
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.

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

99.5.8.4 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

99.5.8.5 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).'