

28. UNITING CHURCH PROPERTY UTILISED BY UNITINGCARE

(Ku-ring-gai

Presbytery

Mr Clive McCormack)

Proposal

That the Synod

Determine

1. That UnitingCare be released from the oversight of the Synod, so it may operate as a business, connected to the Church in ethos and purpose but not constrained by the link.
2. That the land on which UnitingCare facilities are built shall be held by UnitingCare on a 99 year lease arrangement with a back dating of rent to 2003 when local management committees were compulsorily taken over by UnitingCare regional management bodies. All land currently vested in the name of The Property Trust (NSW) shall remain under the ownership and custodianship of the Uniting Church in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.
3. That the definition of “rent” be described in such a way that the financial stability of UnitingCare shall not be compromised but that over the first 25 years of the lease, those congregations who lost access to and benefit from land gifted to the local congregation and buildings paid for by local congregations, however long ago that may have been, shall receive a form of compensation, being an agreed percentage of monies received by way of rent, which the local congregation may direct towards the mission of the Church in their local context, or towards the mission of the wider church by directing such compensation to either the Presbytery or the Synod for the benefit of the whole Church.
4. That the term “rent” be a negotiated amount which shall, over the first 25 years of the arrangement be scaled to reflect a market value for the land under lease.

Rationale

The operation of UnitingCare Ageing, Children’s Services and other services which are regulated and funded by the Federal and/or State Governments must be conducted in a business-like manner with a corporate identity separate from the operation of a religious body such as the Church. Although in recent years there has been a return to closer association and some form of accountability with the Synod, it seems to be more appropriate for the UnitingCare “business” to be released to be just that – a business.

The “compulsory” take-over of land and improvements for aged care facilities and child care facilities in order to meet regulatory requirements was undertaken for good and

understandable reasons. Nevertheless, local congregations were deprived of their access to land which had been, in most cases, gifted to them for the benefit of the congregation and used for its mission. Many congregations built and managed aged care facilities as a service to the local community and did a great job. As government regulations began to demand greater accountability, it was decided for the sake of the provision of services and good governance, that a centralised management and compliance body should take over management and control of these operations. As happens in the life of the church, consultation with local congregations and local management committees was not comprehensive and many congregations felt disempowered and betrayed. When there was no acknowledgement (in many cases) of this outcome and no compensation offered for the loss of assets, support for UnitingCare drastically reduced and resentment continued for some time.

30. BEQUEATHS

(Ku-ring-gai

Presbytery

Mr Clive McCormack)

Proposal

That the Synod

embark on a program encouraging members to bequeath a percentage (nominally 10%) of their Estate to the mission of the UC.

Rationale:

Say we have 300,000 UCA members and each has a life span of 85 years. This means that there are approx. 3500 deaths annually. Say half those own their own home and have average assets of say \$300,000 (these approximations could be verified from census and Bureau of Statistics figures) If we were able to convince our members to bequeath 10% of their assets to the church (there is biblical precedent to adopt the figure of 10%), then an income of around \$50m could be added annually to total UCA church revenue for mission. An income of \$50m annually would pay off the current NSW Synod debt within 2 years. The question posed then, is, 'should the UCA embark on a program of suggested sacrificial giving to assist in overcoming its current financial debt and ensure the future of Christ's mission'?