nature and the rights of future generations, which is printed as Section 40 of the Commission for Mission report, with the amendment proposed in the body of the report (paragraph 36:22).

1992 re: Environment - General

92.4.8.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the use of disposable drinking cups be abolished at future Synod functions to be replaced by suitable alternatives for example:
 - (i) the provision of reusable cups;
 - (ii) participants providing their own cups;
 - (iii) the availability by purchase of reusable cups at the function.
- (b) That participants at the 1993 Synod be encouraged to provide their own reusable cups.
- (c) That parishes and presbyteries be encouraged to reduce the use of disposable cups, and to make known to their members any consequent cost benefits and waste reductions.

1993 re: Environment - General, Energy

93.5.1.8-10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That parishes and agencies be requested to study the booklet "Work Greenhouse Saver" published by the Victorian Government Office of the Environment with a view to implementing energy saving measures.
- (b) That parishes and agencies managing Uniting Church property be requested to conduct energy audits of church buildings, including manses.
- (c) That parishes and agencies be requested, when installing or replacing hot water systems in residences, to give serious consideration to the installation of solar hot water systems.

1993 re: Environment - General

93.5.8.2 The Synod resolved:

That the General Secretary, presbyteries, parishes and agencies of the Synod be requested to review their practices of purchasing paper, with the goal of purchasing 90% of their paper requirements from environmentally preferred sources by 1995.

1994 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

94.4.2.11/12 The Synod resolved:

To reaffirm its opposition to the mining and export of uranium.

To urge the Federal Government to resist attempts to abandon the existing "three mine" policy of the Australian Labor Party so that new mines may be allowed to operate.

1996 re: Environment - General, Uranium Mining

96.6.4.13 The Synod resolved:

To inform the Federal Government of its disappointment and opposition to their decision to abandon the existing "three mine" policy of the previous Federal Government in order to establish new uranium mines in areas including National Parks, World Heritage Areas and aboriginal owned land.

2003 re: Tuvalu and the impact of Global Warming

03.18.01 The Assembly resolved:

- (a)
 - (i) to call on the Australian government to immediately sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocols in relation to global warming, especially because this has affected the nation of Tuvalu and other Pacific countries;
 - (ii) to call on the Australian government to offer the guarantee of special immigration status to the people of Tuvalu, for immigration to Australia when their nation loses its viability for human habitation;
- (b) to express our solidarity with the Christian Church of Tuvalu in this predicament and to call on our people to remember the people and church of Tuvalu in their prayers

2004 Re: Forests

04.4.4.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) Noting that the Rights of Nature and Rights of Future Generations adopted by the Assembly in 1991 and the Synod of Tasmania in 2001 stated that future generations have a right to a rich plant and animal world, abundant nature, healthy air, clean and sufficient waters and to healthy woodland, and that the Rights of Nature and Rights of Future Generations also stated that rare ecosystems be placed under absolute protection,
 - (i) To declare that forests should be respected for all their values; including economic, biodiversity, water filtration, habitat, oxygen production, carbon storage, natural beauty and recreation opportunities;
 - (ii) To affirm that as long as timber and wood products are used by our society, Australia has a need for its own timber and wood product industries;
 - (iii) To recognise that timber and wood products are often more environmentally friendly than alternatives;
 - (iv) To support the key principles on which the Regional Forest Agreements have been developed, including the Comprehensive Adequate Representational reserves which seek to protect as a minimum all rare or depleted old growth forest types and all rare or endangered Ecological Vegetation Classes;

- (v) To call on the Australian Government to:
 - work with other governments in the Asia-Pacific region (especially those of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Malaysia) to end illegal logging activities;
 - only allow the importation of certified timber and wood products, certified under internationally recognised schemes such as that of the Forest Stewardship Council or the Pan-European Forestry Council;
- (vi) To call on the Victorian and Tasmanian Governments to include all log volumes taken from forests into the sustainable yield volumes, including pulp log volumes;
- (vii) Whilst acknowledging the recent announcements of the Tasmanian Government on reforms to the transparency and independence of the regulation of forestry in that state, to call on the Tasmanian Government:
 - to adhere to the environmental benchmarks in the State Government initiated “Tasmania Together” process, which included an end to clear felling in areas of high conservation value old-growth forest by 1 January 2003 and cessation all clear felling in old-growth forests by 2010;
 - noting the finding under the National Competition Policy review in 2001 that “separation of policy, regulatory and commercial function of the industry is still minimal, at best”, to replace the current system of regulation of the forestry industry, with a truly independent regulator; and
 - to make forestry activities in Tasmania as transparent and open to public scrutiny and appeal as is reasonably possible, including being subject to Freedom of Information legislation and other appropriate legislation contained within the Resource Management and Planning Scheme for Tasmania;
- (viii) To request that presbyteries and congregations seek:
 - to provide an appropriate pastoral role to those involved in forest industries, dependent on forest industries and to environmentalists; and
 - take practical steps to bring healing between those in conflict over the future of the forests;
- (ix) To request presbyteries, congregations, agencies, schools and members
 - to consider the environmental impacts of timber and wood products (including paper), which may include the use of recycled paper, use of recycled timber, and use of timber and wood products from plantations; and
 - to seek through the use of informational resources to be produced by the Commission for Mission to reduce the use of timber and wood products where such reduction is reasonably possible and will have a net environmental benefit, taking into account the amount of energy used in the manufacture of other materials and their environmental impacts.
- (b) To write to the Premiers and Leaders of the Opposition in Victoria and Tasmania to inform them of this resolution.

2006 re: Global Warming and its Impact on Pacific Nations

06.21.04 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to reaffirm the decision of the Tenth Assembly (Minute 03.18.01) which called on the Australian Government to ratify the Kyoto Protocols in relation to global warming because of the impact of rising sea levels on the nations of the Pacific; and
- (b) to call upon the people of the Uniting Church to adopt lifestyles which have a minimal impact on global warming.

2007 re: Climate Change

07.4.37.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To call on the Australian Federal Government to honour its obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by:

- (i) Taking a lead in targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as a developed country, agreeing to an emission reduction target of at least 30% by 2020, based on 1990 emission levels, if other developed countries agree to make similar commitments;
 - (ii) Assisting developing countries to adapt to climate change, providing additional funding to achieve this outcome rather than using existing overseas aid;
 - (iii) Providing technical and financial assistance to developing countries to adopt technologies to assist them in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions without reducing their ability to meet the necessary development needs of their people; and
 - (iv) Continuing to assist developing countries in addressing deforestation with the promotion of sustainable forest management and the need to reward developing countries that preserve existing forest estates.
- (b) To call on the Federal, Victorian and Tasmanian Governments to work collaboratively:
- (i) To commit to binding greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 20% by 2020 and at least 60% by 2050, based on 1990 emission levels;
 - (ii) To set a target to stabilise and then reduce residential, industrial and government per capita electricity consumption with supporting legislation and programs, with the inclusion of measures to ensure that low-income people will still have access to affordable electricity; (iii) to increase the Renewable Energy Target to 10% by 2010;
 - (iv) To provide financial incentives for households to take up renewable energy;
 - (v) To mandate the requirement for new building stock to have gasboosted solar hot water systems wherever possible and appropriate in Australia; and
 - (vi) To implement programs to rapidly increase the uptake of gasboosted solar hot water systems in existing building stock; (c) To write to the Australian Prime Minister, the Federal Minister for the Environment, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for the Environment, the Premiers and Ministers for the Environment in Victoria and Tasmania to inform them of this resolution; and
- (d) To request that all congregations and bodies associated with the Uniting Church take immediate steps to comply with past Synod resolutions regarding reducing energy usage and energy efficiency and take all reasonable further steps to minimise their own greenhouse gas emissions.

Equal Opportunity

1985 re: Equal Opportunity, Homosexuality, Discrimination

85.2.1 The Synod resolved:

To call upon all political parties in Victoria to support an amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act to ensure that individual homosexual citizens are not discriminated against in employment, housing or the provision of goods and services solely on the grounds of their homosexuality.

Note: The following members asked that their dissent from the motion be recorded - Mrs. C. Coulter, Rev. R.L. Maddigan, Rev. K.H. Moorhead, Rev. R.C. Outhred, Mr. J.H. Strickland, Mr. H. Trevenen.

1992 re: Equal Opportunity, Discrimination

92.4.8.2 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested:

- (i) to consider the issue of the perceived inconsistency of the acceptance by the Uniting Church of exemption from equal opportunity and discrimination provisions of state legislation whilst taking an active role in opposing acts of discrimination, and
- (ii) to report, with recommendations, to Synod 1993.

1993 re: Equal Opportunity, Discrimination

93.5.1.1-3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm that persons should not be discriminated against on the basis of their gender, marital status, disability, race or age in matters of employment, education, church membership or access to accommodation and other services provided by the Uniting Church in Australia.
- (b) That all presbyteries, parishes and agencies be advised of the above resolution.
- (c)
 - (i) To support the maintenance of Clause 38 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984, in order to protect the freedom of religious groups to practise their beliefs.
 - (ii) That the Victorian Government be informed of resolution (i) hereof.

1994 re: Equal Opportunity, Homosexuality, Discrimination

94.3.3.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod request the Commonwealth Government to enact anti-discrimination legislation prohibiting discrimination against gay men and lesbians in areas of housing, employment, education and the provision of goods and services.
- (b) That the Synod request the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to initiate public enquiries into the nature and extent of public violence and abuse directed at lesbians and gay men in Australia.

Ethical Investment

1977 re: Ethical Investment

77.2.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Division of Resources to draw up guidelines to ensure that the investment policy of the church is an expression of the Gospel.
- (b) That the Guidelines be submitted to the Standing Committee for approval.
- (c) That the Board of Administration, Property and Finance be requested to examine the Church's investment in the light of the approved guidelines and to take whatever action the Board may consider necessary in the light of such guidelines.
- (d) That a committee comprising six persons be formed to advise on the possibility of allotting some of the Church's financial resources toward community self help projects such as credit unions, and report to the Division of Resources.
- (e) That the Nominating Committee take nominations for the committee to the Synod Standing Committee for appointment.

1977 re: Ethical Investment

77.5.16 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the purpose and work of the Division of Social Justice be extended to include the purpose and work of the former Mission and Investment Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, viz:
 - (i) To promote an understanding of the nature and effects of investment policies and practices, and of the responsibilities of the church, its agencies, committees and members in this field;
 - (ii) To co-ordinate action for the church in liaison with other committees and agencies of the church in the area of corporate responsibility, including the use of:
 - shareholder power as defined by Australian Company Law;
 - enquiry and research on specific aspects of corporate responsibility;
 - communication with corporations on specific issues.
 - (iii) To establish contact with and support research groups who are contributing to a clearer understanding of corporations both in Australia and overseas and establish contact with similar groups in other countries.
- (b) That the Division of Social Justice take up and continue work on the issues being pursued by the former Presbyterian Mission and Investment Committee at the date of union.

1981 re: Ethical Investment

81.5.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the investment policy of the Church should be based on the biblical and theological understanding of the nature of the church.
- (b) To refer the question of divestment of certain classes of investment to the Resources

1982 re: Ethical Investment

82.55 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) recognize the need for the agencies of the Uniting church to re-examine their investments to ensure that they reflect as far as possible the type of society it seeks to foster. Therefore when the Assembly or its agencies hold or make investments they give consideration to issues of concern about the environment and injustice.

In examining investments, Agencies of the Uniting Church should take into account unacceptable levels of social injury which may result from activities which:

- unnecessarily pollute the air or water;
 - excessively destroy or waste non-recurring resources;
 - unnecessarily or excessively change the environment or fail to improve the environment if there is an opportunity to do so concurrently with other activity;
 - create goods or services which will have harmful effects on humans and the environment, and such harmful effects cannot be avoided by prudent and practical controls;
 - damage the health of human beings;
 - contribute to the serious inhibition of human rights (in Australia and overseas);
 - result in discrimination in employment, advertising or education on basis of race or sex;
 - fraudulently market or deceitfully advertise the products or the activities;
 - entice the poor into financial over-commitment;
 - exploit underprivileged persons by providing low wages and poor working conditions;
 - enable or encourage the evasion or avoidance of payment of income tax;
 - create or perpetuate excessive reliance on militarism;
 - engage in the manufacture of armaments or similar means of mass destruction.
- 2) request its agencies to examine all the investments held by them to determine whether any investment contravenes these criteria.
- 3) request the Assembly Commission on Social Responsibility to consult with other Assembly Agencies concerning the employment of the investment criteria indicated above.
- 4) encourage Synods and their Agencies to consider these criteria and to commence and/or continue development and implementation of guidelines for investments and to consult with the Commission.

1992 re: Ethical Investment

92.2.2.4 The Synod resolved:

That the Resources Commission be requested to determine whether the Synod should retain its share in BHP in view of BHP's purchase of 32% of Foster's Brewing Company.

2003 Re: Synod Ethical Investment Policy

03.3.7.1 The Synod resolved:

To adopt the following revised Ethical Investment Policy:

Preamble

At its simplest, all Christian discipleship is a response to Christ's 'great commandment' to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. (Matthew 22: 34-40)

The Church, in its worship and mission, including its investment policies and practices, seeks to bear witness to God's love for that which God has created; to support that which enhances life and to resist that which diminishes life.

Positively, the love commandment will motivate the Church, where possible, to invest its financial resources in areas which promote human welfare, dignity and respect, and the general good.

Negatively, this perspective will proscribe investment in enterprises whose products or practices cause or perpetuate injustice and suffering, infringe fundamental human rights or cause unacceptable damage to the natural environment.

Love of neighbour extends to caring for the natural environment which supports our neighbours' life; and it extends in time to those who come after us - and so long term considerations will also come into decisions relating to investments.

Our theological tradition teaches that we live in a world where God's intention that we live in love, peace and justice has been distorted. Accordingly, our choices are rarely pure or unambiguously good and true. Choices made in good faith are often a careful weighing up of 'the greater good' or the 'lesser of evils'. Such processes will inevitably be part of the context of investment choices.

Investment Process

The investment process will ensure that all investment decisions are made having regard to the values expressed in the preamble and to our requirement to exercise good financial stewardship. Good financial stewardship can be achieved by the evaluation of negative and positive screens together with a focus on appropriate economic returns and sustainability. The Church will, where appropriate, undertake a process of engagement with companies involved in unacceptable activities.

Positive screen

We seek to invest in companies which promote human welfare, dignity and respect, and for the general good. Examples include companies which produce goods or services which enhance the health and welfare of individuals and communities, companies which produce goods or services which preserve the environment.

Negative screen

We avoid investing in companies whose products, services or practices cause or perpetuate injustice and suffering, infringe human rights or cause unacceptable damage to the natural environment. Industries included are armaments, uranium mining, gambling, alcohol, tobacco and pornography.

Companies are also excluded where their practices are unacceptable in areas such as human rights, occupational health and safety and environmental management and wherever companies support oppressive regimes.

We recognise that there will be occasions when companies inadvertently breach some of the principles and where genuine efforts are made to rectify the breaches.

We will not prohibit investment in a company where a breach of the principles, in relation to its products or services constitutes no more than 5% of the company's activities; the breach may be balanced by other positive actions.

We acknowledge that decisions will always be complex involving a balance between positive and negative factors.

Neutral

The majority of investments will be in companies which are considered to be neutral in terms of the positive and negative screens. Such investments will be made on the basis of investment criteria, which will assist us to exercise good stewardship and provide a reliable source of income and capital growth to the Church. The wise use of resources is, in itself, an ethical outcome.

Ethnic Affairs

1977 re: Ethnic Affairs, Refugees

77.3.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That Synod support the requests of the ACC to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs that representatives of voluntary agencies be included in the Inter-Departmental Committee on Refugees.
- (b) That Synod support the approach of the VCC to the Commonwealth Government for the establishment of an independent tribunal to review deportation orders, thus removing from the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic affairs the absolute power he holds at the present in these matters.

1981 re: Ethnic Affairs

81.5.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To adopt the following guidelines for work in, or with, ethnic communities by Parishes and Presbyteries:
 - (i) The Basis of Union, with its commitment to ecumenical action and to a renewed understanding of ministry and mission, should inform all the planning and proposing of the Church.
 - (ii) In today's multicultural Australia, the Uniting Church in Australia's first task is to minister to its own members and adherents in Australia of related Churches overseas which are not established in Australia.
 - (iii) In relation to sister reformed Churches overseas, which have members and adherents in Australia, the task may be to help the particular Church establish itself and minister to its own people in Australia, rather than seek to establish Uniting Church congregations within the specific ethnic community.
 - (iv) The Uniting Church in Australia should direct the mission of the Church to those ostensibly belonging to another denomination only when partnership agreement has been reached about the appropriate form of that mission.
 - (v) Any proposal for work within ethnic communities by Parishes or Presbyteries requires, (and should arise from):
 - consultation with persons belonging to that community;
 - consultation with the Churches belonging to that community, including discovery of:
 - the spiritual, social, welfare, and social justice needs to be met;
 - the ecumenical implications of any action by the Uniting Church in Australia;
 - what might be achieved through the Uniting Church in Australia's support of community organizations within the particular community.
 - consultation, in developing proposals in the light of the above, with:

- the Division of Ecumenical Mission;
- other Presbyteries which have people of the same ethnic community within their bounds;
- the Assembly Commission on Ecumenical Affairs.

1984 re: Ethnic Affairs, Racism

84.4.2.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) declare its support for the continuing development of a racially non-discriminating policy in determining the admission of new immigrants to Australia;
- (b) communicate such support to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs of the Australian Government and the Shadow Minister.

1985 re: Ethnic Affairs

85.89.1f The Assembly resolved:

To adopt the Statement "The Uniting Church is a Multicultural Church" as a declaration of the intention and nature of the Uniting Church in Australia.

(There followed resolutions to do with the structures of representation etc.)

1986 re: Ethnic Affairs, Migration

86.2.2.1 The Synod resolved:

- a) That all Boards, Commissions, Divisions, committees, Presbyteries and Parishes of the Synod be encouraged to study the document "Australian Migration Policy: A Uniting Church Perspective" and to respond appropriately in their ministry and mission to a multicultural society.
- b) That the Committee on Immigration and Ethnic Affairs be requested to prepare a study guide to assist in the study of the document.

1987 re: Ethnic Affairs, Migration

87.4.2.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Australian Government be requested to negotiate special migration rights for those South Pacific countries for which emigration is critical.
- (b) That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to prepare supporting documentation (based on Section 6.2.3.9.3 of the report of the Commission) for submission with the request to the Australian Government as per clause (a) of this resolution.

1988 re: Ethnic Affairs, Migration, Racism, Refugees

88.5.3.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm, in the light of God's creation of all people, its commitment to accept and stand by immigrants and refugees whatever their race or country of origin, and to repudiate race as a criterion for migrant selection.
- (b) That a copy of resolution 88.5.3.9(a) be forwarded to:
 - the Prime Minister, and
 - the Leaders of the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Australian Democrats.

1990 re: Ethnic Affairs

90.3.1.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the councils of elders be requested, in parishes within which ethnic congregations share in worship and mission, to share cross cultural insight into spirituality, lay education, evangelism, pastoral care and ministry when planning strategies for mission.
- (b) That parishes, within the Uniting Church related ethnic congregations share the use of church properties, be requested to include representatives of both congregations in decision-making processes concerning usage, responsibilities, and rights of access to property.
- (c) That parishes and presbyteries, when investigating the rationalization of properties, be requested to consult with the Synod Commission for Mission on the needs of ethnic parishes and congregations of the Uniting Church.
- (d) That the Resources Commission, in consultation with the Synod Commission for Mission, be requested to develop financial policies and guidelines for:
 - (i) the establishment of new ethnic congregations;
 - (ii) providing assistance to existing ethnic congregations engaged in ministry and mission with the Uniting Church.

1990 re: Ethnic Affairs, Refugees

90.3.3.1 The Synod resolved:

That parishes be requested to participate with the Synod Commission for Mission and the Australian Council of Churches in providing re-settlement opportunities and on going care for refugees.

1991 re: Ethnic Affairs, Migration

91.5.2.2 The Synod resolved:

That the Australian Government and Opposition parties be requested to establish a tri-partisan position on immigration in which the composition of Australia's immigration in-take is based on factors which include justice and compassion rather than economic factors alone.

1992 re: Ethnic Affairs, Refugees, Asylum Seekers

92.5.1.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To commit itself to attaining adequate personal and financial support for persons seeking asylum in Australia on grounds of refugee or humanitarian status, because of the scriptural injunctions to provide hospitality to the sojourner and the alien in our midst.
- (b) To make representation to the Australian Government on behalf of asylum seekers, requesting the following urgent action:
 - (i) the provision of an acceptable, minimum level of financial support (such as Special Benefits) for all people from time of application;
 - (ii) an expediting of applications;
 - (iii) the provision of health benefits, Medicare and work permits for applicants;
 - (iv) the provision of adequate counselling.
- (c) To express this Synod's conviction that in this matter the Australian Government acts on behalf of the Australian community, rejecting the Government's intention to shift the burden of support of asylum seekers onto welfare agencies.

Euthanasia

1992 re: Euthanasia, Abortion

92.5.1.1 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to ensure that the issues of euthanasia and abortion are appropriately addressed, and report to Synod 1993.

1994 re: Euthanasia, Abortion, Genetic Engineering

94.4.2.10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to reproduce and distribute to each Presbytery and Parish in the Synod the report on Euthanasia and Abortion of the Bioethics Committee for the information of members of the Church, together with a study guide.
- (b) To encourage Presbyteries and Parishes to respond to the Bioethics Committee no later than 30th June 1995.
- (c) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to ensure that in the future work of the Bioethics Committee, particular attention is given to ways in which genetic engineering and genetic mapping relate to bioethics.

1995 re: Euthanasia

95.6.9.5.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That it is not yet ready to express an opinion on whether to support or oppose legislation to provide for active euthanasia in Victoria.
- (b) To request the Commission for Mission to continue its program of research, study and debate on issues relating to euthanasia and after seeking assistance from the Committee on Doctrine and Liturgy to develop further its statement on euthanasia within a broad theological context.
- (c) To inform the Victorian Government that the Synod is actively encouraging discussion on the issue of euthanasia and asks to be consulted about any proposed legislation in the future.
- (d) To make strong representation to the State and Federal Ministers for Health urging:
 - (i) that an increased range of quality palliative care services be made accessible and affordable to all in the community; and
 - (ii) that increased resources be made available for specialist training in palliative care for health care professionals.
- (e) To request the Synod Commission for Mission, in consultation with the Commission on Education for Ministry, to develop and promote further training opportunities for specialist and lay pastoral carers, including staff of Uniting Church aged care facilities for ministry in palliative care.
- (f) To request the Commission for Mission to produce and distribute information and study material on The Medical Treatments Act 1988 with encouragement for the wider use of the provisions of the Act.

- (g) To encourage members of the church to offer strong pastoral support to doctors, nurses, chaplains and others who care for terminally ill patients and their relatives and friends.

Falkland Islands

1982 re: Falkland Islands, Peace and Disarmament

82.58 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) express deep sorrow at the tragic loss of life which has already occurred in the Falkland Islands conflict;
- (b) regrets the manner in which some sections of the Australian media have glamorized the conflict;
- (c) draw the attention of the Australian people to the way in which the incident has escalated and that this is a warning of how easily a third world war could begin, therefore necessitating even more attention to ending the arms race;
- (d) request the Australian Government not to be involved politically or militarily in the conflict and, instead, to devote its efforts to work for a settlement of the dispute by the United Nations.

Family Violence

1989 re: Family Violence, Violence

89.3.3.1 The Synod resolved:

To recognize that within the Victorian community, physical violence occurs predominantly within families, and that women are predominantly its victims.

1989 re: Family Violence, Violence

89.3.6.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request presbyteries:
 - (i) to consider and implement those measures necessary to provide support for ministers of the word, deaconesses and councils of elders in the pastoral task of responding to family violence; and
 - (ii) to advise the Synod Commission for Mission of steps taken.
- (b) To request ministers of the word, deaconesses and councils of elders to include in their preparation for regular nurture of members, serious attention to family violence.

1991 re: Family Violence, Violence, Sexual Abuse

91.5.1.5 The Synod resolved:

That as a consequences of the issues raised by synod Section 2, the following matter be referred to the Synod Commission for Mission for consideration, and, after consultation with the Resources Commission, any action as deemed appropriate:

That the provision of services for the perpetrators and victims of family/sexual abuse be given high priority, and an allocation of resources to develop this work.

1993 re: Family Violence, Sexual Abuse, Violence

93.4.3.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be requested to provide for the protection of women and children from rape, domestic violence and incest by:

- (i) Developing and maintaining long term programs of preventative community education.
- (ii) Requiring the Department of Public Prosecutions to provide information and advice to victims.
- (iii) Collecting and publishing accurate information concerning sex crimes.
- (iv) Enhancing education for police officers, in particular for the officers of the Uniform and Community Policing Unit, so that they better understand and can better implement codes of practice for sexual assault victims.

- (v) Increasing support for victims of sexual assault by resourcing programs specializing in offering services to victims.
- (vi) Encouraging and resourcing research and education designed to assist judges in sentencing, particularly sentencing involving crimes of sexual assault.

Fiji

1988 re: Fiji, Pacific

88.22.4 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To give thanks to God for more than one hundred and fifty years of partnership in mission between churches in Australia and in Fiji, and acknowledge our common call to express together, especially in times of trial, God's love for all human beings.
- (b) To request the prayers of the Uniting Church people for their sisters and brothers of the Methodist Church in Fiji as that church wrestles with national questions of land rights and democratic rights and the difficult questions raised by the events associated with the military coups in 1987 and their consequences.
- (c) To assure the Methodist Church in Fiji that it has the continued concern and prayerful support of the Uniting Church in Australia as it takes up these issues and faces the task of caring for people of all races in Fiji who have been hurt, especially those whose basic human rights have been abused and who have no recourse in law to seek compensation.
- (d) To request Uniting Church congregations where possible to assist in providing pastoral care and opportunities for worship to the many people of Fijian, Indian and other ethnic groups who have migrated to Fiji.
- (e) To encourage Uniting Church members, in visiting Fiji, to plan opportunities for listening to local people of various racial backgrounds, thus helping to increase the level of understanding in the Australian community of the concerns of the people of Fiji and of the ways Australian Christians can respond.

2000 re: Fiji

00.35.16 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) having heard the report of the President of the Methodist Church in Fiji, Rev Tomasi Kanailagi, to welcome the fact that a civilian government is being installed and looks forward to the return of constitutional democracy as soon as possible;
- (b) to ask the Australian Government to ensure that in the institution or removal of sanctions against Fiji, it acts on the request and advice of those most likely to be affected, particularly the poorest sections of both the indigenous Fijian and Indo Fijian communities;
- (c) to remind the Australian Government that economic sanctions could further destabilise the country leading to conflict among the indigenous Fijian community and the further persecution of Indo Fijians;

Gambling

1979 re: Gambling

79.2.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a)
 - (i) To request the State Government not to proceed with the introduction of a casino in this State. Synod believes that there is already more than sufficient facilities for gambling available in Victoria, and there is neither need nor demand for a casino. In view of the reputation of casinos in other parts of the world for attracting criminal elements, and of the rapid increase in crimes of violence in Victoria, Synod believes it would be unwise and irresponsible for the Government to introduce another potential cause for criminal activity.
 - (ii) That telegrams be sent conveying the above resolution to the Premier and Deputy Premier.
- (b)
 - (i) To request that Presbyteries and Parishes continue to make public their opposition via the media, City and Shire Councils, the Council of Churches and its regional branches;
 - (ii) To request Church members to communicate their opposition within their communities and to their Parliamentary representatives.

1982 re: Gambling

82.2.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod protest to the Victorian Government over the reported statements allegedly made on Monday, October 4. by the Minister for Economic Development and Tourism (Mr. Landeryou) on the Casino Issue.
- (b) That Synod believes that such statements:
 - (i) are contemptuous of the proceedings of the Board of Inquiry on Casinos established by the current Government;
 - (ii) reveal a degree of political cynicism as to the outcome of the Inquiry which reflects badly on the Government;
 - (iii) are disrespectful to bodies who have responsibly made submissions to the Inquiry.
- (c) That the Synod requests the Victorian Government to ensure that Mr. Landeryou participates no further in the eventual decision on the establishment of a Casino.

1988 re: Gambling

88.2.11.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm that Canberra, as the national capital of Australia, has a unique and symbolic role in the nation's life.
- (b) To remind the Federal Government:
 - (i) much social harm is caused by casino gambling, as affirmed in the recent

Social Impact Study on the Civic Development and Casino.

- (ii) the economic benefits of casinos are extremely doubtful, as much additional money is required from the public purse to pay for the social costs of supporting damaged individuals and families, to monitor the legality of the casino's operation and to put in place the necessary safeguards and surveillance which will make it more difficult for the infiltration of criminal elements.
- (c) To advise the Federal Government that the establishment of a casino in the national capital is totally inappropriate.
- (d) To call upon the Senate to disallow the Casino Ordinance, acknowledging that this decision should be made by members of the A.C.T. self-governing body elected by the citizens of Canberra.
- (e) To advise all Senators from Victoria of the above resolutions, including the voting figures.

1990 re: Gambling

90.3.3.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare its opposition to the introduction of further gambling facilities within Victoria in the form of casinos, poker machines and Tabaret.
- (b) That a copy of resolution (a) hereof be forwarded to the:

Victorian Government, and
The Victorian Opposition Parties.

1994 re: Gambling

94.4.2.4 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod request the Victorian Government to make public its comprehensive future gambling strategy for the State of Victoria including plans for the analysis of the social impact of the Crown Casino.

1994 re: Gambling

94.4.2.5 The Synod resolved:

To request the Commission for Mission to explore with our ecumenical partners the possibility of ministry in and around the Crown Casino in Melbourne with the clients, staff, management and their families in an effort to minimise the problems and adverse effects associated with gambling in the Casino.

1995 re: Gambling

95.6.9.13 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To urge the State Government of Victoria to fulfil its obligations under the Gaming Machine Control Act (1991) and to conduct comprehensive research into the social and economic impacts of gambling in the community.
- (b) To inform the State Government of our total opposition to the increased gambling

opportunities in this State and in particular to the changes to the Crown Casino development which have occurred with no community consultation.

- (c) That the State Government review the current allocation criteria for the Community Support Fund with the view to amending the Gaming Machine Control Act (1991) and increasing the proportion of the estimated \$50 million per annum to be used for community service purposes.

1996 re: Gambling

96.6.4.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To express to the Victorian Government its deep concern that 13.9% of the Victorian State revenue now comes from gambling taxes and that this amount is increasing.
- (b) To request the Victorian Government to maintain the current freeze on the number of poker machines in the State of Victoria.
- (c) To request the Victorian Government to increase the level of taxation currently paid by Crown Casino on commission based players (known as "High Rollers") from the current level of 9%.
- (d) To request the Victorian Government to amend section 114 of the Casino Control Act to ensure that all sources of gambling revenue contribute to the Community Support Fund in the same manner (as per the recommendation of the Auditor General).

1997 re: Gambling

97.6.6.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To write to the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Councillor Ivan Deveson, indicating support for his comments to the 'Not the Casino Party' questioning publicly the myth that the Crown Casino only brought benefits to Melbourne.
- (b) To write to the State Coroner indicating support for his decision to regard the increase of gambling-associated suicide as worthy of concern and attention.
- (c) to report to the Standing Committee by December 1997.

1997 re: Gambling

97.6.6.12 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To write to the Premier, the Hon Jeff Kennett:
 - (i) deploring the heavy reliance of the State Government on gambling revenue; and
 - (ii) Expressing agreement with the Prime Minister's warning to State Governments on becoming addicted to gambling taxes for raising State revenue.
- (b) To write to the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. John Howard advising him of clause (a) of this resolution.

1999 re: Gambling

The Synod resolved:

Having regard for the need for consumer protection of gamblers,

- (a) To welcome those measures of consumer protection promised by the State Government prior to the State election and urge their rapid implementation.
- (b) To call on the State Government to implement strong consumer protection measures for gamblers through legislation to stop their exploitation by the gambling industry, including:
 - (i) the establishment of adequately resourced, independent bodies to provide consumer protection for gamblers and to enforce legislation and regulations for consumer protection;
 - (ii) the provision for local government veto over the number of machines and new gaming venues; and
 - (iii) the provision of increased funding for recreational alternatives to gambling.
- (c) To urge the Department of Premier and Cabinet actively to seek out ways to increase the expenditure from the Community Support Fund on relief and rehabilitation of problem gamblers and their families.

2005 Re: Policy on accepting Donations from the Electronic Gaming Machine Industry

05.4.3.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That it is opposed to the promotion of the electronic gaming machine (EGM) gambling industry;
- (b) As a way of opposing the self-promotion of the EGM industry, to request congregations, schools and UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania agencies not to accept donations from any private organisation that derives income from electronic gaming machines, noting that such organisations include, but are not limited to, individual gaming venues, TABCORP, Tattersall's, Clubs Victoria, Australian Hotels Association, Federal Hotels and Resorts, Wrest Point Hotel in Hobart, Country Club Casino in Launceston and Crown Casino.
- (c) To advise congregations, schools, UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania agencies and other Synod related bodies that it is acceptable to accept money from the Victorian and Tasmanian State Governments, the Victorian Community Support Fund and the Tasmanian Community Support Levy.
- (d) To inform gaming industry peak bodies in Victoria and Tasmania of this resolution.

Genetic Engineering

1994 re: Genetic Engineering, Abortion, Euthanasia

94.4.2.10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to reproduce and distribute to each Presbytery and Parish in the Synod the report on Euthanasia and Abortion of the Bioethics Committee for the information of members of the Church, together with a study guide.
- (b) To encourage Presbyteries and Parishes to respond to the Bioethics Committee no later than 30th June 1995.
- (c) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to ensure that in the future work of the Bioethics Committee, particular attention is given to ways in which genetic engineering and genetic mapping relate to bioethics.

Gun Control

1988 re: Gun Control, Firearms

88.5.1.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare its conviction that the ownership of firearms is not a right but a privilege to be granted only in very specific circumstances.
- (b) That the Victorian Government be advised that this Synod supports legislative action which implements this principle.

1992 re: Gun Control, Firearms

92.4.8.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To note with deep concern recent activities aimed at weakening the present gun control laws in Australia, especially:
 - (i) The formation of the "Shooters Party" in New South Wales and the possible formation of similar parties in other states.
 - (ii) The call by such groups for the development of a "privately armed society" in which Australians have the "right" to own a firearm for self defence.
 - (iii) The funding being channelled into Australia by the American National Rifle Association (NRA) to assist the Australian gun lobby set up permanent lobbying facilities in Canberra
- (b) To commend the Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs, Senator Michael Tate, for the work he has done with the state premiers in achieving improvements in gun control.
- (c) That the Australian and State Governments be urged:
 - (i) To continue to work towards uniform gun laws in Australia, including the establishment of a central registry with the Institute for Criminology in Canberra.
 - (ii) To continue to improve the gun laws in the area of safe storage and handling.
- (d) To inform the Australian and State Governments and the respective opposition parties of the contents of (a) to (c) above.

Health Care

1981 re: Health Care

81.4.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm the right of all persons to have proper access to basic health care facilities without regard to their ability to pay.
- (b) To call on the Federal Government to implement the Jamison Committee recommendation No.36, that a working party be set up to devise a new health insurance scheme "satisfying the principles of equity, freedom of access, payment by those who can afford it, and universal participation".
- (c) To call upon the Federal government to take note of the Jamison Committee belief that the taxation system is the best system for achieving equity of payment in the health care administration. (refer.Vol.1, p. 49).

1994 re: Health Care

94.4.4.1 The Synod resolved:

That this Synod make strong representation to the Victorian Government urging that the devastating personal, social and economic effects of hospital closures in small rural communities be taken into account when implementing health care policy.

1996 re: Health Care, Dental Services

96/25.6 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

to inform the Federal Government of its outrage at the Government's decision to abolish the Commonwealth Dental Health Scheme which services some of the most vulnerable members of the Australian community, and to request its immediate reinstatement and to encourage members of the Uniting Church to write to the Minister for Health and to local Federal politicians.

Homelessness

1986 re: Homelessness, Housing

86.4.3.6 The Synod resolved:

To encourage parishes and presbyteries to inform themselves about shelter and homelessness, especially in their own localities, in order to engage in informed debate and action during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (1987).

Homework

2006 re: Homework

06.4.4.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To support the FairWork Standard developed by the FairWear Australia campaign (which makes reference to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – C177 Convention Concerning Home Work);
- (b) To encourage Australian and multinational companies to produce and source garments and apparel products from international factories and suppliers that provide fair working conditions for all workers;
- (c) To call on all Australian State and Territory Governments to support the Commonwealth of Australia ratifying the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – C177 Convention concerning Home Work;
- (d) To call on the Commonwealth of Australia to ratify the ILO – C177 Home Work Convention, 1996, Convention concerning Home Work; and
- (e) To write to State and Territory industrial relations Ministers and the Commonwealth Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations to inform them of this resolution.

Homosexuality

1982 re: Homosexuality

82.5.11 The Synod resolved:

To note the action of the Standing Committee concerning the ordination of homosexual persons as reported in Supplementary Report (Paragraph 3.28, page C9.15), and authorize the Standing Committee to continue to act on the matter in terms of Regulation 3.5.53(a).

1985 re: Homosexuality

85.1.10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To commend the Assembly Standing Committee for initiating an educational process with the publication of the study report, "Homosexuality and the Church".
- (b) To encourage Parishes to study the document and, wherever possible, to include homosexual Christians in such study and dialogue.
- (c) To note the availability of the study guide, "Who is My Neighbour?", prepared by the Division of Social Justice for use with the report "Homosexuality and the Church".

1985 re: Homosexuality, Discrimination, Equal Opportunity

85.2.1 The Synod resolved:

To call upon all political parties in Victoria to support an amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act to ensure that individual homosexual citizens are not discriminated against in employment, housing or the provision of goods and services solely on the grounds of their homosexuality.

Note: The following members asked that their dissent from the motion be recorded - Mrs. C. Coulter, Rev. R.L. Maddigan, Rev. K.H. Moorhead, Rev. R.C. Outhred, Mr. J.H. Strickland, Mr. H. Trevenen.

1986 re: Homosexuality

86.2.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Addendum 1 to the report of the Committee on Doctrine and Liturgy - "Response to the Study-Report, Homosexuality and the Church" - be received.
- (b) That Addendum 1 to the Report of the Committee on Doctrine and Liturgy - "Response to the Study-Report, Homosexuality and the Church" - be forwarded to the Assembly Committee on Homosexuality and the Church as an example of dialogue on a controversial issue.

1986 re: Homosexuality

86.3.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Assembly Committee on Homosexuality and the Church be informed that there exists a diversity of opinion and conviction within the Synod of Victoria on the issue of

homosexuality.

- (b) That in recognition of this diversity,
 - (i) all votes taken during the business of Addendum 1 to the Report of the Committee on Doctrine and Liturgy and related motions or amendments, be counted and recorded;
 - (ii) a copy of the daily record for that business be forwarded to the Assembly Committee on Homosexuality and the Church.
- (c) That the Assembly or its Standing Committee be requested, on receiving the final report of the Committee on Homosexuality and the Church, to determine ways in which the Church may be assisted further to consider issues such as homosexuality and divorce in the context of an overall approach to human sexuality and family.

1994 re: Homosexuality, Discrimination, Equal Opportunity

94.3.3.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod request the Commonwealth Government to enact anti-discrimination legislation prohibiting discrimination against gay men and lesbians in areas of housing, employment, education and the provision of goods and services.
- (b) That the Synod request the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to initiate public enquiries into the nature and extent of public violence and abuse directed at lesbians and gay men in Australia.

Housing

1979 re: Housing

79.3.6 The Synod resolved:

That the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria, before approving future projects for the provision of Resident Funded Housing for the Elderly by the Church, shall encourage support of ventures by the community, the Housing Commission or Municipalities.

1980 re: Housing

80.3.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To inform the Federal Government that the Synod deplores the Government's failure to act on the report of the Joint Working Party on Hostel Accommodation.
- (b) To express to the Federal Government disappointment that there has been no increase in Personal Care Subsidy since 1974 despite escalating costs.
- (c) To request the Federal Government to take action to implement the recommendations of the Joint Working Party on Hostel Accommodation as a matter of urgency.
- (d) To request the Federal Government to undertake an immediate review of the amount of Personal Care Subsidy.

1981 re: Housing

81.2.3 The Synod resolved:

To request the Board of Property and Finance, in the light of the State Government's stated intention to take action to include investment in Housing and Building Societies within the scope of its Trustee Act and other acts so as to raise such investment to the status of a trustee investment, to consider directing a significant proportion of the investment funds under its control to such investment, after such action occurs, so as to increase funds available for housing in the community.

1982 re: Housing

82.2.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm the right of all Australians to have access to decent, secure and affordable housing.
- (b) To call upon the Federal Government, in consultation with the State Governments:
 - (i) to develop a national housing policy to ensure that all Australians are adequately housed;
 - (ii) to ensure that in such policy, immediate priority be given to the expansion of the public housing sector, and that, where assistance is directed to homebuyers, it be given to those most in need;
 - (iii) to increase, substantially, the funds allocated through the Commonwealth State

Housing agreement in order to facilitate:

1. an increase in public rental housing, and
 2. the development of diverse models of low cost rental housing;
- (iv) to increase substantially the Supplementary Rent Allowance and to extend the eligibility criteria to ensure that people on unemployment benefits are eligible, with special consideration being given for long-term unemployed people.
- (c) To affirm the importance of tenant and community participation in the planning and provision of housing, and encourage participation by Uniting Church members in such groups.
- (d) To request the Division of Social Justice to support the Victorian Government in its efforts gradually to put into practice the recommendations of the Community Committee on Tenancy Law Reform.
- (e) That a Task Group of seven persons be established to investigate fully the desirability and feasibility of utilizing an appropriate proportion of the Church's resources of finance and property for the provision of low cost housing directly or indirectly, and to bring a report to the Standing Committee or to Synod 1983.
- (f) (i) That the Task Group be appointed by the Resources Commission and report to the Synod through the Commission.
- (ii) To direct the Resources Commission to ensure that the Task Group confers with the Division of Social Justice and the Division of Community Services.

1986 re: Housing, Homelessness

86.4.3.6 The Synod resolved:

To encourage parishes and presbyteries to inform themselves about shelter and homelessness, especially in their own localities, in order to engage in informed debate and action during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (1987).

1987 re: Housing

87.3.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Australian and Victorian Governments be requested, in view of the widely acknowledged housing crisis, to increase resources for public housing.
- (b) That Parishes be requested to respond to housing needs in their locality by considering the use of Church properties for such purposes as refuges, rooming houses, emergency accommodation or low cost housing.

1989 re: Housing

89.1.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That parishes, in reviewing the use of their land and buildings, consider the Ministry of Housing and Construction "Project Partnership" as a constructive way of dealing with housing need.
- (b) That, before entering into any arrangements the parish or church agency be required to consult with:

- (i) the presbytery, as the body responsible for exercising oversight of the mission of the church in the region and
 - (ii) the Synod Commission for Mission, through its Division of Community Services, as the body responsible for giving approval on behalf of the Synod.
- (c) That the basis for consultation, in recommendation (b) above, be the consideration of:
- (i) issues relating to the church's mission, projected local plans, acute housing needs, parish involvement (including, management and pastoral care), co-operation with other community groups, the opportunity for review and the appropriateness of applying resources.

1990 re: Housing

90.3.3.3/4 The Synod resolved:

To declare:

- (i) its support of the move towards greater co-operation between the Australian and Victorian Governments in matters of housing;
- (ii) its endorsement of the proposal for a National Housing Policy;
- (iii) that in the formation of a National Housing Policy the Australian and State Governments be urged to give consideration to the matters raised in the report of the Synod Commission for Mission (par.6.4.1.5, pages B4.26-28);
- (iv) that a copy of the Minutes 90.3.3.3 and 90.3.3.4 be forwarded to: the Australian Government, and the Victorian Government.

1991 re: Housing

91.2.9.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare its support for the principle of a housing affordability benchmark as proposed by the National Housing Strategy Directorate and that the benchmark be defined as 25% of income for the bottom 50% of household incomes.
- (b) To declare its support for the proposal of the National Housing Strategy Directorate that the Australian Government issue equity bonds as a means of raising finance to invest in affordable rental housing and that this be available only to state housing authorities, local government housing associations, community housing trusts or housing co-operatives.
- (c) That the Australian Government be requested to direct the National Housing Strategy Directorate to address the anomalies within the taxation system which add inflationary pressure to the housing market and undermine the re-structuring of Australian industry by encouraging over-investment in housing the affluent.
- (d) That the Australian Government be requested to ensure that its policies and programs enable increased investment in new housing which is both appropriate and affordable to low income households.
- (e) That the Australian and Victorian Government be requested to increase the level of funding for both the housing and support services for marginalized groups within the community.

- (f) That a copy of resolutions 91.2.9.2 (a) -(e) be forwarded to:
- (i) the Australian Government;
 - (ii) the Opposition parties;
 - (iii) the Australian Democrats;
 - (iv) independent members of the Australian Parliament.

1991 re: Housing, Community Services

91.5.3.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To thank those Uniting Church agencies providing alternate accommodation care programs for children and young people in Victoria for the quality of services provided.
- (b) To advise the agencies, (as per (a) hereof) that Synod is aware of the inadequacy of the current level of State Government funding to provide these essential services.
- (c) That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to engage in regular dialogue with the agencies as per (a) hereof, with respect to the effect of present Government policy on:
 - (i) the financial viability of the agencies;
 - (ii) the quality of service deliver;
 - (iii) the development of urgent strategies for seeking an early increase in the level of government subsidy.

1993 re: Housing

93.4.3.8 The Synod resolved:

That parishes wishing to use Uniting Church property or other resources to provide accommodation for people of any age be requested to give priority to people who are disadvantaged.

Human Rights - General

1977 re: Human Rights - General

77.3.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That congregations be requested to pray and work for those who are imprisoned or suffer because of their loyalty to the Gospel wherever oppressive forces are at work; and to rejoice that in many of these situations growth and development is taking place in the church, and that in the face of suffering, hope and encouragement is brought to the world Church.
- (b) That congregations be encouraged to pray and work for people everywhere who are imprisoned and suffer wherever oppressive forces are at work.

1998 re: Affirmation of United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights

98.5.4.4 The Synod resolved:

Recognising that 1998 marks the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), to:

- (a) demonstrate its commitment to the UDHR by promoting to members Amnesty International's 50th Anniversary Campaign that seeks to publicise the UDHR, and encouraging presbyteries and congregations to participate in that campaign through signing of the Pledge; and
- (b) call on the Australian and State/Territory governments to express their commitment to human rights by
 - (i) taking up fully and energetically their responsibility to protect the human rights of all people by ensuring that their respective human rights agencies are adequately funded, accessible and independent; and
 - (ii) ensuring that the laws which express our nation's ratification of the UDHR are not limited or diminished in effect.

2006 re: Dignity in Humanity: Recognising Christ in Every Person, A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Human Rights

06.20.01 The Assembly resolved:

To adopt the statement 'Dignity in Humanity' as amended by the Assembly (See Appendix A).

Indochina / Indonesia

1990 re: Indochina

90.4.7.1 The Synod resolved:

To commend to parishes the program "Peacebuilding in Indochina" developed by the Australian Council of Churches.

1999 re: Indonesia

99.3.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) At this time of turmoil across Indonesia, to express its solidarity with:
 - (i) the people of the Indonesian region;
 - (ii) the people of East Timor; and
 - (iii) Indonesian people living in Australia.
- (b) To express its appreciation for the contributions that Indonesian members make to the Uniting Church in Victoria in their own diversity.

2000 re: Indonesia

00.35.11 The Assembly resolved:

to note that:

- (d) over the last 18 months the Uniting Church has been deeply aware of the suffering, danger and terror that has been faced by our brothers and sisters in Indonesia;
- (e) Assembly agencies, church councils and church members have sought to stand in solidarity with our partner churches and other groups in Indonesia during their time of trial and suffering - offering prayers, financial and other support, and encouragement as we have been able, often feeling the great inadequacy of our response;

2000 re: Indonesia

00.35.12 The Assembly resolved:

at this moment in time, constrained by the love of God, to make this solemn pledge:

- (a) to urge the members of our church to pray for the people and leaders of Indonesia, seeking to understand the situation with care and compassion, to restrain themselves from falling into the easy temptation of alienation from other faith communities and of irrational demonisation of people groups;
- (b) to express our solidarity and compassion for those who have suffered and grieved in the aftermath of hostilities in the Moluccas region, and elsewhere in Indonesia;

- (c) to comfort those who suffer and, through ecumenical and interfaith co-operation, to commit ourselves to participate in efforts of humanitarian relief, and the resettlement and rehabilitation of those who have suffered significant losses or been displaced back to their home communities;
- (d) to continue to call upon our Government, the United Nations and other appropriate bodies to use the means of diplomacy and aid to communicate concern for the situation in Indonesia, to offer whatever humanitarian assistance is possible, to alleviate suffering and to contribute to communal harmony in Indonesia;
- (e) to continue to stand in solidarity with our partner churches in Indonesia through our prayers, visits and other means of mutual support, advocacy and financial support. In their difficult time we commit ourselves as best we are able from our position of security and comfort, to walk with them;

2000 re: Indonesia

00.35.13 The Assembly resolved:

to express its strong solidarity with the concerns, fears and hopes of the Indonesian community in Australia, particularly with the Christian Congregations and fellowships that are part of the Uniting Church, and assure them of our strong support in the difficult period they are facing;

2000 re: Maluku Islands

00.35.17 The Assembly resolved:

as a matter of urgency:

- (a) to urge the Government of Indonesia to invite the international community through, the United Nations to:
 - (i) facilitate the immediate evacuation of victims of violence in the Maluku Islands to safe havens;
 - (ii) participate in the restoration of law and order and the reconciliation of warring factions in the Maluku Islands;
- (b) to call on the Government of Australia to:
 - (i) provide immediate additional humanitarian aid to the victims of the conflict in the Maluku Islands;
 - (ii) provide safe havens in Australia for displaced people from the Maluku Islands.

2003 re: Support for the Church and People in Bali

03.18.02 The Assembly resolved:

being aware of the severe economic situation being faced in Bali in the aftermath of the bombing in October 2002,

- (a) to express greetings to the Protestant Christian Church in Bali, assuring them that we are aware of their pain, hurt and insecurity at this time;
- (b) to express its thanksgiving for their continuing positive and faithful witness and service;
- (c) to assure them of our continuing solidarity with them as they move forward into the future;

- (d) to ask members of the Uniting Church to express their solidarity with the church in Bali through prayer and practical support;
- (e) to encourage members of the Uniting Church to include Bali in their itinerary for overseas travel whenever possible and to make contact with the church in Bali during their visit

2003 re: Support for the Church and People in Eastern Indonesia

03.18.03 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to acknowledge the continuing uncertainty, danger and great human need being faced by our Partner Churches and others in Eastern Indonesia as a result of conflict and post conflict situations;
- (b) to express our greetings to our Partner Churches, assuring their members of our continuing solidarity, compassion, prayers and support for them in the serious situations that they face;
- (c) to invite the people of the Uniting Church to support projects assisting the restoration of communities in Eastern Indonesia as a way of expressing solidarity, compassion and support.

Information Technology

1983 re: Information Technology

83.4.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That a Task Group be formed to research widely the new and developing technology for information gathering, dissemination and communication, recognizing that aspects of the subject are already receiving attention, and to present a comprehensive report to a future Synod on its application in the Church.
- (b) To request the Board of Communication to prepare terms of reference for the Task Group for approval by the Standing Committee and to nominate appropriate members for the Group for appointment by the Standing Committee.

1997 re: Electronic Communication

97.6.9.6 The Synod resolved:

To request the General Secretary and Synod Commissions to consider the possibility of using electronic communications for the distribution of Synod documents and correspondence as an alternative means of communication to fax and post.

In Vitro Fertilisation

1982 re: In Vitro Fertilisation

82.4.10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Moderator to appoint a Committee, to include representations of the Theological Hall, the Division of Social Justice and professional disciplines, to consider the theological, moral and other implications of the In Vitro Fertilization Program and related programs, consulting with other Synods where appropriate, and present, as soon as practical, a report with recommendations to the Standing Committee, leading to the development of a Synod policy on In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer.
- (b) That the Standing Committee, upon receipt of the report and recommendations, be authorized:
 - (i) to set out a policy statement; and
 - (ii) take any action it deems advisable in the light of such policy statement.
- (c) That the Standing Committee present a full report on this issue to Synod 1983.

1985 re: In Vitro Fertilization

85.1.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a)
 - (i) That the report of the Committee established to consider the In Vitro Fertilization Program and Associated Matters be made available and people and parishes be encouraged to study it and forward comments to the Standing Committee by June 30, 1986.
 - (ii) To request Standing Committee, following receipt of comments on the Report, to prepare, and make available to the Church, a further document.
- (b)
 - (i) To request the heads of the Uniting Church schools within the Synod of Victoria to bring the report to the attention of relevant members of their teaching staff.
 - (ii) To advise the Education Department of the availability of the Report.
- (c) To request the Management of Epworth Hospital to forward its viewpoint on matters raised in the Report, to Standing Committee by June 30, 1986.
- (d) To request the Victorian Government's Standing Review and Advisory Committee to consider, as an exercise of its functions under the Infertility (Medical Procedures) Act 1984 Section 29 (6), the convening from time to time of open public enquiries with particular reference to new developments and the assessment of existing programs in reproductive technology.
- (e) To request the Standing Committee to establish a task group (of which half the members should be women), with adequate resources:
 - (i) to monitor developments in reproductive technology, genetic engineering and other areas of bio-medicine;
 - (ii) to encourage the extension of preventative programs in the areas of infertility and sexually transmitted diseases;

- (iii) to promote inquiry into contemporary issues in sexuality and to keep the Uniting Church community informed in these areas.
- (f) That Presbyteries, Parishes and Congregations be encouraged to engage in discussion and consultation, particularly in ways which involve medical professionals, on the areas raised in the report and in resolution 85.1.(c-e), and to convey their comments to the Standing Committee.
- (g) That the committee be thanked and discharged.

1986 re: In Vitro Fertilization

86.2.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the matters in the notice of motion from the Presbytery of Gippsland, viz:
 - (i) To acknowledge its accountability to the Word made flesh, and to proclaim the humanity and sanctity of human embryos from the moment of conception
 - (ii) To commend the Board of Epworth Hospital on its efforts and success in responsibly facilitating the human life process
 - (iii) To request the Board of Epworth Hospital, in conjunction with the Committee on Biomedical Ethics and Related Matters, to ensure that all practices of In Vitro Fertilization take into account the understanding of the humanity and sanctity of the human embryo from the moment of conception, as revealed to us in the Christian Doctrine of Incarnation

be referred to the Committee on Biomedical Ethics for consideration.

1987 re: In Vitro Fertilization

87.4.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Committee on Biomedical Ethics and Related Matters be thanked for its helpful report and be encouraged to continue to develop and elucidate the implications of the centrality of the incarnation for Christian decision making in the area of In Vitro Fertilization in any further study and subsequent reports.

Iraq

1990 re: Iraq, Kuwait, Middle East

90.4.9.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare:
 - (i) its opposition to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait;
 - (ii) its earnest desire that Iraq withdraw its troops.
- (b) That Iraq's Ambassador in Australia be advised of resolution (a) hereof.
- (c) That parishes be requested to continue to pray for a just and non-violent resolution to the Gulf crisis.
- (d) To distribute to all parishes as soon as possible the Assembly Standing Committee Statement concerning "Australia's Military Involvement in the Gulf Conflict".
- (e) That parishes be requested to discuss the Assembly Standing Committee Statement "Australia's Military Involvement in the Gulf Conflict" with people whose countries of origin are involved in the Gulf crisis.
- (f) That Uniting Church members be requested to expose and protest all evidence of racist activity.
- (g) That the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs be requested to adopt a constructive peace-making role in the Gulf crisis.
- (h) That the Australian Ambassador to the United Nations be advised of resolutions (a) to (g) hereof.

2000 re: Iraq Sanctions

00.4.4.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare its belief that the UN Security Council is responsible for the foreseeable consequences of the sanctions it has imposed on Iraq.
- (b) To declare that the economic sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on Iraq violate both International Humanitarian Law and international human rights standards.
- (c) To call on the UN Security Council to lift the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq's civilian population unconditionally and immediately.
- (d) To call on the Federal Government and the Opposition to end their support for the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq's civilian population and to take all feasible measures to bring about an immediate lifting of the economic sanctions.
- (e) That it does not oppose the imposition of sanctions on those items that are solely of a military nature.
- (f) To inform the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, the Prime Minister, The Hon John Howard, and Leader of the Opposition, The Hon Kim Beazley, of this resolution.

2002 Re: No War on Iraq

02.6.9.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To call on the Australian Government:
 - (x) to use its influence to dissuade the US Government from the threat of precipitate military action in Iraq;
 - (xi) to refrain from all support of such threats;
 - (xii) to continue diplomatic efforts to reach a resolution of the problems of the region; and
 - (xiii) to work through the United Nations, as the duly constituted international body, for building a secure basis for world peace.
- (b) (b) To invite members of Synod and congregations to sign petitions containing these calls, which are the same as those made by the Heads of Churches both nationally and in Victoria.
- (c) To request the Commission for Mission to explore the possibility and implications of urging members to withhold the levy for the Iraq war if such a levy is imposed by the Government.
- (d) To inform the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the Democrats and the Leader of the Greens, and the Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs of this resolution.

Korea

1979 re: Korea

79.5.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To convey to the Urban Industrial Mission clergy and workers of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Korea our prayerful concern at their imprisonment.
- (b) To request the Moderator to invite members of the Uniting Church in Victoria to support in prayer Christians gaoled in Korea, and the Korean Churches and the Korean National Council of Churches seeking to help them.
- (c) To encourage the Commission for World Mission to seek the release of Korean Christians, to express to the Korean Government and the Australian Government the grave concern at recent reports of torture in Korea and to request both Governments to do all within their power to end such needless cruelty.

1980 re: Korea

80.1.13 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To ask members of the Uniting Church in Australia to write to
The Embassy of the Republic of Korea
Ambassador Yoon
113 Empire Circuit,
Yarralumla, 2600

calling for the commutation of the death sentence on Kim Dae Jung and the release of all political prisoners.
- (b)
 - (i) To convey to the families of the prisoners that members of the Church in Victoria stand with them and are seeking through every avenue available to bring change to the situation of gross brutality that they face.
 - (ii) That a list of the families of prisoners be made available to members of Synod.
- (c) To stand for four minutes in prayer to remember the needs of the Korean people and all oppressed peoples of this time.

The House stood for prayer.

1987 re: Korea

87.3.4.5/7 The Synod resolved:

To pray for the people of Korea in their present struggle for justice.

That a greeting be sent to the National Council of Churches of Korea, assuring the council and its member Churches of support in their continuing participation in the present democratic movement and prayers for the people of Korea in their struggles at this time.

That Parishes be requested:

- (i) to pray for the people of Korea;

(ii) to inform, in consultation with the Synod Commission for Mission, their members of the struggle for human rights and justice in Korea as its people prepare for the Olympic Games in 1988.

1989 re: Korea

89.3.6.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To protest the arrest and detention by the National Security Planning Agency of South Korea of Kim Jin Yeop, Australian citizen, missionary of the Uniting Church in Australia and head of the Dental Department of Il Sin Christian Hospital, Pusan, Korea.
- (b) To request Mr. Huh Hyong-koo, Minister for Justice of the Republic of Korea, to release Mr. Kim Jin Yeop from detention and to permit his immediate return to Australia.
- (c) To request the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Gareth Evans, to exercise all available means to have Kim Jin Yeop released.

2003: Re: Korean Crisis

03.47 The Assembly resolved:

noting the current nuclear and military threats in the Korean peninsula and the commitment of our Korean partner churches to peaceful reunification of Korea:

- (a) to affirm and support the efforts of our partners in North and South Korea in their call to oppose policies that embrace confrontation and to support the peaceful resolution of the crisis;
- (b) to ask Uniting International Mission to make urgent representation of the concerns of our partner churches to the Australian government;
- (c) to convey these resolutions to the National Council of Churches in Australia for their consideration and action;
- (d) to condemn any Australian involvement in aggression against North Korea and to call on the Australian Government to advocate for a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Korean Peninsula.

Kuwait

1990 re: Kuwait, Iraq, Middle East

90.4.9.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare:
 - (i) its opposition to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait;
 - (ii) its earnest desire that Iraq withdraw its troops.
- (b) That Iraq's Ambassador in Australia be advised of resolution (a) hereof.
- (c) That parishes be requested to continue to pray for a just and non-violent resolution to the Gulf crisis.
- (d) To distribute to all parishes as soon as possible the Assembly Standing Committee Statement concerning "Australia's Military Involvement in the Gulf Conflict".
- (e) That parishes be requested to discuss the Assembly Standing Committee Statement "Australia's Military Involvement in the Gulf Conflict" with people whose countries of origin are involved in the Gulf crisis.
- (f) That Uniting Church members be requested to expose and protest all evidence of racist activity.
- (g) That the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs be requested to adopt a constructive peace-making role in the Gulf crisis.
- (h) That the Australian Ambassador to the United Nations be advised of resolutions (a) to (g) hereof.

Land Grants

1981 re: Land Grants, Aboriginal Affairs

81.5.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To acknowledge corporately and individually, that the land of Australia was and is an integral part of the life of the Australian Aboriginal people and that Australia has never recognized this fact nor the prior ownership of Australia by the Aboriginal people.
- (b) To approve the following categories of resources and land grants as signs of commitment of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria, to Aboriginal people in response to the Assembly's decision (Minute 79.45):
 - (i) Straight out land grants of land, manse, church, campsite, etc. to specific groups of Aboriginal people, giving freehold title to the land involved;
 - (ii) Appropriate leasing of land, manse, church, campsite etc. on peppercorn rental to specific groups of Aboriginal people;
 - (iii) Sale of land or property and the proceeds being made available as a grant to groups of Aboriginal people;
 - (iv) The allocation of funds by Synod as a capital fund, with Aboriginal trustees, to be available by grant or loan to Aboriginal communities/co-operatives for the purpose of acquisition of land or such other purposes as decided by the trustees.
- (c) To adopt the following guidelines:
 - (i) That the land and other grants of whatever kind are the responsibility of the whole Synod and not necessarily of one Parish or Presbytery. This, however, does not preclude Presbytery or Parish grants of land.
 - (ii) That such above mentioned grants should not be seen as a token gesture but as part of an ongoing dialogue with, and commitment to Aboriginal people.
 - (iii) That any grant would be to an established Aboriginal group with legal entity; e.g. to an incorporated Aboriginal Co-operative, or such a body as the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship.
 - (iv) That grants would be available to all Aboriginal people, not only to those who have Church affiliation (Many Aboriginal people have no Church connections because the Churches have not been willing to receive them). Aboriginal people with Church connections should be advised of the possibility of such grants.
- (d)
 - (i) That, before any decisions on the earmarking of a specific amount of resources for transfer to Aboriginal communities are made, the Division of Ecumenical Mission consult with the members of the Synod's Parishes in order to ascertain the views of the members with respect to this matter;
 - (ii) To request the Division to bring a report with recommendations to Synod 1982.
- (e) To request the Division of Ecumenical Mission, in consultation with all appropriate bodies, including the Board of Property and Finance and the Division of Resources, to pursue the implementation of resolution (b) and report to Synod 1982 and future Synods.
- (f) To request the Theological Hall Faculty and the Commission on Continuing Education for

Ministry respectively to explore the possibility of including studies of Aboriginal culture in the preparation of candidates for ministry and in the continuing education of Ministers and report to Synod 1982.

- (g) To request congregations and members of the Church to include regular and informed prayer for Aboriginal people in worship services and personal devotions.
- (h) To request the Division of Ecumenical Mission to encourage and facilitate the building of a regular dialogue between Parish Councils and Aboriginal co-operatives within their bounds.

Land Rights

1980 re: Land Rights, Aboriginal Affairs

80.1.13 The Synod resolved:

To request the Synod Co-ordinating Commission to appoint a task group:

- (a) to promote debate of the matter of land rights for Aboriginal people;
- (b) to bring a recommendation to Synod 1981 on the best way to use the proposal on the boycott of the Bicentennial celebrations as a means of highlighting the debate and achieving satisfactory resolution to the call for Land Rights.

1982 re: Land Rights, Aboriginal Affairs

82.50 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) affirm again its commitment to support the Aboriginal and Islander people of Queensland in their just demand for legislation which guarantees them corporate ownership of Queensland reserve lands;
- (b) affirm that the vesting of title to land must be accompanied by appropriate legal entities which ensure Aborigines and Islanders exercise administrative and economic control over all activities on their communities;
- (c) express its support for and offer assistance to Aboriginal organizations in their continuing effort to explain the position of Aboriginal and Islander people, to raise awareness concerning the intentions and actions of the Federal and Queensland Governments and to organize their people for their struggle for corporate ownership of Queensland reserve lands;
- (d) regrets that the Commonwealth Government, by supporting the Queensland Government's recently enacted legislation on land tenure for Aboriginal and Islander communities, has failed to honour its commitment to the Aboriginal and Islander people of Queensland to support them in their quest for secure land tenure;
- (e) urge the Commonwealth Government to exercise the powers it possesses in Aboriginal affairs to ensure that the Aboriginal and Islander people of Queensland are guaranteed permanent corporate ownership of their land and control of their communities;
- (f) rejoice with the Pitjantjatjara Council and people on gaining title to their land and express appreciation to the South Australian Government for the Act of Parliament by which this has been achieved, and ask the South Australian Government to give serious consideration to the land and social needs of other Aboriginal groups and communities in South Australia.

1985 re: Land Rights, Aboriginal Affairs

85.106 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To request the Commission for World Mission to prepare a study document on land rights and send it to Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes for their study and consideration as a part of their preparation for the bicentennial year.

- (b) To request Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes to convey their responses to the documents to the Commission for Mission.
- (c) To request the Commission for Mission to continue to exert every effort, in co-operation with Aboriginal organizations, other churches and community groups, to achieve land rights for Aboriginal and Islander people.
- (d) To note the present land rights debate ignores many rural and urban Aboriginal people who have been totally dispossessed and whose links with their land have been totally destroyed, and to request the Commission for Mission to give particular attention to their situation.
- (e) To convey to the Australian Government its commitment to land rights for Aboriginal people as stated in resolution 85.40.1 and to urge the Government to take all necessary steps to achieve this goal.
- (f) To assure the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, the National Aboriginal Conference and other major Aboriginal organizations of its support in the struggle for land.

1985 re: Land Rights, Aboriginal Affairs

85.40.1/6 The Assembly resolved:

To declare its conviction that the 'substantial steps towards establishing justice for Aboriginal people' envisaged by the 1982 Assembly would include meaningful land rights of which basic elements would be:

- (i) provision for a title which cannot be alienated to development or other purpose without an Act of Parliament, i.e. secure tenure to the land;
- (ii) protection of Aboriginal sites;
- (iii) legally guaranteed process of participation in negotiations with any body (including mining companies) who propose to utilise the land, including the necessity to gain the consent of the Aboriginal people concerned;
- (iv) the right to control access to the land and to protect their community, i.e. control job permits;
- (v) access to any royalty equivalents and compensations, and participation in negotiation regarding levels of payments;
- (vi) provision of procedures which enable Aboriginal people totally dispossessed and unable to claim land to obtain compensation, and access to finance and housing, community projects and to meet basic community needs.

To declare that the legislative action taken since 1982 including land rights legislation in New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland, proposed legislation in Victoria, attempted legislation in Western Australia and the failure of the Tasmanian Government to consider any legislation, cannot be construed as the 'substantial steps' envisaged at the 1982 Assembly in that they fail to make 'sufficient progress ... towards the just claims of Aboriginal people for land rights, freedom to rebuild their society, and financial compensation'.

To reaffirm its hope that the Bicentennial may be celebrated without reserve by all Australians and, to this end, to urge all members of the Uniting Church to involve themselves in working for a more just and humane society, giving priority to justice for and reconciliation with Aboriginal Australians.

To encourage the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to take initiatives that may help

the Uniting Church as a whole to deepen its witness to justice and peace.

To encourage all members of the Uniting Church in Australia to become fully involved in preparing for and in celebrating the Bicentennial, asking them:

- (i) to recognise that the history of Australia over the last 200 years, along with its achievements is marked by injustices, particularly to Aboriginal Australians and other marginalised and deprived groups in our society;
- (ii) to seek within the Bicentennial celebrations ways of expressing their commitment to work for the growth of harmonious relationships between Aboriginal and other Australians, to bear witness to the reconciling grace of God in the public life of the nation and to their hope for justice among the people of Australia;
- (iii) to celebrate the opportunities which have been given to millions of migrants (including refugees) to share new liberties, educational, social and economic opportunities for themselves and their families.

1988 re: Land Rights, Aboriginal Affairs

88.22.22 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To declare its deep disappointment that, in abandoning its commitment to national land rights legislation, the Australian Government removed any hope that Aboriginal people could:
 - (i) gain access to secure tenure to land through title which cannot be alienated to development or other purposes;
 - (ii) obtain legally guaranteed processes of participation in negotiations with any body (including mining companies) who propose to utilize the land, including the necessity to gain consent of the Aboriginal people;
 - (iii) gain the right to control access to the land and to protect their community;
 - (iv) gain access to royalty equivalents and compensations, and participation in negotiation regarding levels of payments.
- (b) To deplore the abrupt abandonment of land rights as a policy by major government and opposition parties at both national and most state levels, leaving Aboriginal people without hope that these claims which they have sought, and every Assembly has supported, will be met.
- (c) To demand that the Australian Government and each State Government properly recognize the prior occupancy of the Australian continent by Aboriginal people and acknowledge the immense and continuing destruction of their people imposed by the adoption of the doctrine of Terra Nullius.
- (d) To support efforts to work beyond the concept of the compact proposed by the Australian Government towards a form of treaty - that is an enforceable agreement obtained through formal and full negotiations between Aboriginal political structures and those of the wider Australian community, an agreement which Aboriginal people can use to protect their interests.

1991 re: Land Rights, Aboriginal Affairs

91.14.15 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) That at the request of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, who have worked with the Worora, Ngarinyin, and Wunumbal tribes since the beginning, the efforts of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress on behalf of these people to safeguard their traditional land and their access to it be supported.
- (b) that the Prime Minister, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and the Premier of Western Australia be informed of the Church's long association with the people, of its concern for their spiritual and social welfare, and the Assembly's strong support for the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in its stand with the people of the three tribes living at Derby/Mowanjum.

1993 re: Land Rights, Aboriginal Affairs

93.5.1.4-7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That it supports the decision of the High Court of Australia to reject the legal fiction of "terra nullius".
- (b) To affirm that the decision of the High Court referred to in 93.5.1.4 presents opportunities to facilitate ongoing processes of reconciliation founded on justice.
- (c) That the Australian Government be requested, in its response to the Native Title decision, to enact legislation totally consistent with the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975.
- (d) That the Victorian Government be requested to rescind the Land Titles Validation Act, 1993, and in its further responses to the Native Title decision to enact legislation totally consistent with the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975.

1997 re: Native Title

97.6.6.5 The Synod resolved:

Following the decisions of the 1997 Assembly

- (a) To affirm Native Title as a fundamental common-law right for indigenous people;
- (b) To call on the Federal Government:
 - (i) to acknowledge the importance of Native Title as a means for seeking justice and reconciliation for indigenous people;
 - (ii) to support the decision of the High Court of Australia in the case of *The Wik Peoples/the Thayorre People v. The State of Queensland and Ors (1996)*;
 - (iii) not to proceed with the *Native Title Amendment Bill 1997* (known as the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan legislation); and
 - (iv) to begin a process for negotiation with indigenous people, pastoral lease holders and miners based on their current legally recognised rights of co-existence; and
- (c) To request presbyteries, in consultation with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Commission for Mission, to run public forums on Native Title issues in order to counter the disinformation in our community concerning Native Title.

Landmines

1995 re: Landmines, Peace and Disarmament

95.6.9.15 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Australian Government be requested to endorse immediately the international prohibition of the manufacture, sale and use of land-mines.
- (b) That the Australian Government be requested to retain only minimum stocks of land-mines to be held by Australian Forces, sufficient for training purposes in land-mine identification, clearance, and Explosive Ordinance Disposal.
- (c) Noting the initiative of the Australian Government in providing considerable support for mine awareness training and de-mining in Cambodia, and the deployment of a de-mining team to Mozambique, the Australian Government be requested to provide separate aid funding to accredited foreign governments and Non-Government Organisations for audited land-mine clearance programs.

1997 re: Ban on Landmines

97.6.9.4 The Synod resolved:

To request the Federal Government to sign the Ottawa Agreement on the ban of landmines with immediate effect.

League of Rights

1988 re: League of Rights

88.5.3.2 The Synod resolved:

That Uniting Church members be requested to take seriously Senator Boswell's warning about the League of Rights in his speech to the Australian Senate as printed in the Supplementary Report of the Synod Commission for Mission (page S/B/4.71) and, in light of the fact that those policies of the League which promote white supremacy and anti-semitism are inconsistent with this Church's understanding of the Gospel, to disassociate themselves from the activities of the League.

Lebanon

1982 re: Lebanon, Middle East

82.4.13 The Synod resolved:

*(It was reported that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Council Meetings, held in August this year, recalled that a durable solution of the **conflict in Lebanon** pre-supposes that the right of existence of all peoples in the Middle East shall be recognized, and that there should be established between them relationships of mutual respect, collaboration and confidence. The Council invited its member Churches to pray and work to relieve the victims of the conflict and to enable them to rediscover a normal life.)*

To invite congregations and members of the Uniting Church in Australia in the Synod of Victoria to show concern for all peoples in the Middle East by responding to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' recommendation to offer prayers for peace.

Liberation Theology

1983 re: Liberation Theology

83.5.2 The Synod resolved:

To request the Standing Committee to explore avenues whereby informed and open dialogue can take place on issues such as "liberation theology" and social justice within and between the Councils of the church (Parish, Presbytery, Synod, Assembly), in order that there may be greater understanding, acceptance of diversity, and a commitment to unity in Jesus Christ.

Micah Challenge

2004 Re: Micah Challenge

04.4.4.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To acknowledge that this is a moment in history of unique potential, when the stated intentions of world leaders echo something of the mind of the Biblical prophets and the teachings of Jesus concerning the poor, and when we have the means to dramatically reduce poverty.
- (b) To invite Presbyteries and congregations to adopt the Micah Call initiated by the Micah Network and the World Evangelical Alliance and to participate in the Micah Challenge campaign by (in the words of the Micah Call):
 - 1) calling on international and national decision-makers of both rich and poor nations, to fulfil their public promise to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and so halve absolute global poverty by 2015; and
 - 2) holding our national and global leaders accountable in securing a more just and merciful world.
- (c) To write to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Australian Democrats and the Leader of the Australian Greens to inform them of this resolution.

Middle East

1982 re: Middle East, Lebanon

82.4.13 The Synod resolved:

*(It was reported that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Council Meetings, held in August this year, recalled that a durable solution of the **conflict in Lebanon** pre-supposes that the right of existence of all peoples in the Middle East shall be recognized, and that there should be established between them relationships of mutual respect, collaboration and confidence. The Council invited its member Churches to pray and work to relieve the victims of the conflict and to enable them to rediscover a normal life.)*

To invite congregations and members of the Uniting Church in Australia in the Synod of Victoria to show concern for all peoples in the Middle East by responding to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' recommendation to offer prayers for peace.

1990 re: Middle East, Palestine

90.4.6.1 The Synod resolved:

That the Middle East Council of Churches be advised of the concern and deep grief felt by this Synod at the recent killing of protesters in Jerusalem, and be assured of the synods continued and fervent prayers for peace in the region.

1990 re: Middle East, Iraq, Kuwait

90.4.9.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare:
 - (i) its opposition to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait;
 - (ii) its earnest desire that Iraq withdraw its troops.
- (b) That Iraq's Ambassador in Australia be advised of resolution (a) hereof.
- (c) That parishes be requested to continue to pray for a just and non-violent resolution to the Gulf crisis.
- (d) To distribute to all parishes as soon as possible the Assembly Standing Committee Statement concerning "Australia's Military Involvement in the Gulf Conflict".
- (e) That parishes be requested to discuss the Assembly Standing Committee Statement "Australia's Military Involvement in the Gulf Conflict" with people whose countries of origin are involved in the Gulf crisis.
- (f) That Uniting Church members be requested to expose and protest all evidence of racist activity.
- (g) That the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs be requested to adopt a constructive peace-making role in the Gulf crisis.
- (h) That the Australian Ambassador to the United Nations be advised of resolutions (a) to (g) hereof.

Migration

1986 re: Migration, Ethnic Affairs

86.2.2.1 The Synod resolved:

- a) That all Boards, Commissions, Divisions, committees, Presbyteries and Parishes of the Synod be encouraged to study the document "Australian Migration Policy: A Uniting Church Perspective" and to respond appropriately in their ministry and mission to a multicultural society.
- b) That the Committee on Immigration and Ethnic Affairs be requested to prepare a study guide to assist in the study of the document.

1987 re: Migration, Ethnic Affairs

87.4.2.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Australian Government be requested to negotiate special migration rights for those South Pacific countries for which emigration is critical.
- (b) That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to prepare supporting documentation (based on Section 6.2.3.9.3 of the report of the Commission) for submission with the request to the Australian Government as per clause (a) of this resolution.

1988 re: Migration, Racism, Refugees, Ethnic Affairs

88.5.3.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm, in the light of God's creation of all people, its commitment to accept and stand by immigrants and refugees whatever their race or country of origin, and to repudiate race as a criterion for migrant selection.
- (b) That a copy of resolution 88.5.3.9(a) be forwarded to:
 - the Prime Minister, and
 - the Leaders of the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Australian Democrats.

1991 re: Migration, Ethnic Affairs

91.5.2.2 The Synod resolved:

That the Australian Government and Opposition parties be requested to establish a tri-partisan position on immigration in which the composition of Australia's immigration in-take is based on factors which include justice and compassion rather than economic factors alone.

Re: Amendments to Australia's Migration Legislation

01.6.7.3 The Synod resolved:

To express urgently its deep concern to the Federal Government and the Australian Labour Party about:

- (i) the offensive way in which asylum seekers — extremely vulnerable people — are being used to serve political ends and the way that their fundamental human rights and international conventions on refugees are being undermined;
- (ii) the proposed amendments in relation to Validation and Enforcement Powers, which validate recent actions on the MV Tampa and provide Statutory Authority for future actions in relation to ships at sea; and
- (iii) the haste with which the legislation is being introduced in order to address a particular political situation thereby denying the role of the Senate to thoughtfully review legislation.

Mission

1998 re: The continuation of Assembly Youth in Mission programs

98.5.8.8 The Synod resolved:

That Mr. Peter Lewis be associated with the Synod for this business.

1998 re: The continuation of Assembly Youth in Mission programs

98.5.8.9 The Synod resolved:

To express its concern about the future of the Youth in Mission programs by:

- (a) Affirming that the Youth in Mission programs, which are well supported by Victoria's Mission and Service giving to the Assembly, are important both to our church's relationship with partner churches overseas and ecumenical bodies, and in providing young people with opportunities for service and growth in Christian discipleship.
- (b) Requesting the members of the Assembly Standing Committee from Victoria to take every possible step in the Assembly Standing Committee to ensure that the important programs of Interns in Mission and Volunteers in Mission continue as part of the Uniting Church's commitment to world mission.

1999 re: Interns in Mission Program (Report B2.40)

99.4.4 The Synod resolved:

Noting the reduced funding by Assembly for the Interns in Mission Program, to request the Assembly Standing Committee to explore increased financial support for the Interns in Mission Program because it provides a valuable and important training process for young people within the Uniting Church, by which the Church benefits through the enhancement of partnership relationships with denominations in other countries and through the development of current and potential leadership within its body.

2000 Commitment to world mission

00.35.10 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to acknowledge, with regard to the mission of the Uniting Church:
 - (i) the great World Mission heritage of the Uniting Church which was so strongly expressed in the commitment of our parent churches to engage in mission in Asia and the Pacific;
 - (ii) that Paragraph 2 of the Basis of Union affirms "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"; this is followed by an expression of commitment by our Church to seek special relationships with churches in Asia and the Pacific;
 - (iii) in a time of declining resources and seeking for ways to be more effective in mission in a changing Australia, it is to be expected that the Uniting Church would focus more of its total resources on mission in Australia; however, it is not right to

- emphasise mission in Australia at the cost of forgetting our mission responsibilities in the world, especially in Asia and the Pacific;
- (iv) in the current context of globalisation, fragmentation, and communal and religious conflict, many of our partner churches at this time are particularly vulnerable;
 - (v) the vision of the Christian faith is that we take a broad view of mission and give generously beyond our local situations, and that when we withdraw to focus on our own immediate concerns not only are our partners diminished in their mission but so also are we;
- (b) to reaffirm the commitment of the Uniting Church to be actively involved in the world mission of the church, especially in Asia and the Pacific;
 - (c) to invite Synods, Presbyteries, Congregations and members of the church to involve themselves in the global mission of Christ by supporting a specific mission project within the life of our mission partners through Unity and International Mission;

Multiculturalism

1998 re: Affirmation of the Uniting Church as a Multicultural Church in a Multicultural Society

98.5.4.11 The Synod resolved:

Recognising with sorrow the rise of hostility, suspicion and discourtesy between people of different race, culture, religion and language, and in the light of the 1985 Assembly statement that “the Uniting Church is a Multicultural Church”, to:

- (a) Declare with gladness that we live in a multicultural society in which the rich diversity of race, culture, language and religion enables us to be alive and responsive to the fullness of human being and expression.
- (b) Acknowledge and affirm the contribution of all our sisters and brothers, of all races, cultures, languages and religions, to the social, political, cultural and economic life of Australia.
- (c) Reaffirm that within this society we are a multicultural church and that we value highly our multicultural congregations both as centres of love, service, proclamation and worship, and as expressions of God’s diversity and abundance, of which we are all a part and through which we are all nourished and blessed.
- (d) Encourage members to use the booklet *The Vision of a Multicultural Church* (published by the National Assembly in May 1998) as a study and guide for congregations to give practical expression to this affirmation.
- (e) Encourage members to take every opportunity, both publicly and privately, to demonstrate and actively promote friendliness and neighbourliness to people of races, cultures, religions and languages other than their own.

1998 re: 'The Uniting Church is a Multicultural Church'

01.6.4.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Standing Committee to appoint a task group to conduct a review to determine how effectively the Synod has implemented the following statements and resolutions:
 - (i) the Assembly statement of 1985 'that the Uniting Church is a multicultural church' (sections 1–9);
 - (ii) Synod of Victoria resolution 90.3.1.7;
 - (iii) Assembly document 'Property Policy in a multicultural church' adopted in 1992 and confirmed in 1999; and
 - (iv) Assembly resolution 97.32.09.
- (b) To direct the task group to make progress reports to Standing Committee and a final report with recommendations to the 2002 Synod.
- (c) To ask the task group to ensure that the first progress report relates to property matters.

2000 re: Multicultural Ministry

00.18 The Assembly resolved:

- 00.18.02 to refer to Standing Committee the request for “One Great Sunday of Sharing” to be held in June on the Anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia;
- 00.18.03 as a specific mission strategy, to strongly encourage Congregations, Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committees and Synod Placements Committees, when making decisions regarding placements, to pursue the possibility of placing ministers who are able to exercise ministry in both Anglo and specific Migrant-ethnic cultures (with the relevant language capacities);
- 00.18.04
- (a) as a specific expression of the multicultural nature of the Church, to affirm the need for a national translation strategy;
 - (b) to request representatives of the Reference Committee on Multicultural Ministry and the Secretariat to consult about steps to be taken in implementing such a strategy;
- 00.18.05
- (a) to agree to launch a national bequest campaign for Multicultural Ministry;
 - (b) to authorise the National Director for Multicultural Ministry to develop an annual appeal on One Great Sunday of Sharing for the work of multicultural ministry.

2000 re: Living with the Neighbour who is Different

00.30.02 The Assembly resolved:

- (d) to commend the report to Synods, Presbyteries and Congregations for study and action;
- (e) to note that the full report and study guide are available and commend it to the church;
- (f) to request Synods, Presbyteries, Congregations and members of the Uniting Church to recognise, as part of their mission in Australia at this time, the importance of fostering of neighbourly relations with people of other faiths;

2003 re: Review of Current Policies

03.10.01 The Assembly resolved:

- (e) to establish a Task Group to review the current policies of the Uniting Church on multicultural ministry and migrant-ethnic congregations, and the effect of these policies on the proper functioning and role of each of the councils of the church and the processes followed by the councils of the church in implementing these policies;
- (f) to authorise the Standing Committee to appoint the Task Group;
- (g) to recommend that the Task Group consist of 7 persons appointed according to the following principles:
 - there shall be one representative from the Assembly Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee;
 - there shall be one representative from each of the equivalent committees of the Synods of NSW and Victoria and Tasmania;
 - at least four of the seven members shall come from a non-English-speaking first language background;
 - and one of those four shall be a person born or educated in Australia;
- (h) to request that the Task Group report to the March 2005 meeting of the Standing Committee, including the bringing of any recommendations;

2003 re: Representative Membership in a Culturally Diverse Church

03.10.03 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to support an increase in the membership of Assembly of people from non-Anglo cultural and linguistic backgrounds from 6 to 12 and to request the Standing Committee to find the most appropriate means of implementing this desire;
- (b) to encourage synods and presbyteries to adopt an intentional policy on ethnic diversity for nominations to all councils of the church, giving consideration to an appropriate cultural mix in the context of each particular synod and presbytery.

Multifunction Polis

1990 re: Multifunction Polis

90.3.3.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare:
- (i) its reservations about the current proposals for a Multifunction Polis for reasons as detailed in the report of the Synod Commission for Mission (para 6.4.1.8 pages S/B4.33-35);
 - (ii) its support for an investigation of less costly and more community enhancing ways of achieving the benefits attributed to the Multifunction Polis, such as technological transfer and research.
- (b) That a copy of resolution (a) be forwarded to:
- the Australian Government;
 - the South Australian Government;
 - the Multifunction Polis Community Consultation Panel; and
 - all synods.

Myanmar (Burma)

1996 re: Myanmar (Burma)

96/25.2 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

- (a) to express its concern to the Federal Government at the continuation of human rights abuses by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) of the Government in Myanmar (Burma);
- (b) to urge the Federal Government to support the call of Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy of Union of Burma for economic and military arms sanctions against the SLORC regime;
- (c) to request that parishes pray for the people of Burma and express their concerns to the Federal Government;
- (d) to establish a task group:
 - (i) to determine the extent of the Synod's investment in, and business with, companies doing business in/with Burma; and
 - (ii) to propose recommendations concerning divestment and selective purchasing to the Standing Committee for decision.

1998 re: Uniting Church Concern for the People of Burma

98.5.4.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To give expression to its concern at the plight of many ethnic refugees from Burma, now living in Thailand, by:
 - (i) praying for a peaceful and just resolution of the political and social situation within Burma, so that the refugees may be able to return home in safety;
 - (ii) voicing support for Australian foreign aid assistance being directed towards Burmese refugees;
 - (iii) commending Australia's continued involvement with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the Thai government and non-government organisations within Thailand for the safe housing and living conditions of Burmese refugees in Thailand; and
 - (iv) encouraging members and parishes to make an effort to be informed of the situation of Burmese refugees.
- (b) To express to the Australian government its concern at the continued lack of democratic reforms in Burma despite promises by the State Peace and Development Committee (SPDC), and at the continuation of human rights abuses within Burma including imprisonment of people for their political views, forced labour, and military campaigns against individuals and villages of minority ethnic groups.
- (f) To request the Australian government to support democratic reforms within Burma, including multi-party negotiations between the National League for Democracy ethnic minorities and the SPDC.

(d) To request the Australian government to close the Austrade office in Rangoon, recognising that foreign trade with Burma is regarded by the SPDC as a sign of legitimacy, and foreign exchange helps the SPDC remain in power despite the will of the people as expressed in the 1992 general election.

National Competition Policy

1995 re: National Competition Policy, Economic Justice

95.6.9.6 The Synod resolved:

To communicate a note of caution to the Australian Government about adopting the National Competition policy as detailed in the "Hilmer Report" because of the need to balance economic, social and environmental goals.

New Caledonia

1982 re: New Caledonia, Pacific, Nuclear Testing

82.52 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) Note the relations that have been developed with the Evangelical Church of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, and affirm its support for that church as it provides pastoral support for its people who are involved in the struggles of the Kanak people for independence.
- (b) affirm its support for the Pacific Conference of Churches' campaign in promoting a "nuclear-free Pacific"; and call on the Australian Government to support the call of Pacific churches and governments for an end to nuclear tests, the dumping of nuclear wastes and the deployment of nuclear weapons and nuclear powered ships in the Pacific, by specific policy decisions concerning the sale of uranium ore to offending countries.

1985 re: New Caledonia, Pacific

85.105.1/2 The Assembly resolved:

To invite congregations of the Uniting Church to support through their prayers the Evangelical Church of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands and the people of New Caledonia in their difficult struggle for independence.

To convey to the Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands the assurance of the support of the Uniting Church as it witnesses to Jesus Christ in the struggle of the Kanak people for a just and peaceful independence.

Nuclear Testing

1982 re: Pacific, New Caledonia, Nuclear Testing

82.52 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) Note the relations that have been developed with the Evangelical Church of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, and affirm its support for that church as it provides pastoral support for its people who are involved in the struggles of the Kanak people for independence.
- (b) affirm its support for the Pacific Conference of Churches' campaign in promoting a "nuclear-free Pacific"; and call on the Australian Government to support the call of Pacific churches and governments for an end to nuclear tests, the dumping of nuclear wastes and the deployment of nuclear weapons and nuclear powered ships in the Pacific, by specific policy decisions concerning the sale of uranium ore to offending countries.

1984 re: Nuclear Testing, Peace and Disarmament

84.5.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod express its concern about the reported intention of the French Government to continue testing of nuclear devices in the Pacific to the Eglise reformed d'Alsace et de Lorraine and the Eglise reformed de France and the Rev. Roland Revet of the Reformed Church of France and a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Executive Committee.
- (b) To request these Churches and the Rev Roland Revet to convey this concern to the French Government.
- (c) To inform the Pacific Conference of Churches of this action.
- (d) To convey these resolutions to parties concerned in the French language.

1985 re: Nuclear Testing, Pacific

85.104 The Assembly resolved:

That the Uniting Church shares the concern of the relatively small and powerless Pacific nations as they seek to keep their environment free of the effects of nuclear damage and as they counter the power of the political and commercial interests of the more wealthy and more populous nations, and supports related Pacific churches and ecumenical bodies in their research and action in these matters.

1995 re: Nuclear Testing, Peace and Disarmament

95.6.9.16 The Synod resolved:

That noting that the testing of nuclear weaponry threatens both the process for world nuclear disarmament and the world's environment:

- (a) To express its continuing opposition to the testing of nuclear weaponry in any part of the world.

- (b) To request the President and the General Secretary of the Assembly to take action in consultation with the leaders of other churches to persuade the Australian government to take appropriate diplomatic initiatives to follow up the widespread concerns which have recently been expressed about the testing of nuclear weapons with co-ordinated international campaign to achieve nuclear disarmament and effective means of control to prevent the future development and use of nuclear weapons by any nation.
- (c) To condemn the French Government's actions in testing nuclear weapons in the Pacific despite the concerns and opposition of the Pacific Conference of Churches and the majority of peoples in the Pacific.
- (d) To request Parishes to pray for the peoples of the Pacific and look at ways of expressing solidarity with the Pacific Conference of Churches; and
- (e) To condemn the Chinese Government's actions in testing nuclear weapons.

1996 re: Nuclear Testing, Peace and Disarmament

96.6.4.12 The Synod resolved:

To congratulate the Federal Government for its initiatives in the passing of a successful resolution in the United Nations affirming the halting of the testing of nuclear weapons.

Occult

1980 re: Occult

80.5.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To note that deep concern is being shown by various leaders in the Uniting Church in Australia because of spiritual bondages occurring in the lives of people which can be attributed to the action of subtle and dark evil forces having domination where ignorance reigns and in particular to involvement in certain forms of parapsychology (as, for example, telepathy, clairvoyance and extrasensory perception) or in spiritualism, spiritism and the occult.
- (b) To note that it is desirable that the Church should not remain silent on this issues, because of insufficient reliable information being officially available.
- (c) To note with regret, the wide extent of media publicity being given to these issues which is attracting many young people, including young Christians.
- (d) To request the Division of Field Services to consider the issues, and to give consideration to publishing an appropriate document on the subject as a guide to the Church.

Organ Donation

1991 re: Organ Donation, Autopsies

91.5.5.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Committee on Bioethics be requested to prepare and forward to the Standing Committee for adoption a theological and ethical statement regarding the practice of donating organs and permitting autopsies.
- (b) That the Standing Committee be requested then to encourage members of the Church to donate organs and to consent to autopsies being performed.

1992 re: Organ Donation, Autopsies

The Synod Standing Committee resolved:

That the following statement be adopted for the guidance of members of the Uniting Church within the Synod of Victoria:

Whereas we believe:

- that the developments in modern medicine that make possible a growing range of organ and tissue transplants are to be welcomed, because they offer hope of renewed life to people who face sickness and the possibility of early death;
- that the knowledge gained from autopsies in hospitals can contribute significantly to the quality of medical care available to us;
- that becoming an organ donor, or agreeing to a hospital autopsy when requested, can be an expression of the love which is part of our Christian discipleship;
- that such actions are also expressions of our solidarity with other members of the human family, and of the ties which bind us together.

We recommend:

- (a) that members of the Uniting Church be encouraged to volunteer to become organ donors and to consent to an autopsy (post mortem examination) when a hospital seeks permission to carry out this procedure;
- (b) that those who are willing to become organ donors, and those who have no objection to being the subject of an autopsy, take appropriate action to make their wishes known, in ways such as the following:
 - (i) most important of all, having frank and specific discussions within the family, so that other members of the family, specifically next of kin, understand the wishes of the person or persons concerned, and are prepared to see that these wishes are carried out, when the opportunity arises;
 - (ii) taking action to make these wishes known (specifically in regard to organ transplants) in some durable, written format, which may include:
 - carrying a donor card;

- adding a donor sticker to a driver's license, when possible;
- making a declaration of intent in a will;
- registering with the National Organ Donor Registry of Australia, or some other registry for specific organs, such as The Australian Kidney Foundation;
- completing any form which offers the opportunity to make personal wishes publicly known and requesting next of kin to keep a copy of such a form.

The Standing Committee further resolved that the Background Paper, prepared by the Committee on Bioethics, be made available to parishes and interested persons.

Outworkers

1996 re: Outworkers

96/25.8 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

- (a) to request the Australian Retailers Association to implement the key proposals which they submitted to the Senate Inquiry into Garment Industry Outwork which would guarantee outworkers a just and living wage for their work;
- (b) to urge members to write to major retailers indicating their support for a “Fair Wear” label, which would show that a fair wage had been paid to the maker of the garment produced and to purchase such products themselves.

Pacific

1980 re: Pacific, Vanuatu

80.1.13 The Synod resolved:

To request the Moderator to convey to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu:

- (a) the greetings and good wishes of the Synod on the occasion of its country's independence;
- (b) congratulations to the Church for the leadership given in the struggle for independence; and
- (c) the assurance of the continued support of this Synod, as the Church of Vanuatu seeks to accept the new challenges and responsibilities of this time.

1982 re: Pacific, New Caledonia, Nuclear Testing

82.52 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) Note the relations that have been developed with the Evangelical Church of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, and affirm its support for that church as it provides pastoral support for its people who are involved in the struggles of the Kanak people for independence.
- (b) affirm its support for the Pacific Conference of Churches' campaign in promoting a "nuclear-free Pacific"; and call on the Australian Government to support the call of Pacific churches and governments for an end to nuclear tests, the dumping of nuclear wastes and the deployment of nuclear weapons and nuclear powered ships in the Pacific, by specific policy decisions concerning the sale of uranium ore to offending countries.

1985 re: Pacific, New Caledonia

85.105.1/2 The Assembly resolved:

To invite congregations of the Uniting Church to support through their prayers the Evangelical Church of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands and the people of New Caledonia in their difficult struggle for independence.

To convey to the Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands the assurance of the support of the Uniting Church as it witnesses to Jesus Christ in the struggle of the Kanak people for a just and peaceful independence.

1985 re: Pacific, Nuclear Testing

85.104 The Assembly resolved:

That the Uniting Church shares the concern of the relatively small and powerless Pacific nations as they seek to keep their environment free of the effects of nuclear damage and as they counter the power of the political and commercial interests of the more wealthy and more populous nations, and supports related Pacific churches and ecumenical bodies in their research and action in these matters.

1988 re: Pacific, Fiji

88.22.4 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To give thanks to God for more than one hundred and fifty years of partnership in mission between churches in Australia and in Fiji, and acknowledge our common call to express together, especially in times of trial, God's love for all human beings.
- (b) To request the prayers of the Uniting Church people for their sisters and brothers of the Methodist Church in Fiji as that church wrestles with national questions of land rights and democratic rights and the difficult questions raised by the events associated with the military coups in 1987 and their consequences.
- (c) To assure the Methodist Church in Fiji that it has the continued concern and prayerful support of the Uniting Church in Australia as it takes up these issues and faces the task of caring for people of all races in Fiji who have been hurt, especially those whose basic human rights have been abused and who have no recourse in law to seek compensation.
- (d) To request Uniting Church congregations where possible to assist in providing pastoral care and opportunities for worship to the many people of Fijian, Indian and other ethnic groups who have migrated to Fiji.
- (e) To encourage Uniting Church members, in visiting Fiji, to plan opportunities for listening to local people of various racial backgrounds, thus helping to increase the level of understanding in the Australian community of the concerns of the people of Fiji and of the ways Australian Christians can respond.

1997 re: Greenhouse and the Pacific

97.6.9.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To write to the Australian Government expressing our concern at the position taken at the recent South Pacific Forum by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. John Howard, over greenhouse gas emissions and its effects on the Pacific Island Nations and their hopes for the future.
- (b) That a copy of this letter be sent to the Pacific Conference of Churches with an added statement of our support for their concerns on this issue.

2003 re: Tuvalu and the impact of Global Warming

03.18.01 The Assembly resolved:

- (a)
 - (i) to call on the Australian government to immediately sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocols in relation to global warming, especially because this has affected the nation of Tuvalu and other Pacific countries;
 - (ii) to call on the Australian government to offer the guarantee of special immigration status to the people of Tuvalu, for immigration to Australia when their nation loses its viability for human habitation;
- (b) to express our solidarity with the Christian Church of Tuvalu in this predicament and to call on our people to remember the people and church of Tuvalu in their prayers

2003 re: Solomon Islands

03.18.04 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to send greetings to our Partner Church – The United Church in the Solomon Islands;
- (b) to convey to that church the ongoing concern of the Assembly for them and the people of their nation as they face racial tension, lawlessness, the breakdown of the economy and the dislocation of many government services and to assure them of our prayers and ongoing support;
- (c) to thank the people and congregations of the Uniting Church who have provided support for projects in the Solomon Islands and ask that such support continue and expand;
- (d) to note:
 - (i) the willingness of the Australian Government to become the lead nation in an Intervention Force to be provided by Pacific Island nations; and
 - (ii) that the restoration of law and order is the primary task of the Intervention Force;
- (e) to urge the Australian Government to ensure its armed forces act with cultural sensitivity and to focus not only on law and order in the short term but also on the long term tasks of economic restoration and the development of the Solomon Islands through aid grants in other ways.

2006 re: Global Warming and its Impact on Pacific Nations

06.21.04 The Assembly resolved:

- (c) to reaffirm the decision of the Tenth Assembly (Minute 03.18.01) which called on the Australian Government to ratify the Kyoto Protocols in relation to global warming because of the impact of rising sea levels on the nations of the Pacific; and
- (d) to call upon the people of the Uniting Church to adopt lifestyles which have a minimal impact on global warming.

Palestine

1990 re: Palestine, Middle East

90.4.6.1 The Synod resolved:

That the Middle East Council of Churches be advised of the concern and deep grief felt by this Synod at the recent killing of protesters in Jerusalem, and be assured of the synods continued and fervent prayers for peace in the region.

2002 Re: Israel/Palestine

02.6.4.2 The Synod resolved:

To affirm the rights of the people of the state of Israel to live in safety and security within the internationally recognised borders of Israel's pre-1967 territory, and of the Palestinian people also to live in safety and security within a viable state within internationally recognised borders in accordance with UNSCR 242; and to this end as a matter of urgency:

- (a) To call on the State of Israel for an end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, entailing the withdrawal of military forces and installations as well as the withdrawal of Israeli civilian populations in the settlements;
- (b) To call on the State of Israel and the Palestinian authorities to end the cycle of violence and to use every possible measure to prevent their civilian populations and armed forces from engaging in acts of brutality and breaches of basic human rights;
- (c) To explore ways to support efforts by the Palestinian community to reform their own program and political agenda on internal issues and concerns, as a necessary step to self-determination, particularly through Palestinian Christian organisations such as the Middle East Council of Churches and Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre;
- (d) To commit to supporting programmes and actions of the church ecumenical which aim to end the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians;
- (e) To request the General Secretary to write to the General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, Rev Riad Jarjour, and to the Director of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, Rev Dr Naim Ateek, to express the solidarity of the Synod and to commit to exploring partnerships with the two organisations;
- (f) To communicate this resolution to the relevant bodies, including the World Council of Churches; National Council of Churches in Australia; National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Palestinian delegation, Canberra; Israeli Embassy, Canberra; Prime Minister of Israel; President of the Palestinian National Authority; and the US Ambassador in Australia.

Partner Churches

2000 re: Solidarity with partner churches

00.35.14 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to recognise that partner churches in India, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Taiwan, Fiji and the Philippines have faced - and continue to face – communal and religious conflict, and political tension in the life of their societies;

to continue to stand in solidarity with our partner churches in these countries, offering our prayers, financial and other support, as they seek to be faithful witnesses in their specific situation;

2003 re: Tuvalu and the impact of Global Warming

03.18.01 The Assembly resolved:

- (a)
 - (ii) to call on the Australian government to immediately sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocols in relation to global warming, especially because this has affected the nation of Tuvalu and other Pacific countries;
 - (iii) to call on the Australian government to offer the guarantee of special immigration status to the people of Tuvalu, for immigration to Australia when their nation loses its viability for human habitation;
- (b) to express our solidarity with the Christian Church of Tuvalu in this predicament and to call on our people to remember the people and church of Tuvalu in their prayers

2003 re: Support for the Church and People in Bali

03.18.02 The Assembly resolved:

being aware of the severe economic situation being faced in Bali in the aftermath of the bombing in October 2002,

- (a) to express greetings to the Protestant Christian Church in Bali, assuring them that we are aware of their pain, hurt and insecurity at this time;
- (b) to express its thanksgiving for their continuing positive and faithful witness and service;
- (c) to assure them of our continuing solidarity with them as they move forward into the future;
- (d) to ask members of the Uniting Church to express their solidarity with the church in Bali through prayer and practical support;
- (e) to encourage members of the Uniting Church to include Bali in their itinerary for overseas travel whenever possible and to make contact with the church in Bali during their visit.

2003 re: Support for the Church and People in Eastern Indonesia

03.18.03 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to acknowledge the continuing uncertainty, danger and great human need being faced by our Partner Churches and others in Eastern Indonesia as a result of conflict and post conflict situations;

- (b) to express our greetings to our Partner Churches, assuring their members of our continuing solidarity, compassion, prayers and support for them in the serious situations that they face;
- (c) to invite the people of the Uniting Church to support projects assisting the restoration of communities in Eastern Indonesia as a way of expressing solidarity, compassion and support.

2003 re: Solomon Islands

03.18.04 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to send greetings to our Partner Church – The United Church in the Solomon Islands;
- (b) to convey to that church the ongoing concern of the Assembly for them and the people of their nation as they face racial tension, lawlessness, the breakdown of the economy and the dislocation of many government services and to assure them of our prayers and ongoing support;
- (c) to thank the people and congregations of the Uniting Church who have provided support for projects in the Solomon Islands and ask that such support continue and expand;
- (d) to note:
 - (i) the willingness of the Australian Government to become the lead nation in an Intervention Force to be provided by Pacific Island nations; and
 - (ii) that the restoration of law and order is the primary task of the Intervention Force;
- (e) to urge the Australian Government to ensure its armed forces act with cultural sensitivity and to focus not only on law and order in the short term but also on the long term tasks of economic restoration and the development of the Solomon Islands through aid grants in other ways.

2003 re: General Support of Partner Churches

03.18.05 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to acknowledge that many of the Partner Churches of the Uniting Church are facing rapid change in their societies, major impacts of globalisation, international tensions, communal conflicts and violence or their aftermath, the huge effects of HIV / AIDS and rising levels of inequality, injustice and poverty;
- (b) to express greetings to and solidarity with Partner Churches as they face these huge issues in their countries and seek to be faithful in their witness and service;
- (c) to ask members of the Uniting Church to provide ongoing prayer, solidarity and support for our Partner Churches.

2006 re: Support for the Evangelical Christian Church in the Land of Papua

06.21.05 The Assembly resolved:

To offer maximum support to the Evangelical Christian Church in the Land of Papua through prayer, advocacy with the Australian Government and the people of Australia, and in such other ways as are appropriate.

2006 re: United Church of Christ in the Philippines

06.21.08 The Assembly resolved:

To support the ministry of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), our Partner Church, as it defends the rights of the poor, deprived and oppressed communities; as it calls for a proper investigation into death threats and murders; and as it addresses the underlying issues that lead to violence and injustice throughout the Philippines.

2006 re: United Church of Christ in the Philippines

06.4.4.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) to note with concern the murder of, and death threats being made against members and Ministers of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP);
- (b) in light of the strong diplomatic and counter-terrorism links between Australia and the Philippines, to call on the Australian Government:
 - (i) to raise the issue of the murders of UCCP members and ministers with the Government of the Philippines;
 - (ii) to urge the Government of the Philippines to make every effort to bring the perpetrators and architects of the murders to justice;
 - (iii) to increase Australia's aid budget to the Philippines, expanding program support from the Southern Mindanao region to other parts of the Philippines, including in the program a focus on human rights education;
 - (iv) to offer the Philippines Government direct financial and other forms of assistance to be given to the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines;
 - (v) to provide financial and technical assistance to non-government organisations that are working on the promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines;
 - (vi) to encourage the Government of the Philippines to develop an effective witness protection program, so that witnesses to murders are able to testify without fear for their safety or that of family members;
 - (vii) to consistently monitor military support to the Philippines to ensure Australia is not contributing to training which can be used to further human rights abuses being committed by members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; and (viii) to support the delivery of ongoing education on human rights and International Humanitarian Law (the Geneva Conventions) to the Armed Forces of the Philippines;
- (c) to call on the Government of the Philippines:
 - (i) to make every effort to bring the perpetrators and authors of the murders of UCCP members and other church members, journalists, trade unionists and human rights activists to justice;
 - (ii) to provide stronger investigation and reporting powers to the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines to enable independent assessment of human rights abuses in the Philippines;
 - (iii) to increase the resources and staff of the Commission on Human Rights to ensure that they are able to effectively perform their duties;

- (iv) to undertake a comprehensive review of the Filipino security forces in relation to respect for human rights and thorough and impartial investigation into cases of human rights abuses;
- (v) to ensure the protection of witnesses to human rights abuses in order to protect testimony;
- (vi) to ensure witnesses are free to testify in any investigation and trial without fear for themselves or their families; and
- (vii) to fulfill all responsibilities under the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CAHRIHL).

Peace and Disarmament

1982 re: Peace and Disarmament

82.56 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a)
 - (i) acknowledge that God came in the crucified and risen Christ to make peace; that he calls all Christians to be peacemakers, to save life, to heal and to love their neighbours. The call of Christ to make peace is the norm, and the onus of proof rests on any who resort to military force as a means of solving international disputes;
 - (ii) note that at this point in history, most governments support military priorities which cause valuable and limited resources to be diverted unproductively towards the purchase of armaments and the maintenance of large military forces; that nuclear weapons are a demonic method of killing and wounding people and poisoning God's creation; and that nuclear war would be catastrophic in terms of both human violence and environmental disaster;
 - (iii) affirm that the Uniting Church is committed to be a peacemaking body, seeking to follow the Lord of the Church by encouraging political authorities to resolve political tensions by peaceful means.
- (b) call on the members of the Uniting Church in Australia to support and engage in peacemaking programs and resist reliance on military solutions to political problems.
- (c) direct the Commission for World Mission and the Commission on Social Responsibility to continue education efforts including a publication conveying the facts of the armaments situation and the possible alternatives to war as a means of settling international disputes.
- (d) support the United Nations' work towards general and complete disarmament, commend the following program and instruct the Commission for World Mission and the Commission on Social Responsibility to take steps to ensure
 - (i) that greater efforts be made towards the peaceful settlement of international disputes;
 - (ii) that encouragement and publicity be given to studies of non-violent methods of national defence;
 - (iii) that publicity be given to the implications for the security of non-nuclear weapon nations (including Australia) of having foreign nuclear weapons and facilities on their territory;
 - (iv) that balanced, factual information about the arms race and its military dangers be published;
 - (v) that information be widely disseminated concerning the potential for converting military industries and facilities from military to peaceful purposes, thus increasing employment opportunities;
 - (vi) that greater publicity be given to the scientific, economic and social costs of the arms race, with special reference to the problems created by the arms trade;
 - (vii) that there be increased inter visitation across the lines of political tensions, with a view to stressing the human and individual aspects of the principle of detente;

- (viii) that the rights of all forms of conscientious objection to military service be fully recognized.
- (e) strongly urge the Australian Government to:
- (i) develop an independent foreign policy for Australia, not aligned to either of the super powers;
 - (ii) negotiate the gradual removal of all foreign military bases from Australian territory;
 - (iii) prohibit all foreign military forces from using Australian bases which by their presence or use of the bases undermine national, regional or international security, stability and peace.
 - (iv) ensure that overseas military aid is allocated within guidelines which give significant consideration to the record of the recipient government or organization in the area of human rights violations and international aggression.

(Voting: For 122; Against 61; Abstentions 7.)

- (f) urge the Australian Government, as another step to general and complete disarmament, to call on the governments of the USA and USSR to:
- (i) complete without delay the negotiation of a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests;
 - (ii) complete as soon as possible the current phase of SALT and continue to use this forum to reach agreement on a substantial reduction of their nuclear arsenals;
 - (iii) proceed towards a disengagement and reduction of their forces in Central Europe, Asia, Central America and Africa;
 - (iv) stop all deployment of their forces in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and their nuclear powered vessels traversing these oceans;
 - (v) agree on additional effective measures to ban the military use of Outer Space;
 - (vi) agree not to use nuclear weapons;
 - (vii) halt the production of weapons-grade fissionable material;
 - (viii) ban the production, stockpiling and use of chemical and biological weapons.
- (g) urge the Australian Government to continue to call upon the government of France to cease immediately the testing of nuclear devices in the Pacific or anywhere else.
- (h) direct the Commission for World Mission and the Commission on Social Responsibility to take all appropriate steps through Synods, Presbyteries and parishes to:
- (i) convey these resolutions to our members by all means and as a matter of urgency, and that this be in co-operation with the Council of Christian Education;
 - (ii) support people pastorally through the conflicts which may arise;
 - (iii) remove any vestiges of support, except in the course of debate, for militarism or the arms race from all our published materials;
 - (iv) request all UCA related schools to replace their present military cadet training system with training or activities associated with social service and non-violent activities of friendship and good neighbourliness;

- (v) support the defence force UCA chaplains in their pastoral work and members of the Church who are members of the Defence Forces, and their families, while also encouraging them to study this statement and these resolutions;
- (vi) urge theological colleges to have study courses which include Biblical and theological perspectives on peace and related documentation from the World Council of Churches, Christian Conference of Asia, Pacific Conference of Churches, the United Nations and the various national Peace Research institutes.
- (vii) support ecumenical and other initiatives for peace and disarmament.

1982 re: Peace and Disarmament, Falkland Islands

82.58 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) express deep sorrow at the tragic loss of life which has already occurred in the Falkland Islands conflict;
- (b) regrets the manner in which some sections of the Australian media have glamorized the conflict;
- (c) draw the attention of the Australian people to the way in which the incident has escalated and that this is a warning of how easily a third world war could begin, therefore necessitating even more attention to ending the arms race;
- (d) request the Australian Government not to be involved politically or militarily in the conflict and, instead, to devote its efforts to work for a settlement of the dispute by the United Nations.

1982 re: Peace and Disarmament

82.2.8 The Synod resolved:

In the light of its firm conviction that Christ calls His Church to be a peacemaker, and that involvement in the use of nuclear weapons is grossly against the will of God, to urge the Australian Government to negotiate the gradual removal of all foreign military bases from Australian territory, in particular, the Omega base in southern Victoria.

1983 re: Peace and Disarmament

83.3.2 The Synod resolved:

That in view of the continued development and amassing of armaments, and in view of the Church's ministry of reconciliation, Synod encourage congregations to include prayers for peace in Services of Worship.

1984 re: Peace and Disarmament

84.4.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To invite each Congregation, within the next twelve months, to engage in a program of covenanting for peace and justice similar to that posed by the Division of Social Justice in its report to Synod (p.D4,3.3.4.1/2).
- (b) To request all Congregations to include in Services of Worship on a regular and frequent

basis a prayer for peace and disarmament such as:

"So that no one may ever know the tragedy of nuclear war,
We pray that all the nations of the world may find a way to reduce their armaments
and eventually completely disarm.
Lord, in your mercy:
Hear our prayer."

- (c)
 - (i) To commend the New Zealand Prime Minister, the Hon. David Lange, on the actions of the New Zealand Government in banning nuclear warships from New Zealand ports.
 - (ii) That this commendation be conveyed in writing to the Hon. David Lange, with a copy to the Hon. R.J.Hawke.

1984 re: Peace and Disarmament, Nuclear Testing

84.5.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod express its concern about the reported intention of the French Government to continue testing of nuclear devices in the Pacific to the Eglise reformed d'Alsace et de Lorraine and the Eglise reformed de France and the Rev. Roland Revet of the Reformed Church of France and a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Executive Committee.
- (b) To request these Churches and the Rev Roland Revet to convey this concern to the French Government.
- (c) To inform the Pacific Conference of Churches of this action.
- (d) To convey these resolutions to parties concerned in the French language.

1985 re: Peace and Disarmament

85.76.1/10 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To refer the Statement on Peace and Disarmament to Presbyteries and Parishes for discussion and comment before 31 December 1986.
- (b) To instruct the Committee on Social Responsibility and Justice to revise the Statement in the light of comments received.
- (c) That the revised Statement on Peace and Disarmament be presented to the 1988 Assembly.
- (d) To call on all members of the UCA to study this Statement and to plead for continuing and intensive conversation throughout the Church so that, in relation to this Statement, members render one another an account of their faith.
- (e) To request the Commission of Social Responsibility to conduct a three year program of study and action based on the Statement on Peace and Disarmament and the following definition of 'common security' and the implications of both for Australia;
 - (i) respect for the legitimate rights of all nations and peoples;
 - (ii) promoting mutual understanding and appreciation among cultures, religions and ideologies, through open communication, rejecting propaganda of mistrust and fear, and promoting confidence building measures;

- (iii) broad international co-operation in science and technology, economy and culture;
 - (iv) conversion of all economies from military to civilian production;
 - (v) using and strengthening the United Nations Organization and other international institutions with similar objectives;
 - (vi) promoting adequate international legislation and providing means for adjudication of international disputes and for the implementation of decisions;
 - (vii) making the machinery for peaceful settlement of international conflicts more effective.
- (f) To recognize the dilemma that this issue causes for Uniting Church members whose livelihood depends directly or indirectly on the armed services and so to reaffirm its pastoral commitment to them and to encourage them to involve themselves, as appropriate, in discussion of this Statement generally and with the Commission on Social Responsibility.
- (g) To request the Commission on Social Responsibility to engage in programs of research, consultation, education and related action relating to Australia's involvement in, and contribution to, alliances within her own territories, in the and Indian Ocean region, and globally, in order to provide specific directions for Australia's withdrawal from support of the arms race, and to enable specific contributions by Australia to a reduction of the nuclear threat.
- (h) In the light of the recent difficulties relating to the ANZUS Alliance as it affects Australia and the Pacific nations, to encourage the Commission of Social Responsibility to engage in programs which critically research and examine ANZUS and to communicate the findings to members of the Church.
- (i) To request the Commission on Social Responsibility to advise Church members of how they can best participate fully in the International Year of Peace (1986), especially with regard to ecumenical cooperation.
- (j) To request the Commission on Social Responsibility to investigate the establishment of a Conflict Resolution Program and report to the Standing Committee for decision.

1985 re: Peace and Disarmament

85.100 The Assembly resolved:

To request the Commission for Mission to undertake a major study of issues related to militarism and bring a report to the Fifth Assembly for the study and response of the whole Church.

1985 re: Peace and Disarmament

85.1.10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To endorse the work of the Pacific Conference of Churches in support of a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific.
- (b) To commend to Presbyteries, Parishes and Congregations the study program being undertaken by the Division of Social Justice in relation to a Nuclear Free and

Independent Pacific, to prepare for recommendations on the issue which the Division intends to bring to the 1986 Synod.

1986 re: Peace and Disarmament

86.4.3.1/4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To endorse the Pacific Conference of Churches' goal of a comprehensive Nuclear Free Zone Treaty for the Pacific.
- (b) To note the Australian Government's involvement in the formulation of the South - Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Raratonga Treaty), and to express concern that the Raratonga Treaty allows:
 - (i) nuclear weapon transit and temporary presence at ports and airfields;
 - (ii) support facilities and programs for nuclear weapon systems;
 - (iii) nuclear waste reprocessing, transport, storage and disposal on land;
 - (iv) mining, export and processing of uranium.
- (c) To convey resolutions 86.4.3 (a) & (b) to the Australian Government, the South Pacific Forum and the Pacific Conference of Churches.
- (d) To encourage parishes and congregations to forge links with groups and churches in the Pacific.

1987 re: Peace and Disarmament

87.3.4.1/4 The Synod resolved:

- (a)
 - (i) That it understands the possession, use, or threatened use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the Gospel.
 - (ii) That it supports the concept of "common security" for all peoples and nations.
 - (iii) That it declares its readiness to support the development of an Australian security policy which emphasizes defence that does not threaten other nations, and that it advise the Australian Government accordingly.

That the Australian Government:

- (b)
 - (i) be commended for making, in 1984, the first statement to the Australian public concerning the role of bases ("joint facilities"), including North West Cape, Pine Gap and Nurrungar, and their status as nuclear targets;
 - (ii) be requested to establish a full and open Public Inquiry into the role of all bases ("joint facilities" and others) in Australia.
- (c) That it believes an international system of verification is necessary for the process of disarmament and affirms its commitment to a major Australian contribution in such verification.
- (d) That it supports the Australian Government's work for an international system of verification; and:
 - (i) requests the Government to take further steps in establishing the Independent

Seismic Monitoring Agency (ISMA);

- (ii) requests the Government to take an active role in setting up an International Disarmament Monitoring Agency (IDMA).

That the Australian Government be requested to work for the declaration of Zones of Peace in Pacific and Indian Oceans.

1988 re: Peace and Disarmament, Conscientious Objection

88.5.3.3/4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare that the decision to participate or not participate in armed conflict must be a matter of conscience.
- (b) To urge the Church to offer its fellowship and pastoral care in full measure to all those who:
 - (i) conscientiously object to involvement in or training for armed conflict, whether of a combatant or of a non-combatant nature;
 - (ii) conscientiously object to involvement in or training for a particular armed conflict;
 - (iii) conscientiously serve in the armed services.

To establish, as an expression of pastoral concern to all those wishing to establish their status as Conscientious Objectors, a Register of Conscientious Objectors on the basis of guidelines as printed in the Supplementary Report of the Synod Commission for Mission (S/B 4/57).

1988 re: Peace and Disarmament

88.5.3.6 The Synod resolved:

That the Moderator and/or his nominee, be requested:

- (i) to communicate, by means of a personal visit and a hand-delivered letter, to the Commander of each warship visiting the Port of Melbourne as part of the Bicentennial Celebrations, this Synod's position on a comprehensive Nuclear Free Zone in the Pacific (Minute 64.4.3.1) and the possession, use or threatened use of nuclear weapons as being contrary to the Gospel (Minute 87.3.4.1);
- (ii) to send a copy of the letter to:
 - the Prime Minister of Australia;
 - the Premier of Victoria;
 - the Lord Mayor of Melbourne;
- (iii) to inform parishes of this action and of the results of the visit;
- (iv) to inform the media of the intended action and the result of the visit.

1989 re: Peace and Disarmament

89.3.6.3 The Synod resolved:

That councils of elders be requested to encourage members to study the Statement of Alternative Security for Australia in the Report of the Synod Commission for Mission

1991 re: Peace and Disarmament

91.14.9 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To express grave concern to the Australian Government that it will again encourage the international sale of arms through the AIDEX '91 Arms Exhibition; and
- (b) to encourage all parishes, presbyteries, and synods to take appropriate action to express opposition to the AIDEX '91 Arms Exhibition.

1991 re: Peace and Disarmament

91.2.7.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the following Guidelines on Alternative Security be adopted and sent to parishes:
 - (i) Common Security is the guiding principle in all policy development. Common security means that true global security can come about when, together, nations seek security for all people.
 - (ii) As a first priority, Australia needs to model a process of political negotiation in the settlement of all disputes and conflicts between people and nations.
 - (iii) Australia's security is based on the principle of non-provocation toward other nations. It should not threaten the security of another nation.
 - (iv) Australia's defence policy is to be congruent with its foreign policy.
 - (v) Australia needs to have an independent foreign policy.
 - (vi) Australia should abstain from all participation in the arms trade, except where it is strictly required for its own defence.
 - (vii) Australia should repudiate the possession, production, use or threatened use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.
 - (viii) Australia needs to give priority to regional security and the establishment of zones of peace in the Indian and Pacific oceans.
 - (ix) The ultimate goal is general and complete disarmament.
 - (x) In the interim, Australia needs to work towards the development of the principle of social defence as a means of dealing with threats to Australia's security.
- (b) That a copy of resolution 91.2.7.1(a) be forwarded to:
 - the Australian Government;
 - the Opposition parties;
 - the Australian Democrats;
 - independent members of the Australian Parliament.

1991 re: Peace and Disarmament

91.2.9.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To express grave concern to the Australian Government that it will again encourage the international sale of arms through the AIDEX '91 Arms Exhibition.
- (b) To encourage all parishes and presbyteries to take appropriate action to express opposition to the AIDEX '91 Arms Exhibition.

1995 re: Peace and Disarmament, Landmines

95.6.9.15 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Australian Government be requested to endorse immediately the international prohibition of the manufacture, sale and use of land-mines.
- (b) That the Australian Government be requested to retain only minimum stocks of land-mines to be held by Australian Forces, sufficient for training purposes in land-mine identification, clearance, and Explosive Ordinance Disposal.
- (c) Noting the initiative of the Australian Government in providing considerable support for mine awareness training and de-mining in Cambodia, and the deployment of a de-mining team to Mozambique, the Australian Government be requested to provide separate aid funding to accredited foreign governments and Non-Government Organisations for audited land-mine clearance programs.

1995 re: Peace and Disarmament, Nuclear Testing

95.6.9.16 The Synod resolved:

That noting that the testing of nuclear weaponry threatens both the process for world nuclear disarmament and the world's environment:

- (a) To express its continuing opposition to the testing of nuclear weaponry in any part of the world.
- (b) To request the President and the General Secretary of the Assembly to take action in consultation with the leaders of other churches to persuade the Australian government to take appropriate diplomatic initiatives to follow up the widespread concerns which have recently been expressed about the testing of nuclear weapons with co-ordinated international campaign to achieve nuclear disarmament and effective means of control to prevent the future development and use of nuclear weapons by any nation.
- (c) To condemn the French Government's actions in testing nuclear weapons in the Pacific despite the concerns and opposition of the Pacific Conference of Churches and the majority of peoples in the Pacific.
- (d) To request Parishes to pray for the peoples of the Pacific and look at ways of expressing solidarity with the Pacific Conference of Churches; and
- (e) To condemn the Chinese Government's actions in testing nuclear weapons.

1996 re: Peace and Disarmament, Nuclear Testing

96.6.4.12 The Synod resolved:

To congratulate the Federal Government for its initiatives in the passing of a successful resolution in the United Nations affirming the halting of the testing of nuclear weapons.

1999 re: Child Soldiers

99.4.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare its support for a ban on the recruitment and use in combat of children under the age of 18, and, in particular, to support an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to:
 - (i) prohibit persons below 18 years of age from direct or indirect participation in hostilities;
 - (ii) prohibit the compulsory or voluntary recruitment of persons below 18 years of age into government armed forces;
 - (iii) prohibit the recruitment of persons below the age of 18 years into armed opposition groups.
- (b) To forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Defence, John Moore, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer.
- (c) To request that presbyteries and congregations support the Campaign to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

2002 Re: Explosive Remnants of War

02.6.4.7 The Synod resolved:

Recalling Assembly Resolution 82.56 that affirmed the Uniting Church in Australia to be a peacemaking body supportive of work towards general and complete disarmament:

- (a) To support international efforts to minimise explosive remnants of war, as an interim step towards general and complete disarmament;
- (b) To call on the Australian Government to support a ban on the manufacture, stockpiling, transfer and use of anti-vehicle mines;
- (c) To call on the Australian Government to support the development of a Protocol to the *Convention on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects* to cover explosive remnants of war and containing the following elements:
 - (i) That the parties to the conflict promptly clean up all unexploded ordnance, taking particular responsibility for those that they have generated;
 - (ii) Include in agreements to terminate hostilities, peace negotiations and other relevant military technical agreements provisions allocating responsibility, standards and procedures for signing off land as cleared of unexploded ordnance;
 - (iii) Parties to the conflict are to inform demining agencies of where strikes have been made and how to render safe or destroy their unexploded ordnance;
 - (iv) Parties to the conflict are to provide appropriate information and warnings to civilians, both during and after the conflict about the dangers of unexploded

ordnance;

- (v) A prohibition on the use of weapons with large amounts of submunitions in or near concentrations of civilians; and
 - (vi) Where nations resort to the evil of explosive munitions, that all munitions have high quality fuses and detonation systems that ensure explosion on impact, self-destruct within seconds of impact or that render munitions safe if they fail to detonate.
- (d) To inform the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Minister for Defence and the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs of this resolution.

2003 re: Uniting for Peace

03.19.02 The Assembly resolved:

Affirming that God loves all creation and that all people, as members of God's family, are called to love each other, and, recalling past resolutions of this Assembly,

- that God came in the crucified and risen Christ to make peace; and that God calls all Christians to be peacemakers, to save life, to heal and to love their neighbours; and
 - that the Church is committed to be a peacemaking body,
- (a) in response to the World Council of Churches' declaration of the *Decade to Overcome Violence*⁴, to commit:
- (i) to work together for peace, justice, and reconciliation at all levels – local, regional, and global;
 - (ii) to embrace creative approaches to peace building which are consonant with the spirit of the gospel;
 - (iii) to interact and collaborate with local communities, secular movements, and people of other living faiths towards cultivating a culture of peace;
 - (iv) to empower people who are systemically oppressed by violence, and to act in solidarity with all struggling for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation; and
 - (v) to repent together for our complicity in violence, and to engage in theological reflection to overcome the spirit, logic, and practice of violence;
- (b) to call on all members, councils, agencies, congregations and groups of the Uniting Church to examine their own lives in order to overcome violence and to transform systems and structures of injustice;
- (c) to commit to work for peace through justice and genuine security, believing that:
- (i) true justice can only be achieved through means that do not consist of violence, nor perpetuate the cycle of violence;
 - (ii) true security can only be achieved through non-violent means that seek to build trust and relationships of understanding and acceptance between nations and people;
- (d) to support, and urge the Australian Government to support, the following mechanisms for dismantling the global culture of violence and building a culture of peace through justice and genuine security:
- (i) international treaties and programs on human rights, environment, and social and human development, also ensuring that Australia fulfils its obligations in these areas;
 - (ii) co-operation with governments, the United Nations, and community sector and religious organisations to develop peaceful solutions to conflict and to seek just and peaceful means for overcoming and preventing violence in all aspects of our life together, from the personal to the global;

- (e) in light of recent wars and in the face of impending war, the increasing global militarism and willingness to use military force, and those countries seeking to acquire or retain nuclear, chemical and/or biological weapons, to declare that:
 - (i) ownership, use, or threatened use of nuclear, chemical and/or biological weapons is evil;
 - (ii) reliance on weapons for peace and security can never achieve a just and lasting peace. Security achieved through armament is sustained by fear of the enemy and can never see the world reconciled;
 - (iii) genuine global security will only be achieved by working for an end to the trade in illegal weapons and the arms trade, preventing the proliferation of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction, and requiring progressive disarmament of all nations.

2007 re: Banning Cluster Munitions

07.4.37.2 The Synod resolved:

Recalling Assembly Resolution 82.56 that affirmed the Uniting Church in Australia as a peacemaking body supportive of work towards general and complete disarmament:

- (a) To support international efforts to ban cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians, as an interim step towards general and complete disarmament;
- (b) To call on the Australian Government to:
 - (i) Join the process initiated by the Government of Norway and supported by 47 countries, as of May 2007, to develop a treaty banning cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians, with a view to becoming a party to the treaty that is developed; and
 - (ii) Introduce legislation in Australia that would ban the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.
- (c) To write to the Australian Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Defence, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Defence and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs to inform them of this resolution.

Philippines

1990 re: Philippines

90.4.7.3 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested:

- (a) to write to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines:
 - (i) to express our delight in the developing and strengthening relationship between our two churches;
 - (ii) to convey its grief at the murder of over 50 United Church of Christ in the Philippines people since 1986, and at the ongoing harassment of church and other people involved in living the gospel by working for a just and lasting peace;
 - (iii) to express our solidarity with them during this time of continuing instability and oppressed, and our upholding of them in their struggle for the transformation to a just society;
- (b) to write to the Philippines-Australia Christian Forum assuring them of our interest and encouragement for the January 1991 "Church Pilgrimage".

2006 re: United Church of Christ in the Philippines

06.21.08 The Assembly resolved:

To support the ministry of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), our Partner Church, as it defends the rights of the poor, deprived and oppressed communities; as it calls for a proper investigation into death threats and murders; and as it addresses the underlying issues that lead to violence and injustice throughout the Philippines.

Police

1993 re: Police

93.4.3.6 The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be requested to establish an independent authority to investigate complaints against the police.

1993 re: Police

93.4.3.7 The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be requested to ensure that police powers are increased only if there is improved accountability to the community.

Pornography

1983 re: Pornography

83.4.9.3 The Synod resolved:

To request the Board of Communication to investigate the extent and effect of pornography in the media (including TV, film, video, printed media and displays in bookshops and newsagents) and present a report with recommendations to the Standing Committee or Synod 1984.

1984 re: Pornography

84.2.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the joint select committee of the Australian Parliament inquiring into the effectiveness of new Australian legislation on video censorship to seek submissions from interested individuals and community groups.
- (b) To commend the Victorian Government for proposing legislation to ban "X" rated videos until June 30 1985.
- (c) To request the Victorian Attorney General, during the moratorium period, to seek submissions from interested persons and community groups concerning the appropriate classification of video pornography.
- (d) To request the Australian Attorney General's Department to make available to interested persons and community groups, the discussion paper on the proposed new classification of video pornography.
- (e) To request the Australian and Victorian Governments to examine the effectiveness of laws relating to the making and distribution of video pornography, especially as it relates to the exploitation of men, women, children and animals.
- (f) To commend the Victorian Government for proposing legislation making it illegal to distribute videos which have been refused classification by the Australian film censor.
- (g) To request Parishes to encourage members to sign the petition of the Australian Family Association to the Victorian Parliament (as per 3.5.1, page S/B1.7 of the Report of the Board of Communication).
- (h) To request Parishes to encourage members to sign the petition of the Festival of Light to the Victorian Parliament (as per 3.5.2, page S/B1.7 of the report of the Board of Communication).
- (i) To request Parishes to encourage members to write to their Federal and State members of Parliament, expressing concern about the problems of video pornography in the community.
- (j) To authorize Standing Committee, after consultation with the Nominations Committee, to appoint three additional members of the Board of Communication Task Group on Pornography.
- (k) To request the Nominations to note the tenor of the debate about women needing to be on the Board of Communication Task Group on Pornography.
- (l) To endorse terms of reference of the Task Group as follows;

- (i) to explore comprehensively the theological and ethical issues;
 - (ii) to gather information from other churches, individuals and community groups;
 - (iii) to monitor developments in federal and State legislation;
 - (iv) to make submissions to the relevant Federal and State authorities including any commissions or enquiries;
 - (v) to consult with other Synod bodies on this issue.
- (m) To refer the matter of any necessary funding for research and action on the matter of pornography to the Standing Committee.

1985 re: Pornography

85.2.4 The Synod resolved:

- a) To commend the Pornography Task Group of the Board of Communication for its work and report on pornography.
- b) to encourage Parishes and Congregations to study the Report on Pornography printed in the Addendum to the Supplementary Report of the Board of Communication (pages S/B1.7-14).
- c) To request the Committee on Doctrine and Liturgy to consult with the Joint Board of Christian Education in preparing study guides for use in Parishes and Congregations.

Poverty

1980 re: Poverty, Unemployment

80.2.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To note the current high rates of unemployment in Australia, and to recognize that,
 - (i) in the overwhelming majority of cases, unemployment is not the fault of the unemployed themselves;
 - (ii) many of those who depend upon unemployment benefits are living in poverty;
 - (iii) the human cost arising from unemployment levels is evident; and
 - (iv) while there are no cheap or easy solutions to unemployment, it is unjust for the unemployed minority to shoulder the burden of the nations economic problems.
- (b) To call on the Government of Victoria and the Federal Government to initiate strategies which will:
 - (i) provide work for everyone who wants it, recognizing that this may mean some jobs are to be financed through the public purse; and
 - (ii) guarantee a liveable income for those not at work.
- (c) To endorse the claims of the Coalition Against Poverty and Unemployment, which are to:
 - (i) Heighten awareness of the severity and causes of poverty and unemployment;
 - (ii) Involve the community in expressing its support for change; and
 - (iii) Mobilize pressure on both the Government and the Opposition to effect the change necessary to eliminate poverty and unemployment.
- (d) To request Presbyteries and Parishes to encourage all their members to study the material produced by the Division of Social Justice, sister Churches, the Ecumenical Unemployment Task Group, and the Coalition Against Poverty and Unemployment, in order that they may be better informed on the issues of poverty and unemployment.
- (e) To request Presbyteries and Parishes to be informed about activities in their areas which have the elimination of poverty and unemployment as their primary aim, and, where appropriate and possible, to provide support.
- (f) To request the Division of Social Justice to pursue the study of the links between poverty and unemployment with a view to providing resources for study and action throughout the Uniting Church.

1981 re: Poverty, Economic Justice

81.4.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To welcome the proposals for a national and ecumenical poverty awareness program in 1982, sponsored by the Anglican Commission on Social Responsibility, the Uniting Church Assembly Commission on Social Responsibility, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the Australian Council of Churches' Church and Society Commission,

and other national church bodies.

- (b) To request the Division of Social Justice to keep Presbyteries and Parishes informed of the programme and to encourage them to provide support.

1984 re: Poverty, Economic Justice

84.4.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To adopt the Statement as set out in the Supplementary Report of the Division of Social Justice (para.4.2.2, page S/D4.15).
- (b) That the Synod express its support of, and participation in, the joint-church venture "A Fair Share" movement, in its call to the Australian Government and the Australian people to seek to shape policies which include:
 - (i) employment strategies for the sound creation of permanent jobs;
 - (ii) that the provision of adequate income security for all Australians;
 - (iii) fundamental taxation reform;
 - (iv) access to affordable housing for all.
- (c) To request Parishes to call upon members of the Church:
 - (i) to study the statement contained in the Supplementary Report of the Division of Social Justice (Para.4.2.2, page S/D4.15);
 - (ii) to examine their own attitudes and commitments in order that they may be open to the changes called for;
 - (iii) to enter actively into programs of support for those who are unemployed and to support actively the "A Fair Share" movement in its aims and programs.
- (d)
 - (i) To direct the Resources Commission, in consultation with the Division of Social Justice, to prepare a submission for the Priorities conference which critically analyses the financial and property resources held within the Synod of Victoria, which could be redirected to fulfilling the Synod's commitment to the "fair share" movement.
 - (ii) To direct the Synod Co-ordinating Commission to present specific proposals and projects to the 1985 Synod which will help Presbyteries and Parishes to direct their resources towards the fulfilling of the aims of the "A Fair Share" movement.

1985 re: Poverty, Economic Justice

85 4.6 The Synod resolved:

To request the Resources Commission to provide a grant of up to \$15,000 to the Joint Churches Action Group, A Fair Share Movement.

1985 re: Poverty, Economic Justice

85.77.1/7 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To submit the theological statement about poor people and the Gospel (see Report) to Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes for study so that as a Uniting Church we might struggle with its implications for our life and witness in the Australian community.
- (b) To urge parishes and congregations to develop ways to listen and identify with the poor and marginalized in their community and together struggle to discover the Good News and the Signs of the Kingdom.
- (c) To declare its belief that in a nation as wealthy as Australia, poverty should not and need not exist.
- (d) To call upon the various Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes to a re-examination of the Church's economic priorities and use of resources.
- (e) To urge the parishes, as a step in the journey towards economic justice, to set aside 2% of all income for projects aimed at eliminating poverty, both in Australia and the rest of the world.
- (f) To encourage the people of Australia, and Christians in particular, to respond to poverty by joining ecumenical initiatives on poverty.
- (g) To urge the Australian Government to ensure that poor and disadvantaged people, especially those dependent on Commonwealth benefits and pensions, are adequately represented at the tax summit, and other processes of consultation on issues of the economy, poverty or tax. That is:
 - (i) by representation in numbers which reflect their numbers in the Australian community;
 - (ii) by specific representation for specific groups, which include:
 - unemployed people
 - children
 - invalid pensioners
 - aged pensioners
 - single parents
 - Aborigines
 - recent refugees and migrants from Asia
 - recent refugees and migrants from Latin America;
 - (iii) such representation should include a high proportion of women, since more women than men are affected by poverty and are at risk of poverty.

1986 re: Poverty, Economic Justice

86.4.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To encourage parishes and presbyteries, in the light of the increasing inequity of the distribution of wealth within Australian society, to inform themselves about the distribution of wealth and its consequences, in order to engage in informed debate on economic and social policy.
- (b) To urge parishes and presbyteries to study the Commission on Social Responsibility's statement on Poverty and the Gospel.

1987 re: Poverty, Economic Justice

87.3.2.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Australian Government be requested, as a matter of urgency, to implement its longstanding commitment to establish a Wealth Inquiry.

1987 re: Poverty, Economic Justice, Aboriginal Affairs

87.4.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the theme for the 1988 Synod, including the Bible Studies, take seriously the history of Australian Aboriginal people, look penitently at the role of the missions of our Church in that history and enable the Church to move towards a more just and equal society.
- (b)
 - (i) To commend the Federal Minister for Social Security, the Rev. Brian Howe, for his work towards alleviating poverty in Australia by instituting the first review of more equitable pensions.
 - (ii) To assure Mr. Howe of its prayerful support of his work in the area of social security towards a more just and equal society.

1988 re: Poverty, Economic Justice

88.22.11/13 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To commend the paper "Economic Justice - the Equitable Distribution of Genuine Wealth" to all members of the Uniting Church for study.
- (b) To request Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes to offer responses to the Commission for Mission which would assist it in ongoing involvement in the debate about economic justice in Australia.
- (c) To call upon all members of the Uniting Church to work together for the elimination of poverty through a more equitable distribution of wealth, including access to services and resources.
- (d) To request the Australian Government and State governments to adopt social justice policies and strategies which:
 - (i) ensure the protection, development and equitable distribution of Australia's true wealth, giving serious consideration to the issues raised in the report "Economic Justice - the Equitable Distribution of Genuine Wealth";
 - (ii) discourage business development and government programs which maximize profits at the expense of such wealth;
 - (iii) recognize that privatisation is not simple a matter of current budgetary decisions, but an issue of government responsibility for ensuring accessible services and equitable distribution of and access to wealth, and involving serious questions about the role of government in influencing the shape of Australian society;
 - (iv) reform the taxation system in ways which will ensure that taxation becomes a means of redistributing income and wealth so that all people gain a more equitable share, and so that those on lower incomes do not bear a disproportionate percentage of the taxation burden.

1992 re: Poverty, Economic Justice

92.4.8.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To compliment the Catholic Bishops for their joint publication "Common Wealth for the Common Good".
- (b) That congregations be requested to study the Bishops' publication and the report "Economics and Faith" as described in par.2.5 (page B4.2) of the report of the Synod Commission for Mission.

2005 Re: Government Surpluses

05.4.3.4 The Synod resolved:

Noting significant levels of budget surpluses at Federal and Victorian state level while there are substantial needs for people in poverty and hardship within our communities and around the world:

- (a) To request the Federal and Victorian Governments to review their planned levels of surplus and to seek to use any budget surplus to provide greater resources to health, welfare, social services, overseas development assistance and education; and
- (b) To advise the Prime Minister, the Federal Leader of the Opposition, the Treasurer, the Shadow Treasurer, the Victorian Premier, the Victorian Leader of the Opposition, the Victorian Treasurer and the Victorian Shadow Treasurer of this resolution.

2007 re: Consistency of action on Global Poverty

07.4.37.5 The Synod resolved:

Recalling its commitment to the Micah Challenge campaign, made in 2004, to achieve the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and halve global poverty by 2015 and therefore seeking that the Australian Government provide the UN recommended level of 0.7% of Gross National Income in overseas aid;

- (a) To ensure that Synod lives up to what it is asking of the Federal Government in the spending of taxpayers' money, by maintaining expenditure of at least 0.7% of the Synod's annual budget which addresses global poverty and seeks the fulfilment of the MDGs;
- (b) To request that BOMAR and the Justice and International Mission Unit work together to report to the Synod each year up to 2015 as to the level of Synod funds spent on addressing global poverty and the fulfilment of the MDGs, indicating how this funding is assisting in addressing the MDGs; and
- (c) To write to the Australian Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Federal Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs to inform them of this resolution.

Prisons

1978 re: Prisons

78.5.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That this Synod expresses horror of the living conditions of men in the Remand area of Pentridge Prison. There is a denial of the right of these men to human dignity. The overcrowded conditions cause sanitation problems. The new recreation facilities can only effectively handle 30 out of the 230 men at any one time. There is not adequate shelter, and the men are often wet and cold. There are no facilities for employment, hobbies or occupation, causing aimlessness and frustration, which often leads to violence in the form of attacks on other prisoners or suicide. There is no privacy for ablutions or toilets.
- (b) That this Synod commends Governor Gill for his forthright comments about the conditions of the Remand Section. We urge the Government to take immediate action to implement plans for a new Remand Prison.

1988 re: Prisons

88.5.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To declare its conviction:
 - (i) that our society must seek to minimize imprisonment;
 - (ii) that imprisonment must be a last resort in which the loss of liberty is the sole punishment;
 - (iii) that prisons must be humane, and managed justly.
- (b) That the Victorian Government:
 - (i) be commended for the significant steps taken during its term of office to improve the prison system and to provide alternatives to imprisonment;
 - (ii) be urged to undertake a full examination of alternative models of sentencing, imprisonment and prison structures;
 - (iii) be requested to establish appropriate support programs to facilitate the transition from prison to community life;
 - (iv) be requested to review its decision to suspend all unescorted leave for all prisoners;
 - (v) be requested to institute an Inquiry into injury, suicide and other deaths in custody, and to establish a task-force charged with the reduction of injury and deaths in prisons, especially in relation to Aboriginal people;
 - (vi) be encouraged to address social conditions which may underlie much criminal behaviour.
- (c) To declare that the Church's role in relation to prisons includes two forms:
 - (i) advocacy for prison reform; and
 - (ii) the provision of ministry in prisons through chaplaincy and other visitation and

support programs.

- (d) That Parishes and Uniting Church members be encouraged:
- (i) to study the documents "I was in Prison" and "Prison, the Last Resort";
 - (ii) to support programs of assistance for prisoners, for families of prisoners, for people released from prisons, and for victims of crimes;
 - (iii) to inform their local government and State parliamentary representatives of this Synod's call for prison reform.

1989 re: Prisons

89.4.2.4 The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be requested to establish a full and independent inquiry into the Victorian Prisons System.

1993 re: Prisons

93.4.3.1-2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Victorian Government be requested to give special consideration to the management of women prisoners, particularly to their need for access visits by their children.
- (b) That the Victorian Government be advised that this Synod is strongly opposed to the closure of Fairlea Prison and the transfer of women prisoners to male prisons.

1993 re: Prisons, Privatisation

93.4.3.3 The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be advised that this Synod opposed any moves to introduce privately owned and operated prisons into Victoria.

1993 re: Prisons, Sentencing (for Crimes)

93.4.3.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Victorian Government be advised that this Synod opposes the Sentencing (Amendment) Act 1993 for the following reasons:
 - (i) Sentences should only be imposed on people who have been found guilty of committing a crime.
 - (ii) People should not be incarcerated for crimes they might commit.
 - (iii) The issue of indefinite sentences diverts attention away from the need to provide rehabilitation programs and other assistance for prisoners during the term of their sentences.
 - (iv) The introduction of severe penalties for crimes will lead to longer trials and an increased prison population in an already overcrowded system.

- (v) The introduction of severe penalties for crimes will lead to higher costs to the community to maintain both the courts and the prison system.

1993 re: Prisons

93.5.8.8 The Synod resolved:

The Victorian Government be advised that this Synod strongly disapproves of:

- (a) new contact visit regulations which allow for search of body cavities of prisoners, a practice which the Synod believes is an affront to human dignity;
- (b) the introduction of random strip searches for visitors.

1999 re: Juvenile Justice

99.4.4 The Synod resolved:

To call upon the State government:

- (a) To abandon any proposal to privatise Youth Detention in Victoria.
- (b) To increase funding levels to those parts of the Juvenile Justice system that facilitate community-based rehabilitation of young offenders.
- (c) To hold, as a matter of urgency, an independent inquiry into the Juvenile Justice system with the intention of evaluating, researching, discovering and providing the best possible system of community-based rehabilitation for young offenders.
- (d) To facilitate earlier intervention by investing more extensively in support services within the primary and secondary phases of state education.

Privatisation

1993 re: Privatisation, Prisons

93.4.3.3 The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be advised that this Synod opposed any moves to introduce privately owned and operated prisons into Victoria.

1994 re: Privatisation

94.5.1.1 The Synod resolved:

In the light of moves by the Victorian Government to privatise public utilities, to:

- (a) request the Commission for Mission to develop responses to the broader issue of privatisation and in particular, its impact on financially vulnerable members of the community; and
- (b) make strong representations to the Victorian Government that access to affordable water and fuel is a basic human right in Victorian society.

1995 re: Privatisation

95.6.9.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To express the Synod's opposition to further privatisation of Victoria's electricity, water and gas industries, because it does not believe it enhances community co-operation and equitable access to these essential services, and to advise the Victorian Government accordingly.
- (b) To request the Victorian and Australian Governments and opposition parties to each provide a clear statement on its policy position on the privatisation of public utilities.
- (c) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to continue to provide means by which Uniting Church members may be informed on and involved in debate on the issue of privatisation, including the sponsoring of a forum presenting a wide spectrum of opinion.

Prostitution

1978 re: Prostitution

78.5.11 The Synod resolved:

To ask the Division of Social Justice to set up a Task Force to look at the question of legalized prostitution and bring a report to a subsequent meeting of Synod.

1994 re: Prostitution, Child Prostitution,

94.18.06 The Assembly resolved:

given the large involvement of Australians in child prostitution:

- (a) to strongly support the ECPAT campaign;
- (b) to encourage church members to use the ECPAT information to become fully aware of the serious effects of child prostitution in tourism and to facilitate public discussion on the issues;
- (c) to encourage church members to be active in bringing about just changes by working with the proper authorities to change structures and bring individuals, travel agencies, sporting and social clubs to be accountable before the law in relation to child prostitution in tourism;
- (d) to encourage the Australian Government to ensure that sufficient resources are provided for enforcement of the Crime (Child Sex Tourism) Amendment Act 1994 to make it effective.

Racism

1978 re: Racism

78.5.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request ministers to assure Church Members that the only money used through the Special Fund of the Program to Combat Racism is money given explicitly for that purpose.
- (b) To request ministers to assure Church Members that no one anywhere has produced any evidence that any money from the Special Fund of the program to Combat Racism has been used other than for food, health, social, educational and agricultural programs.
- (c) To affirm the importance of the Program to Combat Racism and the Special Fund as a sign of the support by Christians and the Churches of refugees and the victims of war in the struggle against racism.
- (d) To instruct the Division of Ecumenical Mission to prepare and circulate to Parish Councils material about the Program to Combat Racism and the Special Fund in order that Church members may not base their judgement on inadequate and misleading material available through the media.

1979 re: Racism

79.27 It was resolved that the Assembly:

approve and commend to members of the Uniting Church the Commission's appeal for \$25,000 for the Special Fund of the Program to Combat Racism, as a sign of the commitment of the Church to the World Council of Churches and the Program to Combat racism, and of our concern over racial discrimination in the world, and particularly in Australia.

1979 re: Racism

79.3.4 The Synod resolved:

To commend to Parishes and members the Commission for World Mission's appeal for \$25,000 for the Special Fund of the Program to Combat Racism, as a sign of the commitment of the Church to the World Council of Churches and the Program to Combat Racism, and of our concern over the racial discrimination in the world, and particularly in Australia.

1984 re: Racism, Ethnic Affairs

84.4.2.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) declare its support for the continuing development of a racially non-discriminating policy in determining the admission of new immigrants to Australia;
- (b) communicate such support to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs of the Australian Government and the Shadow Minister.

1988 re: Racism, Migration, Refugees, Ethnic Affairs

88.5.3.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm, in the light of God's creation of all people, its commitment to accept and stand by immigrants and refugees whatever their race or country of origin, and to repudiate race as a criterion for migrant selection.
- (b) That a copy of resolution 88.5.3.9(a) be forwarded to:
 - the Prime Minister, and
 - the Leaders of the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Australian Democrats.

1996 re: Racism

96/26.1 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

(The Rev John Rickard distributed a report and recommendation on racism).

- (a) that the report be received.
- (b) the Uniting Church, Synod of Victoria calls upon Christians and all Australian citizens to speak boldly against racism in any form.
- (c) the Uniting Church, Synod of Victoria calls upon the Prime Minister of Australia to:
 - (i) unequivocally repudiate comments made in Parliament by Ms. Pauline Hanson and make it clear that these do not reflect the position of his Government; and
 - (ii) acknowledge the extent and impact of racist policies and practices in Australian history so that true reconciliation may be possible.

1997 re: Racism

97.6.6.6 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

Affirming that all people are equal in God's sight and noting with alarm the rise of racism in Australian society:

- (a) To declare its unequivocal opposition to the promotion of racially discriminatory policies;
- (b) To request presbyteries, in consultation with the Commission for Mission, to run public forums to discuss the reasons behind and ways of overcoming the rise of racism in the community;
- (c) To call upon parishes to make public in their local media, either by advertisement or article, their opposition to any form of racism, and to refuse use of their property for any meetings promoting racially discriminatory policies; and
- (d) To reject the policies of the One Nation Party and any other party that promotes policies that are racially discriminatory.

2002 Re: Confronting Racism Workshops

02.6.4.10 The Synod resolved;

- (f) To approve the conduct of Confronting Racism Workshops across the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania over the next three years.
- (g) To request the Synod Commission for Mission to use the resources of the Mission and Resource Development Unit (MRDU) and the Justice and International Mission Unit (JIMU) to conduct the workshops, and to ensure that participation is made available to presbyteries, congregations, agencies, schools and ministerial candidates.

2003: re: Confronting Racism

03.10.02 The Assembly resolved:

trusting that in Jesus Christ God has broken down barriers between all people, and by the Holy Spirit is able to transform lives and heal communities,

- (a) to recognise again that racism is a sin that reflects our alienation from God and one another and is incompatible with the Gospel;
- (b) to reaffirm its commitment to work to overcome racism in Australia and beyond;
- (c) to call on the church to model the inclusive love of Christ, building communities of justice and love and practising respect and equality in all our relationships; and
- (d) to urge members of the Uniting Church, particularly those in leadership, to attend a Confronting Racism or Looking with New Eyes workshop to explore ways of working to eradicate racism.

2005 Re: Dealing with Religious Hatred

05.4.3.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That it is opposed to the incitement of hatred against people on any basis, including that of religion;
- (b) To acknowledge and welcome open dialogue between faiths, including critique and criticism, provided that such dialogue seeks to be respectful, accurate and objective, is open to gaining new understandings, and is willing to admit errors;
- (c) To support the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* as achieving a balance between being a 'safety net' for preventing incitement to hatred of people based on their race or religion, while allowing for legitimate freedom of speech;
- (d) To advise the Premier and Leader of the Opposition and all Members of Parliament in Victoria of this resolution.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

1977 re: Refugees, Ethnic Affairs

77.3.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That Synod support the requests of the ACC to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs that representatives of voluntary agencies be included in the Inter-Departmental Committee on Refugees.
- (b) That Synod support the approach of the VCC to the Commonwealth Government for the establishment of an independent tribunal to review deportation orders, thus removing from the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic affairs the absolute power he holds at the present in these matters.

1988 re: Refugees, Migration, Racism, Ethnic Affairs

88.5.3.9 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm, in the light of God's creation of all people, its commitment to accept and stand by immigrants and refugees whatever their race or country of origin, and to repudiate race as a criterion for migrant selection.
- (b) That a copy of resolution 88.5.3.9(a) be forwarded to:
 - the Prime Minister, and
 - the Leaders of the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Australian Democrats.

1990 re: Refugees, Ethnic Affairs

90.3.3.1 The Synod resolved:

That parishes be requested to participate with the Synod Commission for Mission and the Australian Council of Churches in providing re-settlement opportunities and on going care for refugees.

1992 re: Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Ethnic Affairs

92.5.1.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To commit itself to attaining adequate personal and financial support for persons seeking asylum in Australia on grounds of refugee or humanitarian status, because of the scriptural injunctions to provide hospitality to the sojourner and the alien in our midst.
- (b) To make representation to the Australian Government on behalf of asylum seekers, requesting the following urgent action:
 - (i) the provision of an acceptable, minimum level of financial support (such as Special Benefits) for all people from time of application;
 - (ii) an expediting of applications;
 - (iii) the provision of health benefits, Medicare and work permits for applicants;

- (iv) the provision of adequate counselling.
- (c) To express this Synod's conviction that in this matter the Australian Government acts on behalf of the Australian community, rejecting the Government's intention to shift the burden of support of asylum seekers onto welfare agencies.

1996 re: Refugees, Asylum Seekers

96/25.7 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

- (a) to request the Federal Government to continue the Asylum Seekers Assistance Scheme (ASAS) at its current rate for onshore refugee applicants;
- (b) to call upon Uniting Church congregations and members:
 - (i) to offer substantial protection and assistance to asylum seekers;
 - (ii) to convey their concerns about changes to the ASAS to their local federal members of parliament; and
 - (iii) to study "A Moment to choose: Risking Solidarity to be with Uprooted people" produced by the WCC 'Ecumenical year for churches in solidarity with the uprooted', 1997;
- (c) to request the Federal Government to grant permanent residence on humanitarian grounds for asylum seekers from East Timor and not deport such people to Portugal against their will.

2000 Welcome the Stranger

00.21.03 The Assembly resolved:

in the spirit of the Year of Jubilee:

- (a) to note the important call of the gospel to welcome the stranger;
- (b) to commend and celebrate the work of those within the Uniting Church and wider community who work with refugees and asylum seekers as they commence resettlement within Australia;
- (c) to celebrate the work which has been undertaken by the NCCA National Program for Refugees and Displaced Persons over many years and for the creation in late 1998 of an ecumenical committee to support this work;
- (d) to commit the Uniting Church in Australia to ongoing support for refugee and asylum seeker resettlement in Australia;
- (e) to commit the Uniting Church in Australia to:
 - (i) promoting cultural sensitivity particularly in the language that it uses to describe those who are refugees, access to interpreters from the same cultural background and access to appropriate faith communities; and
 - (ii) awareness of racism and discrimination used to instil fear against refugees and asylum seekers;
- (f) to affirm the need for fair, humanitarian, adequately resourced and culturally appropriate government policies and procedures for the processing of refugees and asylum seekers

both within Australia and overseas;

- (g) to call on the Australian Government to amend its policies and practices by ensuring;
- (i) accountability and transparency within government process in processing of refugees and asylum seekers;
 - (ii) that discrimination does not occur in the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, and that their dignity is respected;
 - (iii) cultural sensitivity towards asylum seekers and the situations from which they come;
 - (iv) that the language used by Government does not encourage fear and hatred towards refugees and asylum seekers;
 - (v) the current limits on intake of refugees and asylum seekers within Australia are reviewed and that Government demonstrate its international responsibility to the protection of vulnerable individuals;
 - (vi) an end to the long period of detention experienced by some refugees and asylum seekers;
 - (vii) continued investigation and implementation of alternative methods to detention for those seeking asylum onshore in Australia;
 - (viii) all refugees and asylum-seekers have equal access to facilities, benefits, assistance, information, community networks and legal advice immediately upon arrival within Australia;
 - (ix) immediate notification to the Red Cross and United Nations of any refugees or asylum seekers arrival in Australia;
 - (x) sufficient and culturally sensitive translation services are available in all refugee centres;
 - (xi) sufficient access to medical, legal or community services for those residing in detention centres, including trauma and torture services;
- (h) to encourage the Australian Government to separate its trade policy from its response to refugees and asylum seekers;
- (i) to encourage members, agencies, Congregations and councils of the Uniting Church to welcome recently arrived refugees into their communities and to provide support and advocacy as they are able;

to express its concern to the Australian Government at the current practice of releasing refugees into urban and rural areas with inappropriate supports and resources, and with unsatisfactory notification of services within the placement area.

2001 Re: Australia's treatment of refugees seeking asylum in Australia

01.6.7.6 The Synod resolved:

To express its grave concern and disappointment at the government's hostile and inhumane treatment of refugees and call upon the Federal Government to:

- (i) Abandon its policy of mandatory detention of asylum seekers, and to seek to develop a community-based policy which preserves the interests of the nation as well as the dignity and psychological health of refugees.
- (ii) Stop using refugees in the pursuit of political ends.
- (iii) Allow the Senate, as a house of review, to conduct an effective review of the proposed changes to the Migration Act.
- (iv) Acknowledge the importance of judicial review of executive decision in our Westminster system of Government, and to reverse the current policy of limiting and in some cases excluding judicial review of determinations of refugee status.

- (v) Work towards establishing more off-shore refugee determination centres in the places where refugee populations are greatest.
- (vi) Engage constructively with the situations in countries that create refugees, by increasing foreign aid, initiating peace-building activities and enhancing diplomatic representation.
- (vii) De-link Australia's off-shore and on-shore refugee quotas.
- (viii) Accurately inform the Australian public on all matters relating to refugees by embarking upon a public education campaign that counteracts racism and promotes public sympathy for some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

2002 Re: Treatment of asylum-seeking women and children currently being held in Australian Government detention centres

02.6.9.4 The Synod resolved:

Pursuant to the Assembly 2000 resolution 00.21.03 (g)(ii), Welcome the Stranger, by which all Synods are bound:

- (a) To express its grave concern to the Prime Minister and Australian Government at the discriminatory and degrading treatment of women and children currently held in detention centres, such as the examples revealed by Julian Burnside QC in his recent Deakin University Law School Oration (see Opinion 15 The Age September 27th, 2002); and
- (b) To ask the Government to urgently review and correct all practices which degrade and adversely affect the well-being, either mental or physical, of women and children in the detention centres.

2003 re: Iranian Asylum Seekers

03.19.01 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to condemn the Australian government for its plans to forcibly deport Iranian people to a situation where they will face persecution and possibly death;
- (b) to ask all members of the Assembly to write to the Minister for Immigration and the Prime Minister, expressing our grave concerns about this proposed action;
- (c) to request the President to write to the Iranians in Port Headland and Baxter Detention Centres expressing the concern and support of the Uniting Church for them;
- (d) to request the President to write to the Uniting Church Ministers providing ministry to Iranians in detention centres expressing the concern and support of the Assembly for the

2004 Re: Refugees and Asylum Seekers

04.4.4.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To call on the Federal Government to:
 - 3) Grant permanent protection to all asylum seekers successful in their application for protection in Australia.
 - 4) Assess protection applications against humanitarian protection criteria arising from United Nations (UN) human rights treaties which Australia has signed, in

addition to Refugee Convention criteria.

- 5) Grant Complementary Protection to claimants successful in an application under humanitarian protection criteria arising from UN human rights treaties Australia has signed.
 - 6) Return failed protection claimants to their country of origin only if it is safe to do so and only where the claimant does not meet Refugee Convention criteria or Complementary Protection criteria.
 - 7) Take into account the following factors in assessing whether a country is safe for a person to be returned to:
 - Independent reports by human rights agencies and other non-government organisations (NGO's);
 - The assessment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and
 - Reports of other Governments.
 - 8) Not use intimidation or forced chemical sedation and to avoid unnecessary use of restraints in the process of removing a failed protection claimant from Australia.
 - 9) Consult and notify both the person being removed and relevant bodies/individuals including government and non-government bodies in Australia and the country of origin of the person before the return.
 - 10) Close offshore processing centres such as Nauru, Papua New Guinea's Manus Island and Christmas Island.
 - 11) Repeal legislation relating to the excision of Australian territory from the Migration Zone.
 - 12) Share responsibility for the global movement of displaced people rather than shift responsibility to poorer nations.
 - 13) Abandon the use of detention as a deterrent.
- (b) To write to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Immigration to inform them of this resolution.

Rural Issues

1985 re: Rural Issues

85.2.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To commend the Division of Social Justice for its work on the rural crisis.
- (b) To request the Division of Social Justice to ensure that continuing and adequate attention is given to the rural crisis.
- (c) To authorize the Standing Committee to deal with any recommendations from the Division of Social Justice concerning the rural crisis.

1986 re: Rural Issues

86.5.7.2/6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To underwrite Presbyteries and Parishes in maintaining ordained ministry in rural areas over the next three years at levels regarded as appropriate by the Presbytery concerned, subject to the endorsement of each application by the Rural Crisis Planning Committee.
- (b) To direct the Resources Commission to determine an appropriate source of funding for the above.
- (c) That the Rural Ministry Task Group of the Division of Field services be requested, in conjunction with rural Presbyteries:
 - (i) to explore possible appropriate and viable alternative forms of ministry in rural areas;
 - (ii) to co-ordinate and facilitate a sharing of innovative forms of ministry;
 - (iii) to develop and circulate studies of appropriate material to stimulate rural Parishes.
- (d) That the Faculty of the Theological Hall be directed to enter into discussions with the Rural Ministry Task Group of the Division of Field Services with a view to providing students with appropriate training experiences in order to develop their skills for emerging forms of ministry in rural areas.
- (e) That the Rural Crisis Planning Committee of the Synod Co-ordinating Commission be requested:
 - (i) to reflect theologically on the meaning of the rural crisis and to let that thinking inform the following work of the Committee;
 - (ii) to establish an information bank of services available, of helpful initiatives that have been taken by churches and communities, and of information from other states and from overseas communities experiencing difficulties as a result of rural decline;
 - (iii) to maintain a current list of contact persons that Churches and communities may access in order to get first-hand information, advice and inspiration, in addressing the needs of families and communities under pressure.

- (iv) to liaise with other denominations in the establishment and operation of this service;
 - (v) to draw together a team of persons who will assist people from rural areas, both farm and town, to be able to begin to conceptualize an alternative life and career in urban areas, and to have hope for the future;
 - (vi) to provide resources to equip people with survival skills for managing tough times in both urban and rural areas;
 - (vii) to undertake a study of current economic policy as it affects the viability and character of rural communities and report to the Standing Committee with recommendations for submissions to the Australian and Victorian governments;
 - (viii) to endeavour to maintain contact with community, government and semi-government groups such as the Mallee Crisis Committee, state and Federal Social Security Departments, the State Rural Affairs Task Force, the Victorian Farmers' Federation, shire councils, finance institutions and others, on a regional basis to enable open communication, effective use of resources, and co-ordinated work insofar as is possible;
 - (ix) to consult with the Rural Ministry Task Group of the Division of Field Services.
- (f) That the Moderator be requested to appoint a deputation to seek a meeting with the Rural Affairs Sub-Committee of the State Cabinet, with a view to requesting that it take urgent action to address the serious effect of the policies of individual government departments which remove staff from rural communities, thus seriously affecting the future viability of such communities.

1993 re: Rural Issues

93.5.4.1 The Synod resolved:

That noting the severe effects of the current economic depression on many Uniting Church families who are farmers:

- (a) The Standing Committee be requested to appoint a task group to consider, and report to the Committee as a matter of urgency, on possible strategies to facilitate partnership through which Uniting Church members could enter economic fellowship with other Uniting Church members (especially farmers) facing burdensome debt.
- (b) The Standing Committee be authorized, after consultation with the resources Commission, to determine action on any proposals from the task group.

1994 re: Rural Issues

94.5.2.2 The Synod resolved:

To encourage all presbyteries and parishes to seek to ally themselves with a drought affected parish so that there might be multi-support from parishes in Victoria to parishes in Queensland and New South Wales.

1999 re: Rural Issues

99.2.9.2 The Synod resolved:

In the light of widespread concern about the future of many rural communities in Victoria:

- (a) To call upon the State and Federal governments each to convene, as a matter of urgency, a summit on rural and regional affairs, and to ensure that the processes in convening and running such summits be as transparent and inclusive as possible; and
- (b) To encourage congregations and presbyteries to engage their local political representatives in dialogue around the issues facing rural communities in Victoria and Australia.

Sentencing (for Crimes)

1993 re: Sentencing (for Crimes), Prisons

93.4.3.4 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Victorian Government be advised that this Synod opposes the Sentencing (Amendment) Act 1993 for the following reasons:
- (i) Sentences should only be imposed on people who have been found guilty of committing a crime.
 - (ii) People should not be incarcerated for crimes they might commit.
 - (iii) The issue of indefinite sentences diverts attention away from the need to provide rehabilitation programs and other assistance for prisoners during the term of their sentences.
 - (iv) The introduction of severe penalties for crimes will lead to longer trials and an increased prison population in an already overcrowded system.
 - (v) The introduction of severe penalties for crimes will lead to higher costs to the community to maintain both the courts and the prison system.

2000 Liberty to the Captives (Mandatory Sentencing)

00.21.02 The Assembly resolved:

in the spirit of this year of Jubilee:

- (xii) to record its:
- (i) opposition to Mandatory Sentencing in any jurisdiction and under any conditions;
 - (ii) desire that all Australians have access to fair and discretionary sentencing;
 - (iii) disappointment that Indigenous Australians are often disadvantaged within the criminal justice system;
 - (iv) expectation that sentencing of juveniles occur within the parameters set by the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty;
 - (v) expectation that Australia fulfil its obligations under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
 - (vi) expectation that Australia will meet the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of Prisoners 1955;
 - (vii) support for a restorative and rehabilitative justice system within Australia;
- (xiii) to call on the Australian Government to use both advocacy and its legislative authority to outlaw the practice of mandatory sentencing within this nation;
- (xiv) to convey the beliefs outlined in (a) and (b) to the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders of other parties in the Senate and House of Representatives;
- (xv) to convey the beliefs outlined in (a) and (b) to all State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and Leaders of other parties within these jurisdictions;

Sexual Abuse

1990 re: Sexual Abuse

90.5.9.1 The Synod resolved:

That Synod recognize an urgent need for policy and protocol for lodging and handling of complaints of sexual offence by ministers and officers of the Church, and encourages the Assembly to treat its work on this issue with urgency.

1991 re: Sexual Abuse, Violence

91.18.1/2 The Assembly resolved:

To receive the report (of the Commission for Women and Men)

- (a) That sexual violence be deplored as a sin against God and humanity.
- (b) that it be recognized that the origin of sexual violence lies in the practice of inequality of the sexes;
- (c) that it be confessed that sexual violence is disturbingly frequent within the Uniting Church community as it is in the wider community;
- (d) that it be acknowledged that in the past, the church has often made inappropriate responses or no response to victims/survivors of sexual violence. This has been experienced by many as a further violation;
- (e) that the church be committed to hearing the voices of those who are victims of sexual violence;
- (f) that the actions of people who work for the end of such violence and who support its victims/survivors be supported;
- (g) that the urgent need for the church community to become part of a "network of prevention" in the area of sexual violence be recognized;
- (h) that the publication "The Pastoral Report to the Churches on Sexual Violence Against Women and Children of the Church Community" be commended to presbyteries and parishes as a guide for study and action.

1991 re: Sexual Abuse, Violence, Family Violence

91.5.1.5 The Synod resolved:

That as a consequences of the issues raised by synod Section 2, the following matter be referred to the Synod Commission for Mission for consideration, and, after consultation with the Resources Commission, any action as deemed appropriate:

That the provision of services for the perpetrators and victims of family/sexual abuse be given high priority, and an allocation of resources to develop this work.

1991 re: Sexual Abuse

91.5.3.2 The Synod resolved:

That, as a matter of urgency, the Standing Committee be requested to appoint a task group to provide expertise and to act as consultants to presbyteries and parishes when complaints of sexual harassment are brought against ministers and members of the Church.

1993 re: Sexual Abuse, Violence, Family Violence

93.4.3.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be requested to provide for the protection of women and children from rape, domestic violence and incest by:

- (i) Developing and maintaining long term programs of preventative community education.
- (ii) Requiring the Department of Public Prosecutions to provide information and advice to victims.
- (iii) Collecting and publishing accurate information concerning sex crimes.
- (iv) Enhancing education for police officers, in particular for the officers of the Uniform and Community Policing Unit, so that they better understand and can better implement codes of practice for sexual assault victims.
- (v) Increasing support for victims of sexual assault by resourcing programs specializing in offering services to victims.
- (vi) Encouraging and resourcing research and education designed to assist judges in sentencing, particularly sentencing involving crimes of sexual assault.

Sexuality

1991 re: Sexuality

91.34.1 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To establish a sexuality task group to prepare a report on the way the Church should respond to changing patterns of human relationships and sexual activity in our society.
- (b) that the report of the task group should cover:
 - an analysis of the changes which are occurring;
 - a framework for discussion of the issues, including consideration of the way scripture acts as a resource for the church in this issue;
 - sexuality and spirituality;
 - various issues of sexuality;
- (c) to request the task group to hold hearings, lead studies and encourage broad open discussion in the Church as part of a process of preparing the report;
- (d) to request the Standing Committee to appoint the members of then task group, ensuring that it is constituted by a broad range of views and expertise - theological, ethical, biblical, medical and sociological;
- (e) to request the Commission for Mission to consider ways it might provide staff support for the task group;
- (f) to request the Standing Committee, in consultation with the Finance Committee, to prepare a budget for the meetings of the task group, and determine ways in which that budget can be met;
- (g) to request the task group to present an interim report to the 1994 Assembly and a final report in 1997.

1996 re: Sexuality

96.6.5.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To welcome the Interim Report of the Assembly Task Group on Sexuality and the way in which it has broken the "culture of silence" in the church, and in which it is promoting wide-ranging discussion on sexuality.

Vote: 280 For 51 Against 25 Abstention
- (b)
 - (i) To affirm the report's emphasis on the Biblically-based concept of right relations as being central to our understanding of sexuality; and

Vote: 314 For 15 Against 9 Abstention
 - (ii) to request the Task Group to further develop the Biblical, theological and ethical perspectives of right relations.
- (c) To encourage the Task Group in its work of collating the responses for presentation to the Eighth Assembly, and to urge the Task Group and other councils of the church to promote opportunities for face-to-face dialogue between groups within the church who hold diverse views.
- (d) That this Synod advise the Assembly that clear statements on sexuality should be made

at the Eighth Assembly.

Vote: 199 For 129 Against 10 Abstention

- (e) To forward to the Task Group the report of the Facilitation Group and the response sheets from the Working Groups.

1996 re: Sexuality

96.6.5.6 The Synod resolved:

To recommend to the 1997 Assembly that, as unity is essential to the character of the church, the Assembly deem any decisions to implement proposals in the *Interim Report on Sexuality* which would threaten the unity of the church to be matters which are vital to the life of the Church in the terms of Clause 39 of the Constitution and therefore matters on which the Assembly is obligated to seek the concurrence of other Councils of the Church, and possibly of Congregations.

Vote : 206 For 128 Against

1996 re: Sexuality

96.6.5.7 The Synod resolved:

To request all members of the Uniting Church to:

- (i) acknowledge the wide range of reactions and pastoral needs which have arisen in discussion of the Interim Report on Sexuality.
- (ii) encourage the continuing pastoral care of people for whom the issue could have had deep personal effect.

1997 re: Differences regarding sexuality

97.6.9.3 The Synod resolved:

Recognising the pain and conflict that exists in the church, and in order to discern the truth of God, to commit itself to the process established by the Eighth Assembly of listening to God together, particularly to the witness of scripture, across deep differences of Christian conviction as to what are faithful expressions of human sexuality, confident that God will lead the Church forward as it struggles with this issue.

1999 re: Sexuality

99.4.3 The Synod resolved:

To call upon each member of the Church, when engaged in conversation or debate regarding sexual orientation, to recognise that:

- (a) All people, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual are loved children of a loving God;
- (b) Christians are called to reflect this love in their dealings with one another;
- (c) Christians should not vilify others, either individually or collectively, because of their sexual orientation; and
- (d) Similarly, Christians should not vilify people of differing theologies.

1999 re: Standing Committee Minute 99/12.2

99.4.3 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod affirm the decision of the Standing Committee Minute 99/19.2.

- (i) To advise the Evangelical Members within the Uniting Church (Victorian Synod) that the appointment of a particular person to a position of responsibility has no effect on their personal risks and responsibilities under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act. The Act allows a person to discriminate against another person if the discrimination is necessary to comply with the person's genuine religious beliefs or principles. It does not deprive them of their right and responsibility to advocate doctrinal positions within the Victorian Synod of the Church.

- (ii) To direct members and ministers of this Synod, that in the ongoing debate regarding the ordination or leadership within the Church of those living in committed same-gender relationships, that they should confine themselves strictly to matters of theology, policy and principle, and that they should not name or identify persons in such debate. To do so would expose them and the Church to the risk of complaints such as sexual harassment, homosexual vilification, and authorising or assisting another person to discriminate, under Australian anti-discrimination laws; and to the possibility of civil litigation; and would leave individuals open to discipline within the Church under Regulations 7.8.2(b) and (e).'

Social Justice - General

1977 re: Social Justice - General, Communication

77.5.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request the Division of Social Justice to convene a meeting of the Faith and Order Committee and the Board of Communication to examine how the Uniting Church can best express its mind on matters of importance within the community.
- (b) That the communication received from the Deepdene Parish Council be referred to the above mentioned meeting.

1992 re: Social Justice - General, Communication

92.2.2.2 The Synod resolved:

That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested:

- (i) to give more attention in its future reports to Synod to the initiatives it has taken to bring questions of social justice to the attention of governments, and
- (ii) to make known to the Church how it has consulted on public questions,

in order that in future meetings the Synod is enabled to recognize and discuss the issues.

2006 re: The Importance of International Mission of the Church

06.21.07 The Assembly resolved:

To call upon the Councils of the Uniting Church to give a strong emphasis to the international mission work of the Uniting Church as a way of strengthening the life of the Church.

South Africa

1981 re: South Africa, Apartheid

81.5.2 The Synod resolved:

To refer the recommendations concerning divestment of investment in companies doing business in/with South Africa, to the Resources Commission, for inclusion in the consideration of the question of divestment of certain classes of shares as required by resolution 2(b).

1985 re: South Africa, Apartheid

85.2.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That Synod call upon its members to pray for the people of South Africa and Namibia.
- (b) To note that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches has declared that apartheid is a heresy and that any support for it is sinful.
 - (i) To reaffirm the Synod's commitment to monitor investments "in companies doing business in/with South Africa" for inclusion in "the consideration of the question of divestment". (Minute 81.5.2)
 - (ii) To monitor investment held in the name of the Synod with a view to divesting itself, where legally possible, of shares, trusts, debentures and other investments:
 - 1. in any South African company;
 - 2. in companies operating in South Africa or whose subsidiaries operate in South Africa;
 - 3. in companies whose trade with South Africa affects significantly their operation.
 - (iii) To request the Resources Commission to report on the implementation of this divestment to Synod 1986 and to subsequent Synods.
 - (iv) To ask the Moderator to inform the companies involved of the passage and implementation of these resolutions and to encourage their withdrawal, and the withdrawal of their financial resources, from South Africa.
- (c) To request members of the Uniting Church to divest themselves of investments in companies operating in South Africa.
- (d) To recognize the African National Congress (ANC) as a legitimate representative organization of the people of South Africa.
- (e) To write to the Prime Minister of Australia commending:
 - (i) the actions concerning sanctions against South Africa taken by the Australian Government at the United Nations over recent years, and
 - (ii) the August 1985 announcement concerning sanctions against South Africa;
 - indicating support for
 - (iii) the termination of landing rights in Australia for South African Airways, and

- (iv) the closure of the Australian Trade Commission in South Africa; and
 - requesting
 - (v) that the Government establish Trade Commissions in sovereign states bordering South Africa;
 - (vi) that the Government educate the Australian public on social conditions in South Africa and Namibia as the basis for actions concerning South Africa;
 - (vii) that the Government take up more fully its responsibilities as a member of the United Nations Council of Namibia.
- (f) To appeal to the Pretoria Government:
- (i) To abandon apartheid, release all political prisoners and seek a peaceful, just, multiracial form of government in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
 - (ii) To recognize the African National Congress (ANC) and the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) as legitimate political representative organizations of the people of Southern Africa.
- (g) To send greetings and a copy of resolutions 85.2.1 (a) - (f) to the:
- South African Council of Churches;
 - United Congregational Church of Southern Africa;
 - Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa;
 - Methodist Church of Southern Africa;
 - Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa;
 - Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk.
- (h) That a copy of resolutions 85.2.1 (a) - (d) and 85.2.1 (f) be sent to the Prime Minister of Australia.
- (i) That a copy of resolutions 85.2.1/2-8 be sent to the leaders of the:
- Liberal Party of Australia;
 - National Party of Australia;
 - Australian Democrats; and to
 - the State President of South Africa.
- (j) To write to Mr. Bruce Francis, organizer of the tour of South Africa by Australian cricketers:
- (i) condemning the proposed tour because of its implied support for the oppressive regime in South Africa, and
 - (ii) asking that the tour be abandoned forthwith.
 - (iii) That a copy of the letter to Mr. Francis be forwarded to the:
 - South African Council of Churches;
 - United Congregational Church of Southern Africa;
 - Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa;
 - Methodist Church of Southern Africa;
 - Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa;
 - Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk;
 - Prime Minister of Australia;
 - Liberal Party of Australia;
 - National Party of Australia;
 - Australian Democrats;

State President of South Africa.

1986 re: South Africa

86.4.3.5 The Synod resolved:

To send greetings to:

The South African Council of Churches;
The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa;
The Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa;
The Methodist Church of Southern Africa;
The Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa;
The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk;
Archbishop Desmond Tutu;
The Rev. Alan Boesak;
The United Democratic Front;
The African National Congress;
The South West Peoples Organization

assuring them of our prayers and support in these critical times.

1988 re: South Africa, Apartheid

88.22.14/19 The Assembly resolved:

To request Uniting Church members to study and, where possible, to respond to the Karios and Lusaka documents as a step towards increasing the Church's solidarity with our Christian sisters and brothers in South Africa in their struggle.

To request Parishes to support the "material aid campaign for victims of apartheid" which is assisting refugees in the frontline states.

To request Synods to make money available to the African National Congress and South-West African Peoples' Organization offices in Australia for their anti-apartheid education programs.

To call on the Australian Government as a matter of urgency to implement comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

To stand for two minutes silent prayer for the many people of Southern Africa who have given their lives to the struggle for liberation and contributed so much in faith and love.

To communicate its dismay at and protest the action of the South African Government in its recent banning of the Rev. Dr. T. Simon Gqubule, Principal of John Wesley College, Pietermaritzburg, Ex President of the Methodist Church in South Africa, and request his immediate release.

That it further deplores the South African Government's apparent indifference to the cries of those individuals and organizations committed to peace and social change in society.

1988 re: South Africa, Apartheid

88.5.3.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Australian Government be requested to vote at the United Nations in favour of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa, and to comply in all respects with that United Nations' resolution.

1988 re: South Africa, Apartheid

88.1.9.4 The Synod resolved:

That, in response to Assembly Minute 88.22.16:

- (a) an Appeal be launched to raise funds for the African National Congress and the South-West African People's Organisation offices in Australia for their anti-apartheid education programs;
- (b) that such Appeal be underwritten up to \$10,000 from unearmarked Synod Funds.

1990 re: South Africa, Apartheid

90.4.7.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) The Synod pause:
 - for prayer for the people of South Africa and,
 - for reflection on,
the joy felt throughout the world that there is hope for South Africa
the pain felt as a result of recent events in South Africa.
- (b) That the South African Council of Churches be advised that the prayers and support of this Synod are with the Council and its members at this crucial time.
- (c) That the Moderator be requested to write to the African National Congress (ANC)
 - (i) expressing the Synod's delight at recent events in South Africa including the un-banning of the ANC and the release of some political prisoners including Nelson Mandela;
 - (ii) recognizing that suffering continues, and these events are only the beginning of a long process towards creating a free and just South Africa.
- (d) That a copy of resolution (c) hereof be forwarded to the South African Ambassador to Australia.

Miss Penny Foley led the Synod in prayer for South Africa.

1991 re: South Africa, Apartheid

91.5.3.4 The Synod resolved:

To convey to the Australian Foreign Minister the Synod's support for the ongoing pressure being applied by the Australian Government to the South African Government.

Taiwan

1999 re: Taiwan

99.4.1 The Synod resolved:

To send a message of support and prayer to our partner Church, the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan and through them to the people of Taiwan, following the recent disastrous earthquake in Taiwan.

2003 re: Taiwan

03.48 The Assembly resolved:

noting the suffering and anxiety caused by the recent Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in Taiwan, and the delayed response of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other international health agencies to the epidemic in Taiwan, to support our partner church, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, in its request on behalf of the Taiwanese people for urgent access to all the services of the World Health Organisation and, in the longer term, for full membership of the WHO.

Taxation

1994 re: Taxation, Unemployment

94.3.3.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod call on the Commonwealth Government to develop funding models for employment creation which address health, welfare and education needs of the long term unemployed.
- (b) That the Synod affirm the creation of a means of income distribution based on taxation.

1981 re: Taxation

81.5.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To call on the Federal Government to reverse its decision to impose sales tax on essential articles, such as clothing, footwear and books, as such taxes place a far greater burden on the poor than on the rich.
- (b) To send a copy of this resolution to the Prime Minister, The Federal Treasurer, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Australian Democrats, and Mr Goodluck M.P.

1997 re: Taxation reform

97.6.6.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To affirm the principle that the payment of taxes is a moral responsibility that goes with citizenship;
- (b) While acknowledging that taxation reform is a complex issue, to recommend to the Federal Government that the following guidelines need to undergird any reform of the Australian Taxation System:
 - (i) that the taxation system be primarily progressive and just;
 - (ii) that the taxation system encourage a responsible use of our resources and stewardship of the environment;
 - (iii) that the taxation system be designed in such a way as to lessen the gap between the rich and the poor;
- (c) To urge the Federal Government to incorporate within the Tax Reform agenda a resolution of Commonwealth-State taxation issues in such a way as to minimise State Government dependency on gambling taxes; and
- (d) To inform the Federal and State Government of this resolution.

Terrorism

2001 Re: The tragic events that unfolded in the United States of America on 11th September 2001

01.6.7.4 The Synod resolved:

- (b)
 - (i) To write to the American Consulate in Victoria expressing our deepest sympathy for the families and friends of those who died in the criminal actions that engulfed New York and Washington on 11 September 2001.
 - (ii) To commit the Church to continue to pray for all people traumatised by this tragic event.
- (c) Recalling that Jesus Christ is our peace,
 - (i) to acknowledge that the church is called to a ministry that declares Christ's peace by being a people of non-violence,
 - (ii) to seek justice for the victims of oppression.
- (d) To promote action leading to negotiated justice and to resist calls to engage in war or any associated punitive military action, other than under the auspices of the United Nations, in response to the attacks on the United States of America.
- (e) To call on congregations
 - (i) to pray for peace at this time;
 - (ii) to pray for armed force personnel and their families and for defence force chaplains of all faiths; and
 - (iii) to pray for political leaders in Australia as they respond to this crisis; and
 - (iv) to actively pursue peace by building and sustaining relationships in Australia between peoples of differing communities; standing especially with people who are victimised because they are Muslim, Jewish or of Middle Eastern appearance.
- (f) To call on political leaders of Australia:
 - (i) to act in ways that seek justice for the victims of the crisis of 11 September 2001 and that contribute to peace between peoples;
 - (ii) to urge in international forums that the United States of America and its allies develop and implement a balanced response to the Muslim world and its peoples;
 - (iii) to advocate the use of international judicial instruments to bring those responsible for the attacks to justice, and to urge the United States of America to present the evidence they have in this respect.
- (g) To request the Commission for Mission:
 - (i) to reactivate the Peace Register for Conscientious Objectors;
 - (ii) to invite members of the Synod of Victoria to participate in a network for peace;
 - (iii) to resource that network;
 - (iv) in partnership with the Theological Hall, to develop a theological resource which facilitates faith reflection on peace, "just war" and "terrorism";
 - (v) to continue to work for peace through its ecumenical and inter-faith relationships;
 - (vi) In participation with the Theological Hall and B'Nai Brith (the Jewish Social Justice and Political Council) to establish a formal relationship with the Islamic Council of Victoria; and
 - (vii) to actively promote the World Council of Churches "Decade to Overcome Violence".
- (h)
 - (i) To inform the congregations in Victoria and the President of these resolutions.
 - (ii) To inform the leaders of all political parties of these resolutions.
 - (iii) To issue a public statement outlining these resolutions.

2001 Re: Response to recent events in the United States of America

01.6.7.5 The Synod resolved:

To write, as a matter of extreme urgency, to the Consul General for Victoria and Tasmania and the National Council of Churches of Indonesia (PGI), indicating:

- (i) our prayers of concern that recent events in the USA do not affect the good relationship between Christianity and Islam in Indonesia; and
- (ii) that the Uniting Church, Synod of Victoria, is opposed to any hostility and war between Islam and Christianity, and encourages all people to work for peace.

The resolution will be conveyed in Indonesian, as follows:

Sinode di Victoria memutuskan:

Untuk menulis, karena sangat penting masalahnya, kepada Konsul Jendral di Victoria dan Tasmania dan Persekutuan Gereja – gereja di Indonesia (PGI), mengenai:

- (i) *Doa keprihatinan kami supaya peristiwa yang terjadi di USA tidak mempengaruhi hubungan baik yang ada antara umat Islam dan Kristen di Indonesia; dan*
- (ii) *Bahwa Gereja Uniting, Sinode Victoria, menolak segala bentuk pertentangan dan peperangan yang ada antara umat Islam dan Kristen, dan menganjurkan semua orang untuk mengusahakan perdamaian.*

2003 re: Support for the Church and People in Bali

03.18.02 The Assembly resolved:

being aware of the severe economic situation being faced in Bali in the aftermath of the bombing in October 2002,

- (a) to express greetings to the Protestant Christian Church in Bali, assuring them that we are aware of their pain, hurt and insecurity at this time;
- (b) to express its thanksgiving for their continuing positive and faithful witness and service;
- (c) to assure them of our continuing solidarity with them as they move forward into the future;
- (d) to ask members of the Uniting Church to express their solidarity with the church in Bali through prayer and practical support;
- (e) to encourage members of the Uniting Church to include Bali in their itinerary for overseas travel whenever possible and to make contact with the church in Bali during their visit

2003 re: Detention of Australian citizens in Guantanamo Bay

03.42 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) affirming that:
 - God's love for every human being leads Christians to support those whose human rights are disregarded, including those who are imprisoned unjustly, and
 - it is a fundamental responsibility of a democratic government to seek to safeguard the human rights of all its citizens, including the unpopular and the alleged wrongdoer, to deplore the detention without legal charges or trial of Australian citizens David Hicks since January 2002 and Mamdouh Habib since May 2002 in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba,

and the acquiescence of the Australian government in their detention by the government of the United States of America;

- (b) to request the Australian Government to act immediately:
 - (i) to enable any alleged offences of David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib to be dealt with under Australian or international law,
 - (ii) to ensure that David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib are granted access to lawyers engaged by themselves and/or their families,
 - (iii) to arrange for the return of David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib to Australia to be dealt with under Australian or international law for any alleged offences,
 - (iv) to arrange the release from detention of David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib if there is insufficient evidence for them to face trial under Australian or international law,
 - (v) to protest against United States plans to bring one or both of David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib to trial before a United States Military Tribunal, and
 - (vi) to protest in the strongest possible terms against the potential use of the death penalty as a punishment, should the United States proceed with plans to try David Hicks and/or Mamdouh Habib and find them guilty;

- (c) to communicate these resolutions to the Australian Government, the Federal Opposition, the Australian Democrats, the Australian Greens, the Ambassador of the United States of America and the families of David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib.

Trade Unions

1991 re: Trade Unions

91.14.17 The Assembly resolved:

That, recognising the importance of trade unions, professional associations, and employer organisations to overall democratic processes in society, and acknowledging that in the present political, economic, and industrial climate, trade unions are under serious threat:

- (a) the role trade unions and professional associations play in protecting those who are weaker in society, and the need for people to stand together in solidarity against injustice be affirmed;
- (b) the need for Christians to express their discipleship in trade unions and professional associations as one way in which church and work life connect and influence each other be affirmed;
- (c) members of the Uniting Church be encouraged to join and be active in the trade union and/or professional association appropriate to their employment;
- (d) synods, Assembly agencies, and other Church bodies be requested to encourage employees to join and be active in an appropriate trade union and/or professional association.

Trading Hours

1981 re: Trading Hours

81.5.9 The Synod resolved:

Noting proposed experiments into the extension of trading hours and that apart from several large business corporations these experiments apparently neither arise from public demand nor have the general support of workers, traders or the community;

Noting that the timing of the proposed experiment during December would not represent a typical shopping period;

Recognizing that such trading has ramifications not only for commerce, but also for patterns of family and community life, since it is likely to oblige most traders to extend hours and require workers to work at weekends; believing that our faith heritage provides rich insights into a desirable rhythm of work, rest, and the opportunities for families and communities to enjoy life together:

- (a) To request the State Government neither to proceed with such experiments nor to act in ways which threaten the concept of a family weekend.
- (b) To encourage Church members to make prompt representations on these matters to their local members.

1991 re: Trading Hours

91.5.3.7 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the opposition to the extension of Sunday trading hours (Synod Minute 81.5.9) be re-affirmed.
- (b) That parishes be invited to seek means of acting in solidarity with parishes of other churches, employee organizations, business groups and family welfare groups to express opposition to the extension of Sunday trading hours.
- (c) That those who oppose extension of Sunday trading hours be encouraged to refrain from shopping at outlets of those businesses which are seen to retain a policy supporting an extension of Sunday trading.

1996 re: Trading Hours

96.6.4.10 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To oppose moves by the Victorian Government to extend retail trading hours.
- (b) To request the Victorian Government to negotiate with retailers and community groups to address current anomalies in retail trading hours legislation.
- (c) To encourage Uniting Church members to petition their local councils to conduct a binding poll of all voters in the local area to determine whether Sunday trading should be restricted.

Unemployment

1980 re: Unemployment, Poverty

80.2.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To note the current high rates of unemployment in Australia, and to recognize that,
 - (i) in the overwhelming majority of cases, unemployment is not the fault of the unemployed themselves;
 - (ii) many of those who depend upon unemployment benefits are living in poverty;
 - (iii) the human cost arising from unemployment levels is evident; and
 - (iv) while there are no cheap or easy solutions to unemployment, it is unjust for the unemployed minority to shoulder the burden of the nations economic problems.
- (b) To call on the Government of Victoria and the Federal Government to initiate strategies which will:
 - (i) provide work for everyone who wants it, recognizing that this may mean some jobs are to be financed through the public purse; and
 - (ii) guarantee a liveable income for those not at work.
- (c) To endorse the claims of the Coalition Against Poverty and Unemployment, which are to:
 - (i) Heighten awareness of the severity and causes of poverty and unemployment;
 - (ii) Involve the community in expressing its support for change; and
 - (iii) Mobilize pressure on both the Government and the Opposition to effect the change necessary to eliminate poverty and unemployment.
- (d) To request Presbyteries and Parishes to encourage all their members to study the material produced by the Division of Social Justice, sister Churches, the Ecumenical Unemployment Task Group, and the Coalition Against Poverty and Unemployment, in order that they may be better informed on the issues of poverty and unemployment.
- (e) To request Presbyteries and Parishes to be informed about activities in their areas which have the elimination of poverty and unemployment as their primary aim, and, where appropriate and possible, to provide support.
- (f) To request the Division of Social Justice to pursue the study of the links between poverty and unemployment with a view to providing resources for study and action throughout the Uniting Church.

1987 re: Unemployment

87.3.2.8 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Australian Government be requested:
 - (i) to affirm its commitment to provision of employment under just and favourable conditions to all who seek work, and to protection against unemployment;

- (ii) to give priority to ways in which current unacceptably high levels of unemployment may be overcome, including just and equitable restructuring of industry and the provision of related job creation and training programs, and to do this in consultation with the unemployed and low income people, with women's groups, with employees, employers, trade unions and business organizations.

1991 re: Unemployment

91.2.3.5 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod Commission for Mission make a presentation of up to ten minutes on its response to the current levels of unemployment in Victoria.
- (b) That for the remainder of the time members be allowed one minute speeches on this issue.
- (c) To express to the Victorian and Australian Governments its deep concern at the unacceptable level of unemployment in Victoria and request urgent policy action be taken to stimulate job creation.
- (d) That the Synod Commission for Mission be requested to give high priority to the establishment of an economic, theological and ethical study of the alternatives to policies which produce high levels of unemployment, and report to the Synod 1992.

1994 re: Unemployment

94.18.03 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) to recognize the serious effects of unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, on individuals, their families and the whole community and commend the report to the church for study and action, noting that the Social Responsibility and Justice Committee is developing an educational kit based on the report and suitable for parish use;
- (b) to adopt section 13 of the Report, Policy Implications, as amended, as a statement of the Assembly, under the title of "A call for justice concerning employment" (see Appendix F);
- (c) to request the Social Responsibility and Justice Committee to use this statement as the basis for continuing more specific work, including dialogue with other churches, government and community groups;
- (d) to request the Social Responsibility and Justice Committee to continually review the policy implications and to report any significant revisions to future Assembly or Standing Committee for decision;
- (e) to request parishes and presbyteries to share the stories of their programs and action in response to unemployment, and ask the Social Responsibility and Justice Committee to facilitate the sharing of these stories and networking;
- (f) to express the concern of the church that the urgent matter of unemployment not become an issue for point scoring within political and other agencies.

1994 re: Unemployment, Taxation

94.3.3.2 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Synod call on the Commonwealth Government to develop funding models for employment creation which address health, welfare and education needs of the long term unemployed.
- (b) That the Synod affirm the creation of a means of income distribution based on taxation.

1995 re: Unemployment, Emergency Relief

95.6.9.14 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To inform the Australian Government that this Synod is opposed to any reduction in funding for labour market programs as detailed in the 1994-95 Federal Budget.
- (b) To strongly urge the Australian Government to review its decision to reduce emergency relief funds in Victoria by \$1,153,290.00.

1996 re: Unemployment

96/25.9 Synod Standing Committee resolved:

to request the Federal Government to reverse its decision to cut 40% of the funding from Labour Market Programs, given the increase in unemployment and in particular the numbers of long-term unemployed.

2002 Re: Unemployed People

02.6.4.5 The Synod resolved:

Noting that Synod resolution 80.2.3 called on the Federal Government to guarantee a liveable income for those not at work and to initiate strategies to provide work for everyone who wants it:

- (a) To state its opposition to any reduction in unemployment benefits below the level of the Henderson poverty line for people who are classified as unemployed for failing to meet 'activity tests';
- (b) To welcome the initiatives and commitments to increase assistance and incentives for people to find work in the 2002-2003 Federal budget, while acknowledging the current allocation is still insufficient;
- (c) To inform the Prime Minister, the Minister for Family and Community Service, the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Family and Community Service of this resolution.

Uranium Mining

1977 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

77.4.12 The Synod resolved:

(a) That the first Synod of the Uniting Church in Victoria does not feel free to be silent about a most important issue which is now before the Australian nation: the matter of the mining and exporting of uranium.

- (i) Christ's disciples are called to be "the salt of the earth" and a "city on a mountain" by what they are among themselves and also in their concern for the world. They have heard Christ's commandment to love God and their neighbour and they are called to obey Him in His Lordship over God's creation and his protest against all forces that endanger and damage it.

They look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, indeed a new universe that glorifies God's name, a universe where all that is receives God's gracious gifts in harmony, abundance, safety and security.

- (ii) In this context the Uniting Church feels constrained to express concern about the policy of the Australian government to mine and export uranium.

The Uniting Church wants to speak to its own membership and to the nation, to all men and women, irrespective of their political affiliation.

1. We do not share a popular belief in the inevitability of the use of uranium as a source of energy. Many people argue that the world has entered the nuclear age - that a number of nations are mining and exporting uranium, making handsome profits and also serving the world in its energy needs. They argue that we in Australia cannot put the clock back; that we should not stay behind in the development of the world. We do not share such a belief. We do believe that Australia and the world need a thorough study of the energy problem in its totality in connection with our standards of life; and the glaring differences in the use of energy in the wealthier and poorer parts of the world.

2. We do not share the optimistic belief in man as a being who could overcome all the risks connected with the use of nuclear energy if he only set his mind to it. We have witnessed in our century that man can become a dangerous monster, led by demonic forces to destroy humanity. There are no absolute safeguards against the use of uranium and its waste products for destructive purposes.

3. We share the widely held anxiety in regard to the dangers of waste products - plutonium and others. We feel that present-day generations have no right at all to impose on future ones the enormous cost of human resources to care for the wastes and obsolete installations they leave behind them, to say nothing of the continuous risks this involves.

The 20th century is already, in many respects, bearing the burden of guilty decisions and attitudes of former periods of history. We must not increase that burden.

The life-style of the wealthier parts of the world would only be prolonged for a very small period of time, without helping the under-developed nations to have the bare necessities of life.

- (iii) The above mentioned concerns are only a few of the many reasons which make

us believe that it is the primary duty of the Australian Government to continue studying the use and possible mis-use of uranium as a source of energy.

We plead for the Government to pause again on the decision to mine and export uranium. It should try to involve the whole nation at all levels in the study and discussion of these problems.

The uranium issue is a matter of life and death. It must not become a matter of party-politics; the nation as a whole is responsible.

In this context we believe in the right of every man and woman, young and old, to express an opinion in this matter in public. Endeavours to limit or suppress public demonstrations can only create explosive situations. "Children should obey their parents, but parents should not provoke their children to anger".

- (b) That members of the Synod and members of the Uniting Church in Victoria be requested:
- (i) to study material produced by the Australian Council of Churches, the Commission for World Mission, and the Northern Synod concerning the ethical and social issues involved; the effect on Aboriginal communities and the future implications of the decision to mine and export uranium.
 - (ii) to respond by continuing participation in the public debate, and as individuals to take appropriate action according to the request of the Australian Council of Churches, the Commission for World Mission and the Northern Synod.
 - (iii) to responsibly review our use of personal and church resources and lower our standard of living;
 - (iv) to convey to the Government that we believe no mining of uranium should take place in Australia for a five year period from the publication of the second part of the Fox report.
- (c)
- (i) That resolutions (a) to (b) be forwarded to the leaders of all Federal political parties, and to the Premiers of the various States, and their responses be sought in writing;
 - (ii) that the replies received be published in "Church and Nation" with the consent of the Editor.

1978 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

78.5.11 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To reaffirm the statement of the 1977 Synod on the mining and export of uranium.
- (b) To remind the Federal Government of the recommendations of the first report of the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, viz.
 - (i) to take immediate steps to institute full and energetic programs of research and development into alternative energy resources; and
 - (ii) that there be a national program for energy conservation.
- (c) To request the Government to implement these resolutions as a matter of urgency.

1979 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

79.26 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) receive the statement on uranium;
- (b) print the statement; and
- (c) refer the statement to Synods and Presbyteries.

1981 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

81.4.6 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That the Board of Property and Finance act as follows:
 - (i) By Synod 1982, dispose of any shares, debentures, stock or notes or any other marketable security held by the Board, being an investment of the Common Fund or the specific investment of any other fund held by the Board, which represent an investment in any company whereby any part of the business of that company as at October 1981, is engaged in the actual mining of uranium or a substantial part of the business of that company as at October 1981, is involved in the processing, export, transport, transshipment or handling of uranium or its derivatives.
 - (ii) To report to the Standing Committee by June 1982, the action being taken pursuant to the above resolution including any capital profits or losses which may have resulted from its actions, and whether the board considers that all companies believed to be involved in the uranium industry, and whose marketable securities were held by the Board, are being suitably researched and the necessary action being taken in terms of the above resolution.
 - (iii) To refrain immediately from the purchase of new securities, extensions to present holdings, or option of rights to any marketable security in any company involved in the uranium industry as defined in resolution (i).
- (b) That any company, as defined in resolution (i), whose sole business involvement in the handling of uranium, or its derivatives, is in the area of medical research or for medical purposes, be exempted from action under resolution (a).
- (c)
 - (i) That a Task Group of seven persons be established to carry out an investigation of all companies whose marketable securities are held within the Common Fund or any other fund held by the Board, to ascertain their involvement through financing or secondary investment or otherwise in any way whatsoever in any company which is deemed to be involved with the uranium industry, and to bring a report of such third party involvement in the uranium industry to Synod 1983.
 - (ii) That the Task group comprise three members appointed by the Property and Finance, one of whom shall act as Convener, two members appointed by the Division of Resources, and two members appointed by the Division of Social Justice.
- (d) To encourage all members, agencies, institutions of the Uniting Church to study their involvement through financial investment in the uranium and nuclear industries, in the light of the decisions of this Synod, and to act accordingly.
- (e) To urge strongly the Federal Government to review and reconsider its stated intention of transferring the control and operation of the uranium and nuclear industries to individual State Governments of this country.

1982 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

82.56 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) note the following resolution adopted by the Standing Committee of the Synod of Victoria:
- (i) that an amount equivalent to the profits of the sale of E.R.A. shares in November, 1980, be transferred to the Commission on Social Responsibility for establishment of a Nuclear Action Fund;
 - (ii) that the terms of reference for this fund be as follows:

Grants to be supplied to projects of an educational nature on the issues of the Nuclear Disarmament Debate and the Nuclear Fuel Cycle including the debate on Uranium Mining in Australia and support for Aboriginal people most directly affected by uranium mining;
 - (iii) that grants from the fund be available to both Church and community groups;
 - (iv) to request the Commission on Social Responsibility to appoint a committee, comprising no fewer than three persons, to authorize the disbursements from this fund, which is to be held within the Assembly Fund, and to report annually to the Commission;
- (b) establish the Fund as proposed and request the Commission to:
- (i) encourage further contributions from Synods and individuals; and
 - (ii) operate the Fund in accordance with the above resolution.

1982 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

82.2.8 The Synod resolved:

To support the concept of declaring Victoria a zone free of the mining of uranium, the processing of fissionable material, the storage, transport and waste disposal of fissionable material, and inform the Victorian and Federal Governments accordingly.

1982 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

82.5.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To endorse the action of the Task Group in carrying out its work under the minutes of 1981 Synod.

The identification of eight levels of involvement as follows:

- (i) Companies solely engaged in uranium mining;
- (ii) Companies directly engaged in uranium mining as part of their total operations;
- (iii) Companies holding a substantial or controlling interest in a company in categories (i) and (ii);
- (iv) Companies providing services to companies involved in uranium mining e.g. banking, insurance, transport;

- (v) Companies supplying capital equipment to companies involved in uranium mining;
- (vi) Companies having an indirect involvement with the uranium industry not identified in any one of the above categories;
- (vii) Companies providing ancillary services to communities established at uranium centers;
- (viii) Companies with no identifiable involvement in the uranium industry.

The classification of companies within the Synod Portfolio according to the above levels of involvement.

- (b) That the Synod cease to hold shares in companies as described in the first three categories listed above:
 - (i) Companies engaged solely in uranium mining;
 - (ii) Companies directly engaged in uranium mining as part of their total operations;
 - (iii) Companies holding a substantial or controlling interest in a company in categories (i) and (ii).
- (c) That the task of reviewing the Uniting Church portfolio be the responsibility of the Investment Review Committee established by the Resources Commission.
- (d) That the Task Group be thanked and discharged.

1985 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

85.78.1/3 The Assembly resolved:

- (a) To receive the Statement on Uranium as a basis for discussion.
- (b) To request the Commission on Social Responsibility to print the Statement, without the final paragraph on Disobedience, and appropriate study material.
- (c) To encourage Congregations, Parishes and Presbyteries to study the Statement, to initiate more informed debate in the community, and to keep the Commission on Social Responsibility informed of their work on this issue.

1994 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

94.4.2.11/12 The Synod resolved:

To reaffirm its opposition to the mining and export of uranium.

To urge the Federal Government to resist attempts to abandon the existing "three mine" policy of the Australian Labor Party so that new mines may be allowed to operate.

1996 re: Uranium Mining, Environment - General

96.6.4.13 The Synod resolved:

To inform the Federal Government of its disappointment and opposition to their decision to abandon the existing “three mine” policy of the previous Federal Government in order to establish new uranium mines in areas including National Parks, World Heritage Areas and aboriginal owned land.

Vanuatu

1980 re: Vanuatu, Pacific

80.1.13 The Synod resolved:

To request the Moderator to convey to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu:

- (a) the greetings and good wishes of the Synod on the occasion of its country's independence;
- (b) congratulations to the Church for the leadership given in the struggle for independence; and
- (c) the assurance of the continued support of this Synod, as the Church of Vanuatu seeks to accept the new challenges and responsibilities of this time.

Violence

1988 re: Violence

88.5.3.1. The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be advised that this Synod:

- (i) supports the establishment of a Community Council against Violence, and
- (ii) is ready to participate in community strategies which seek to overcome the problems of violence in our community.

1989 re: Violence, Family Violence

89.3.3.1 The Synod resolved:

To recognize that within the Victorian community, physical violence occurs predominantly within families, and that women are predominantly its victims.

1989 re: Violence, Family Violence

89.3.6.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To request presbyteries:
 - (i) to consider and implement those measures necessary to provide support for ministers of the word, deaconesses and councils of elders in the pastoral task of responding to family violence; and
 - (ii) to advise the Synod Commission for Mission of steps taken.
- (b) To request ministers of the word, deaconesses and councils of elders to include in their preparation for regular nurture of members, serious attention to family violence.

1991 re: Violence, Sexual Abuse

91.18.1/2 The Assembly resolved:

To receive the report (of the Commission for Women and Men)

- (a) That sexual violence be deplored as a sin against God and humanity.
- (b) that it be recognized that the origin of sexual violence lies in the practice of inequality of the sexes;
- (c) that it be confessed that sexual violence is disturbingly frequent within the Uniting Church community as it is in the wider community;
- (d) that it be acknowledged that in the past, the church has often made inappropriate responses or no response to victims/survivors of sexual violence. This has been experienced by many as a further violation;
- (e) that the church be committed to hearing the voices of those who are victims of sexual

violence;

- (f) that the actions of people who work for the end of such violence and who support its victims/survivors be supported;
- (g) that the urgent need for the church community to become part of a "network of prevention" in the area of sexual violence be recognized;
- (h) that the publication "The Pastoral Report to the Churches on Sexual Violence Against Women and Children of the Church Community" be commended to presbyteries and parishes as a guide for study and action.

1991 re: Violence, Family Violence, Sexual Abuse

91.5.1.5 The Synod resolved:

That as a consequences of the issues raised by synod Section 2, the following matter be referred to the Synod Commission for Mission for consideration, and, after consultation with the Resources Commission, any action as deemed appropriate:

That the provision of services for the perpetrators and victims of family/sexual abuse be given high priority, and an allocation of resources to develop this work.

1993 re: Violence, Sexual Abuse, Family Violence

93.4.3.5 The Synod resolved:

That the Victorian Government be requested to provide for the protection of women and children from rape, domestic violence and incest by:

- (i) Developing and maintaining long term programs of preventative community education.
- (ii) Requiring the Department of Public Prosecutions to provide information and advice to victims.
- (iii) Collecting and publishing accurate information concerning sex crimes.
- (iv) Enhancing education for police officers, in particular for the officers of the Uniform and Community Policing Unit, so that they better understand and can better implement codes of practice for sexual assault victims.
- (v) Increasing support for victims of sexual assault by resourcing programs specializing in offering services to victims.
- (vi) Encouraging and resourcing research and education designed to assist judges in sentencing, particularly sentencing involving crimes of sexual assault.

War and War Crimes

2000 War Criminals

00.20.03 The Assembly resolved:

- (xvi) to express its commitment to solidarity with all people seeking justice for war crimes;
- (xvii) to express its belief that neither the passage of time nor the vagaries of location should become pretexts for inaction in the pursuit of justice;
- (xviii) to work for the further development and acceptance of international agreements and efforts in bringing to justice alleged war criminals and persons charged with genocide;
- (xix) to encourage the Australian Government to
 - co-operate further with relevant bodies within Australia and overseas in the pursuit of alleged war criminals and those charged with genocide;
 - ensure that there are government or other officially recognised/authorised bodies in Australia with specific responsibility for the investigation and pursuit of alleged war criminals and those charged with genocide;
 - adequately resource appropriate government or other officially recognised/authorised bodies to investigate and act upon all allegations of war crimes and genocide brought against persons known or thought to be residing in Australia;
- (xx) to inform the Australian Government of these resolutions.

Women and the Church

1978 re: Women and the Church

78.5.5 The Synod resolved:

That in counting the votes, the Scrutineers keep in mind the regulation indicating that at least one-third of lay representatives should be women.

1988 re: Women and the Church

88.22.6/10 The Assembly resolved:

To commend to Synods, Presbyteries, Councils of Elders and Congregations for their serious consideration the position paper arising from the study of the place of women in Uniting Church as containing matters vital to the life and witness of the Church.

To request the Commission for Mission to present a report and recommendations arising from the position paper "Women in the Uniting Church" to the Standing Committee which shall act, as it may deem appropriate, on the recommendation or refer them to the 1991 Assembly.

To declare its support for "The Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women".

To call upon Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes to support "The Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women" with a view to

- a) enabling women to share more fully in leadership and decision making in the Uniting Church in Australia;
- b) challenging structures in church and society that disadvantage women;
- c) upholding women's perspectives on the issues of our time such as the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation;
- d) encouraging participation of women and men together in discussing "Women in the Uniting Church in Australia" (Social Responsibility & Justice Committee Report).

To request the Commission for Mission to develop resources and programs to fulfil the above.

1989 re: Women and the Church

89.5.11.4 The Synod resolved:

That in accordance with Assembly Standing Committee resolution 82.90:

- (a) liturgist and musicians responsible for the preparation of the opening service of Synod and worship of Synod in session should use inclusive language wherever possible in spoken word and song;
- (b) in the choice of hymns used during the opening service of Synod and Synod in session, consideration be given to the imagery used so that male imagery is not the only imagery used;
- (c) members of Synod be requested to use inclusive language during business sessions.

1990 re: Women and the Church

90.4.9.1 The Synod resolved:

- (a) That a Committee for Women and Men be established within the Synod Commission for Mission.
- (b) That the Committee for Women and Men and its function be promoted in presbyteries and parishes.
- (c) That the Synod Commission for Mission appoint the Committee.

1991 re: Women and the Church

91.5.3.3 The Synod resolved:

- (a) To express grief at the present decision of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia regarding the ordination of women; and
- (b) to invite members of the Uniting Church to support prayerfully all women, lay and ordained, offering ministry in the church.

Zimbabwe

1977 re: Zimbabwe

77.5.17 The Synod resolved:

That the following recommendations:

- (a) That our deep concern be expressed at the deterioration in Church-State relations in Rhodesia resulting from the determination of the state to prevent the Church being involved in matters of social justice. We are particularly concerned by the arrest of five members of the Justice and Peace Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Rhodesia, and we authorize the Moderator to send a message of Christian love, concern and support to that Conference.
- (b) That a copy of this statement be sent to the Australian Government.
be referred to the Standing Committee for consideration.

Appendices

Appendix A Dignity in Humanity: Recognising Christ in Every Person

A UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. The Uniting Church in Australia believes that human beings are created in the image of God who is three persons in open, joyful interaction. The image of God that is reflected in human life, the form of life that corresponds to God, is the human community—all people—finding its life and sustenance in relationship.
2. Thus, the Uniting Church believes that every person is precious and entitled to live with dignity because they are God's children, and that each person's life and rights need to be protected or the human community (and its reflection of God) and all people are diminished.
3. In Jesus Christ we discern that which is truly human. As we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger and care for the thirsty, the sick and the imprisoned, there is the mysterious possibility that we will discover the life of Christ among us (Matthew 25: 31-46), and share the love of God.
4. We believe that God has given humanity gifts and skills for the benefit of the earth and humanity itself. These gifts include the capacity for love, compassion, wisdom, generosity and moral choice. They come with the responsibility to ensure the health and wellbeing of present and future generations and the earth. The well-being of the earth is crucial to the possibility of human community and well-being. Social, political and economic arrangements should reflect the dignity and worth of human beings and respect for the planet. Through the prophets and the life and words of Jesus, God calls people to work for justice for the poor and vulnerable.
5. We believe that Christians are called to love their neighbour as they love themselves and to extend that love even to enemies. It is the love of God in Christ Jesus which motivates us to live out this calling by working for peace with justice in our church, our communities and the world. The recognition of human rights is an affirmation of the dignity of all people and essential for achieving peace with justice.
6. We affirm the inherent and inalienable right of all people to live free of persecution and violence, with access to all that is necessary for a decent life.
7. We remember the commitments made in our *Statement to the Nation*, at the Uniting Church's inception in 1977:

We affirm our eagerness to uphold basic Christian values and principles, such as the importance of every human being, the need for integrity in public life, the proclamation of truth and justice, the rights for each citizen to participate in decision-making in the community, religious liberty and personal dignity, and a concern for the welfare of the whole human race.
8. We reaffirm the Statement on the Rights of Nature and of Future Generations (1991) in which the Uniting Church National Assembly acknowledged "the inalienable dignity of all humans", and called for "the recognition and guarantee of human rights around the world".
9. We name the broken nature of the world. It is flawed and vulnerable to unjust structures and the practice of evil.
10. We confess that throughout its history the Church has perpetrated violence and abused human rights through action, inaction, complicity and collusion and that we have often used the Bible to justify such violence. We repent of our sin and commit ourselves to work for reconciliation and justice as we continue to understand our own brokenness.
11. We condemn the abuse of human rights and the failure to uphold and promote human rights as contrary to the gospel of God's love in Christ for all human beings and the earth.
12. We affirm our support for the human rights standards recognised by the United Nations (UN). Everyone has a birthright to all that is necessary for a decent life and to the hope of a peaceful future. This birthright is expressed in UN human rights instruments which describe human rights as civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. These instruments provide a valuable framework for assessing political, economic and social systems and are an important tool for peace.
13. We note that the internationally recognised human rights are indivisible, universal and inalienable:
 - a. No rights are possible without all that is necessary for a decent life, including the rights to work with just pay and conditions, adequate food and health care, adequate, appropriate and accessible housing and a safe environment, education for the full development of the human

- potential and the right of people to participate fully in decision-making about their common future¹. Civil and political rights cannot be separated from economic, social and cultural rights.
- b. It is the duty of all States, regardless of their cultural, economic or political systems, to promote and protect human rights and “eliminate all violations of human rights and their causes, as well as obstacles to the enjoyment of these rights”².
 - c. It is “the right and duty of the international community to hold all state and non-state actors accountable for violations of human rights which occur in their jurisdiction or control, or for which they are directly responsible”³.
 - d. In the exercise of a person's rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of human dignity and the general welfare of a democratic society⁴.
14. We support the commitment of the Eighth Assembly of World Council Churches to promote and defend human rights in a way which takes into account:
- a. “the values and insights into human rights and dignity derived from the rich heritage of peoples’ religions, cultures and traditions”;
 - b. “the rights of peoples, nations, communities and their cultures as well as the rights of each individual within them”;
 - c. “the equal rights of young and old, of women and men, and of all persons irrespective of their origin or condition”⁵.
15. We encourage all governments to fulfil their responsibilities as members of the United Nations, recognising it as the peak forum for discourse between nations, and upholding their commitment to the UN’s Charter and to UN treaties that serve the forging of peaceful and non-exploitative international relations. Peace is served by UN member States acting towards one another and the UN in good faith.
16. We heed the call of the World Council of Churches’ Central Committee in 1995, for all churches to:
- be alert to the activities and policies of their respective governments with a view to strengthening the capacity of the UN in areas such as the promotion and protection of human rights, the struggle against racism, the enhancement of the rights of women, aid to and protection of refugees and migrants, the effective international control of production and transfer of armaments, the elimination of nuclear weapons, protection of the global environment, and the realization of a just and equitable international economic order.*
17. We urge the Australian Government to fulfil its responsibilities under the human rights covenants, conventions and treaties that Australia has ratified or signed, by upholding international standards in effecting social and legislative change.
18. We pledge to assess current and future national public policy and practice against international human rights instruments, keeping in mind Christ’s call and example to work for justice for the oppressed and vulnerable.
19. We declare our opposition to capital punishment and commit ourselves to stand against the death penalty wherever it exists, regarding it as a cruel and inhuman punishment which denies the ability of an offender to reform.
20. We urge the Australian Government to develop and promote human rights education which, consistent with the recommendations of the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, includes peace, democracy, development and social justice, and aims to foster mutual understanding, healthy and harmonious communities, and justice and peace.
21. We commit the Uniting Church National Assembly to promote an increased awareness and understanding of human rights through our education, justice and mission programs and to stand

¹ Together on the Way 5.8 A Statement on Human Rights, World Council of Churches, Eighth Assembly, December 1998, <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/assembly/hr-e.html>, para. 3.5

² Vienna Declaration, World Conference on Human Rights, 25 June 1993, [http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.CONF.157.23.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.CONF.157.23.En?OpenDocument)

³ Together on the Way, WCC, para. 3.9

⁴ based on Article 29(b), Universal Declaration of Human Rights

⁵ Declaration of the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1998, <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/assembly/hudec-e.html>

in solidarity with our partner churches as they advocate and work for human rights in their countries.

22. We encourage all members, groups, congregations and agencies of the Uniting Church to model respect for human rights in their daily lives and to advocate for policies consistent with human rights standards and against violations of human rights in all forms, both within Australia and internationally.
23. We encourage the councils of the Uniting Church to model respect for human rights in their work and mission, including working towards an end to manifestations of greed, corruption, violence, persecution and exclusion.