

# Chaplaincy Discussion Paper

Received by the ASC in March, 2011

1. The focus of this discussion paper is on the role and responsibilities of Ministers and lay people serving as Chaplains. The number of chaplains serving in various roles has increased greatly in recent years. Yet in the Uniting Church they tend not to be regarded as part of the mainstream life of the church because chaplaincy is not the standard ministry which is a pastor-teacher role in a congregation. However, there is the possibility of seeing chaplaincy not as marginal but as a pioneering and representative role that enables people to hear and experience the good news of Jesus Christ. As integral to the mission of the Uniting Church, it should be closely linked to other parts of the life of the church. In a post Christendom context chaplains can see themselves not only as providing pastoral care. They can seek to witness to Jesus Christ and look for ways in which people might experience Christian community and become and grow as disciples. It has the potential of leading to new forms of church. This paper therefore will seek to provide something of a theology of chaplaincy as it applies to Ministers and lay people serving in chaplaincy roles. This will lead to a consideration of the responsibilities of such Ministers and lay people and the issues involved in carrying out their role.

## **A Theological Basis for Chaplaincy**

2. The last major UCA paper on the theology of the ministry of chaplaincy was by Andrew Dutney in 1986. In that paper he pointed out that ministries of chaplaincy often developed out of what had been a part of parish ministry, such as hospital visitation. Another important consideration was the pioneering role of Roman Catholic priests who engaged in non-parochial ministries. The difficulty for the Uniting Church theologically was that ordained ministry was understood to be related to the worshipping congregation. In the 1960s there was the expressed hope that new forms of congregational life would emerge so that congregations would not just be in the suburbs and in church buildings but also in factories, office blocks, universities and hospitals. Dutney points out that the sequence is important: first the congregation then the ordained ministry.
3. The *Basis of Union* affirms this understanding. Ordained ministry is inextricably linked to the rest of the membership of the congregation. The ordained minister “will preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and exercise pastoral care so that all may be equipped for their particular ministries, thus maintaining the apostolic witness to Christ in the Church” (BU par 14). The ministry of the whole people of God requires the ordained minister primarily to function as an equipper of others.
4. Dutney affirms this as theologically and ecclesiological sound but raises the question of the ordained chaplain. He refers to the 1985 report of the then Commission on Doctrine on the proposed diaconate that made the comment “the work of chaplains can be seen as a similar kind of pioneering role.” He affirms this pioneering role of chaplaincy saying it is what the whole church should be about. This links with the ‘representative’ role of ordained ministry. Ordained ministers represent the character and mission of the whole church. Chaplains are engaged in the church’s business. They need to do so consciously and deliberately as representatives and pioneers of the church. Hence a chaplain’s sense of aloneness must never lead them to develop an individualistic consciousness. They need to remember that their work has an ecclesial context. Their ministry receives its significance by being representative and pioneering in relation to the church. Dutney says that this is harmonious with the *Basis of Union* even if it is not actually contained in its articles. It is also harmonious with ecumenical statements on ministry.
5. *A Brief Statement on Ordination* (2008) points out that baptism is the foundation of all Christian ministry. Baptism joins people to Jesus Christ and incorporates them into his body the church. The baptism service in UiW2 says “we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit that we may live as witnesses to Jesus Christ, share his ministry in the

world and grow to maturity.” It points out that the Christian life is inherently communal and missional. All Christians participate in the ministry of Christ.

6. Some are recognised, trained and ordained to preach the gospel, lead worship, care for the flock, share in government and serve those in need in the world (BU par 14). They are set apart to exercise ministry as part of the whole people of God. Hence they are given a new status within the community. This new relationship is with the whole church catholic, not just within the Uniting Church. They are to equip others and work for the integrity of the body of Christ: the one holy catholic and apostolic church. It is a representative ministry in which ordained ministers, both Ministers of the Word and Deacons, are called to embody the church’s essential nature in the exercise of the ministries of word, sacrament and service. They come under the oversight of the presbytery and are ordained into a new relationship of general responsibility within the church.
7. There is a difference between ordained and lay ministries, including specified lay ministries, in that lay ministries are commissioned ministries. People are commissioned for specific tasks and roles for specific times and places. Also they do not have a new relationship with the whole church catholic. Ordained ministers are called to represent the living tradition of the church, the universal nature of the church, the oneness of the church, and the mission of the church. Lay ministries do not do have the responsibility to do this to the same extent.
8. The ministry of chaplaincy then is to be regarded as part of the mission of the church. It is not a separate ministry so what it is about should be seen to be connected to the total ministry of the church. Nor is it a second class ministry or an escape from ‘real ministry’. There is a diaconal quality to chaplaincy. It involves some of the body of Christ representing Jesus Christ and serving on behalf of the church in particular contexts.

#### **Recent changes to our theological understanding of mission, ministry and the church**

9. In recent decades there have been significant changes in our understanding of mission, ministry and the church. Societal changes have meant a move from the modern belief in reason, progress and human potential to post-modernity with its scepticism concerning reason, suspicion of established institutions, pessimism about the future, and relativism. Post modernism also brings an emphasis on experience, a willingness to listen to other voices, and openness to spirituality. Just as modernism was a challenge to the claims of the gospel, post modernism brings both new challenges and opportunities. In relation to the church, we have moved from a nominally Christian society to a post Christian, individualistic, consumer society in which the church has far less prominence.
10. There has been significant theological reflection carried out. In relation to mission, mission is now seen to be central to the life of the church not an extra activity. We all are in a mission context so that mission is not something that takes place overseas or in other remote or difficult places. The purpose of the church is to serve the mission of God. Mission is meant to infuse all the church does in its worship, proclamation, pastoral care, groups, witness and service.
11. Mission and ministry are related terms. Mission is a larger longer term concept. According to the *Basis of Union* God’s mission is nothing less than the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation (BU par 3). The church is called to serve that end and continue the ministry of Jesus in word and deed. Ministry engages in God’s desire to build people up both in and beyond the congregation.
12. The church participates in God’s mission through specific mission activities and particular ministries. These are actions of the church that intentionally assist the people of the wider community in Christ-like ways. Clearly chaplaincy is involved in this. The church and its representatives are called to be a sign and instrument of the

reign of God inaugurated by Jesus. The church is to model a community of people seeking to live according to the way of Jesus, the way of love, justice, peace and reconciliation. It is to proclaim Jesus Christ, serve the people and engage in God's mission in the world. An emphasis on Christian practices has become important for the body of Christ is to live out its faith in Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. The church is called to bless others as a people of God and a community of the Spirit.

### **Learning from our Tradition**

13. Paul in Ephesians says: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ' (Ephesians 4:11-12). John Calvin wrote that "the Lord raised up the first three at the beginning of his Kingdom, and now and again revives them as the need of the times demands." They were extraordinary, temporary roles that do not have a place in duly constituted churches. The church, however, can never do without pastors and teachers which are permanent offices (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4.3.4). Calvin wrote in a Christendom context and bequeathed this understanding to Reformed church traditions that derive from him. Social concern is part of this tradition. The Uniting Church's understanding of ministry is strongly influenced by this tradition.
  
14. John Wesley was an Anglican clergyman who was led into field preaching through the request of his friend George Whitefield who had aroused great interest by preaching in the open air. In his diary Wesley wrote, "I had been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church." Nevertheless on Monday 2 April, 1739, "At four in the afternoon, I submitted to be more vile and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation" (P. L. Parker (ed) *The Journal of John Wesley* p.68). The industrialisation of Great Britain had brought great changes to society and the established church had not responded to these changed conditions which meant many people did not relate to the church and its message. By going to the people Whitefield, Wesley and those who followed them took on the role of evangelist. Wesley quickly came to the conclusion that he regarded the world as his parish and believed God had called him to the ministry that he conducted. At first Wesley was of the opinion that only an ordained minister should preach. When he received word that his first helper, Maxwell was preaching he intended to put a stop to the practice. His mother cautioned him to hear Maxwell preach first. When Wesley listened to Maxwell preach he was satisfied and set out to find others. In order to assist those who responded to his preaching Wesley established societies, not churches, of believers. They might or might not be members of the Church of England. This led to the development of the societies dividing into smaller classes of people who met together weekly. He resisted breaking away from the Church of England and setting up a new church though this was bound to happen. From this Evangelical tradition the Methodist Church developed in a few forms. The desire to enable people to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and be concerned about the social conditions in which they live is central to this tradition. It too has influenced the Uniting Church though its evangelical concern has been emphasised by some but not others.
  
15. The Uniting Church stems from the Reformed and Evangelical traditions. In relation to chaplaincy there is the danger that those engaged in it are not regarded as part of the mainstream life of the church because chaplaincy is not a pastor-teacher role in a congregation. On the other hand there is the possibility of seeing chaplaincy as a pioneering role that enables people to hear and experience the good news of Jesus Christ and has the potential of leading to new forms of church as well as being linked to other parts of the church. Chaplains do well to see themselves not in a Christendom model of primarily providing care for people in various settings but in a post Christendom context in which witness to Jesus Christ and looking for ways in which people might become and grow as disciples and experience Christian community are sought. Chaplaincy can assist the Uniting Church to draw on its

Evangelical heritage that goes beyond established congregational patterns and Reformed understandings of ministry.

16. Chaplains as people in touch with people's lives and context may help the whole church to be more aware of the issues people are facing, the changes taking place in society, and point to ways the church can respond appropriately and effectively. Some chaplains may pioneer new ways of being church. Chaplaincy therefore may well be a gift of God to the church at this time.

### **Ecclesiology**

17. In terms of Uniting Church ecclesiology, the congregation is the primary unit of the church for it embodies the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ (*Basis of Union* par 15). In relation to government the Uniting Church has a series of inter-related councils each of which has its tasks and responsibilities. The Uniting Church recognises the ministries of those who have been called to various tasks and responsibilities and promises to order its life in response to God's call to enter more fully into mission (*Basis of Union* par 13). While the congregation is the basic unit of the church, there may well be other ways for communities of faith to be developed that engage in worship, witness and service and embody the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. In order to be authentic Christian faith communities, they do need consciously to focus on Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and be related to his ongoing mission by word and deed.
18. In relation to chaplaincy, it can be regarded as part of the mission of the church which is expanding at this time providing opportunities for worship, witness and service. Nevertheless, for the church to be church it has to have communal expression. It is to be a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ. It is important for the church not to acquiesce to the individualistic spirit of our time. While ministry to individuals is important, there is also the need to encourage people to link with communities of faith in order to take their place in the body of Christ and to grow and serve as disciples. This is a particular challenge to chaplains whose ministry is often to individuals. Nevertheless links to congregations or the formation of faith communities in which people can experience community with Jesus Christ as head of the church are important. New forms of church can be developed and some chaplains may be involved in this. But for church to be genuine there is the need for people to be in community with word and sacraments and some discipline involved according to our protestant tradition. Presbyteries have a particular responsibility to encourage such developments and provide oversight.

### **Responsibilities of Chaplains**

19. When chaplains are ordained Ministers of the Word or Deacons, they are appointed by a council of the Uniting Church whether presbytery, synod or Assembly, and they come under the oversight and discipline of a presbytery. By virtue of their ordination they have a responsibility to represent not just the Uniting Church but the whole church catholic. Called by Jesus Christ and placed in their role by the Uniting Church, they are to engage in the ministry and mission of Jesus and to represent the living tradition of the church in their chaplaincy responsibilities. This involves having a confessional approach which shares the gospel in word and deed as appropriate while appreciating that the people ministered to may come from various faith positions or none. This evangelical role is to be carried out with humility and respect (1 Peter 3:15). Particularly in the university context, but also in other situations, it will involve bearing testimony in the tertiary world of competing world views and the presuppositions of post-modernity.
20. The ministry of chaplains, whether in a crisis (e.g. hospital) or in an ongoing situation (military, school, prison), can turn a person back or towards faith and a gathered congregation or faith community, not necessarily in the setting where the ministry took place. By faithfully representing the Christian faith and carrying out their role with integrity chaplains can have an evangelical influence. If people do seek out a

congregation then that congregation needs to respond quickly to them, something that many congregations are not good at doing.

21. Chaplaincy is by its nature a diaconal ministry whether carried out by a Minister of the Word, a Deacon or a lay person. In many hospital settings, in schools and in prisons for example, Uniting Church chaplains are called on to provide spiritual and pastoral support to people from other Protestant denominations and indeed across other Christian and non-Christian traditions. Christian chaplains may even facilitate prayers for those of other faith traditions.
22. While service, especially in the form of pastoral care and support, may be the primary activity chaplains carry out, they also engage in the ministries of word and sacrament as appropriate and equip others for ministry. They do so as part of the whole ministry of the church and there is a mutual responsibility on the part of chaplains and the Uniting Church to see their ministry as integral to the total ministry and mission of the church. In serving the mission of God as agents of the church they represent the church in various public domains. In their role they can enable people to know of God's presence in the situation. It is a ministry of 'being there' for people especially when they are vulnerable. Hence it is a 'ministry of presence' and 'being the church' for people.
23. As mentioned above chaplains by virtue of their contact with people in the wider community have the opportunity to hear what is concerning people and can bring this knowledge and experience into the life of the local congregation and the wider church. Chaplains deal with people who ask questions about life and faith, who and where God is, and the role of the church. Their contact with the poor, sick, lonely and imprisoned can assist the church to be reminded of its call to serve people on the margins (Matthew 25:31-46).

#### **The Context of Chaplaincy**

24. Chaplains carry out their ministry in a wide range of contexts. The settings are very different: schools, hospitals, prisons, aged care centres, the defence forces, juvenile justice centres, and psychiatric centres. The payment and accountability of chaplains varies with some appointed and remunerated by the church while others are selected and paid by a government body. Some, such as defence force chaplains, are given rank within the system and are treated accordingly while others, such as police force chaplains, do not have a rank. Some, such as school chaplains, are often expected to perform a significant teaching role as well as have pastoral skills, while others need to be careful not to infringe on others' roles, such as chaplains in a large hospital setting with psychologists and social workers. Some chaplains are specifically Uniting Church representatives while others are expected to serve as representatives of the Christian faith without denying their Uniting Church affiliation.
25. The Uniting Church is a large non-government organisation serving people in a range of ways in health, education, counselling and assisted living. While there are Uniting Church people in leadership roles in these contexts, in the last 20 years the number of persons from non-Uniting Church backgrounds leading such agencies and schools has increased significantly. This means inevitably that these people carry out their leadership in ways that do not have great understanding of the Uniting Church ethos and approaches. With the increases in professionalism required, especially in relation to government regulations, contemporary corporate governance models have become widely applied. These may not sit well with Uniting Church approaches that emphasize shared leadership and consensus decision making. Chaplains serve in these agencies. They have to understand the needs of the organisation as well as the culture of the Uniting Church. Providing ways for all staff in Uniting Church agencies to gain an understanding of the Uniting Church ethos is an opportunity to be taken.
26. Chaplains also serve in various government institutions in a secular, ecumenical and multi-faith environment. They need to be conscious of the sensitivities of people and

the protocols of the institution while remaining faithful to the gospel and the Uniting Church. They have to be able to mix appropriately with people in the organisation whether it is a university, the police force, a hospital, or the military for example.

### **Ordained and Lay**

27. Chaplains serving on behalf of the Uniting Church are not necessarily ordained Ministers of the Word or Deacons. Lay persons are filling a larger proportion of chaplaincy positions. While those who come as members of Uniting Church congregations have an understanding of the ways of the Uniting Church, as lay people they do not have the same accountability as ordained persons. They are commissioned to specific roles and do not have the general responsibility expected of ordained chaplains who have a relationship to the whole church catholic. Nevertheless, chaplaincy is not a personal ministry but an ecclesial one. As lay people they are called to represent the living tradition of the church even if not to the extent expected of ordained people.
28. Then there are those who are ordained or lay but come from non UCA backgrounds. While they may well express a commitment to serve according to the ways of the Uniting Church, they have been formed in other traditions and therefore might not have taken to heart Uniting Church approaches. Given the Uniting Church's commitment to ecumenism and to providing the best services, it is a matter of discernment in selecting people for chaplaincy roles. As well as conducting interviews it is helpful to speak with other people who know them in order to assess their suitability and if appointed to ensure they do have or gain a good understanding of the Uniting Church.

### **Issues for Chaplains and the Church:**

#### **An expression of ministry**

29. Chaplaincy needs to be seen as an expression of the ministry of the church not an activity somewhat separate from the church's ministry. It is part of the mission of the church providing the opportunity of connecting with people that most congregations do not have much contact with. It is appropriately exercised by ordained Ministers of the Word and Deacons as people formed for ministry and representing not just the Uniting Church but the living tradition of the church catholic who link people to the community of faith. Those who become Pastors, having developed the core competencies required, can serve in a similar way. The church's ministry of chaplaincy can be carried out effectively by lay people.
30. In setting up and reviewing chaplaincies, the church needs to name its purposes and expectations in conversation with the employing organisation. The church has to retain its integrity and that of its chaplains and not simply fit in with the goals and desires of the agency. A relational approach rather than primarily an institutional one based on authority can enable a satisfactory outcome for all those involved. As part of the mission of the church chaplains can be involved in the reconciling and renewing purposes of God's mission through the agency.
31. The role is pastoral in terms of making the Christian resources of the church available to people. It involves interpreting the Christian tradition, and more specifically the Uniting Church's perspective, in the situation to people in pastoral acts. This compassionate and hermeneutic role needs to be connected to the church with the chaplain conscious of being part of the community of the church and not acting as a solo agent. Lay chaplains or pastoral care workers ought to be well prepared for their role and have links to responsible, experienced people to whom they can readily refer.
32. The ministry of chaplaincy can be isolating so the Church needs to assist chaplains to feel connected and appreciated for the ministry they exercise. Presbyteries in their role must ensure chaplains are linked to their presbytery and a congregation and have a support group. Presbyteries are not always contacted in relation to inductions and commissionings for example but should be involved. Presbyteries can also be

part of vitality of call interviews. Chaplains may not be regular attenders of presbytery meetings but the work of chaplains could be highlighted on occasion. It is important for chaplains to have opportunities to receive as well as give in ministry and presbyteries have a role in pastorally looking out for the chaplains living in the presbytery area.

33. Partnerships and links between Uniting Church congregations and organisations with chaplains are essential. This is so whether it is Uniting Church organisations (such as UnitingCare agencies or church schools) or government institutions (such as hospitals and universities). People, who might serve in lay chaplaincy or mission worker roles along with ordained people in such organisations and institutions, can be recruited and trained. How to enable chaplaincy to be clearly regarded as an expression of the whole ministry of the church is an issue for it is an important and growing area of ministry.

### **Identity**

34. Chaplains need to have confidence in their own identity and role as representatives of the Christian faith and ministers of the church in their context. It is important for chaplains to stay in their own role and not to take on the roles of others who have particular functions in the organisation they are working in (such as psychologists, social workers or school counsellors). Chaplains typically work in a more hierarchical setting which requires working alongside others and being accountable to those in positions of authority in the organisation. So they have to have a team approach and are less the leader than those in congregational placements. They are expected to show a professional approach to their role and work along with other professionals.
35. In our increasingly multicultural society it is important that chaplains come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds especially in some appointments. Those from particular backgrounds are likely to be able to relate to some people better as a result of their ethnicity.
36. The chaplain also has to recognise when it is appropriate to confer with ministers in congregational roles, such as when dealing with members of congregations in a hospital or aged care setting. Their function as chaplain in the institution can complement the local church minister when people come into their sphere of ministry. In this there is mutual responsibility so that the chaplain and the local church minister follow up on people when they are referred to them.

### **Employment**

37. Chaplains need to see themselves connected to the church first of all and their accountability is primarily to the Uniting Church and the gospel. Organisations often do not understand this. Due to the nature of their employment, chaplains can be seen by the organisation they work in to be providing a peripheral benefit rather than a primary one. They can be viewed as providing client based services and religious observances for the agency rather than be regarded as offering a perspective that can influence the culture of the organisation as a whole.
38. Therefore sometimes what chaplains say might be to raise questions concerning some practices in the organisation. The gospel does critique 'the powers'. This will require discernment and tact as it will not necessarily be well received. Chaplaincy done well can make a significant contribution to the functioning of the organisation as a whole. Because they are part of the institution chaplains have access to people and can influence the organisation. They can for example become involved in ethics committees.
39. Chaplains are a gift from the church to the organisation because the Uniting Church has formed and trained them and could well use them in other roles. The agency is not just employing another person with a particular set of skills. This does raise the issue of the kind of authority that the chaplain has in the organisation which needs to be made clear at the time of appointment.

### **Divided loyalties**

40. Chaplains necessarily live in the tensions between the church and the institution they are serving, between the needs of clients and the requirements of the organisations in which they minister.
41. Chaplains are called to be representatives of the church of Jesus Christ their Lord. Ordained chaplains come under the oversight and discipline of a presbytery. The expectation is that chaplains will be faithful to the ethos of the Uniting Church. They are, however, responsible to both their employing body and the council of the church that appointed them. So whether it is a hospital, school, prison, the military, or some other situation, chaplains inevitably feel the tension between having to conform to the requirements and expectations of the organisation and also that of the church. In a prison setting for example chaplains have to acknowledge the supreme authority of the governor. In a school chaplains have to recognise the authority of the principal. They need to have a sound theology, appreciate their context, adhere to its protocols, and be faithful to the gospel with its priority on people.
42. When chaplains are Ministers of the Word or Deacons they are bound by the promises made at their ordination and induction. Pastors make similar promises when commissioned. They pledge to be guided by the *Basis of Union* of the Uniting Church and to uphold its *Code of Ethics*. There can be pressures to fit into the context. However, there is also the need to regard themselves not simply as employees or workers in that context but as representatives of the church and of Jesus Christ. As indicated above, this may mean calling into question some of the values and practices that are evident in the organisation. Not surprisingly some heads of organisations would prefer chaplains to come fully under their control and can act as if that were the case. Principals of schools for example can rule over chaplains. School councils have a role to play in defining how the chaplaincy will function. The wider church has a responsibility to ensure the chaplain has appropriate authority, such as in relation to worship, in the school context and to support its chaplains especially if conflicts arise and work towards appropriate resolutions. So there is the question of having clear position descriptions and accountability structures for chaplains in order to minimize the potential confusion or conflict.

### **Confidentiality**

43. In their role chaplains hear things expressed that they need to keep in confidence. Only mandatory reporting matters, or instances in which people indicate they may do damage to themselves, are exempt from this important part of their listening role. Those in the organisation have to respect this and chaplains need to be careful in what they say and how they report. Chaplains should have a means by which they record for themselves their pastoral conversations while ensuring that anything written is kept private. They need to be accountable and transparent yet also conscious of issues of confidentiality regarding information that is not to be shared.
44. In some contexts, such as schools, the chaplain is not the only one who has the responsibility for the pastoral care of students. So it is important that people work together as a team and have access to relevant information, otherwise poor decisions concerning students can be made. Also schools have a contract with parents and so need to keep parents informed except in very exceptional circumstances. Chaplains have to be conscious of all this.

### **Sacraments**

45. Providing the sacraments will depend on the situation and chaplains have to be conscious of ensuring the integrity of the sacraments. In the Uniting Church tradition, as against some other Christian traditions, the sacraments are based in the church community, namely a community of faith. While the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper, are appropriately provided in various settings the chaplain needs to do so on behalf of the church community and not simply conduct them as religious rites.



Finding ways to express this and to help people feel connected to a community of faith is important.

46. With regard to baptism people are baptised into a receiving community. This sacrament is not simply some kind of rite of passage. Baptism involves joining with Christ and becoming part of the church, not just in some generalised sense but into a particular body of Christ. If conducted in a school setting for example there is the need for the person being baptised to have links with a community of faith and to facilitate their growth in discipleship
47. In relation to the Lord's Supper there is the need to discern the body, namely to be conscious of Christ and one's relation with other Christians in receiving the elements of bread and wine. Conducting Holy Communion and dispensing the elements is not a right of the chaplain but is a privilege given by the church and to be carried out with the community of faith consciously in mind. In Methodist understanding the sacrament can be a 'converting ordinance' leading a person to full faith. Wesley held the sacrament was for those seeking God, not just for the truly converted. It was a means of grace instrumental in justification and sanctification. The evangelical possibilities of the sacrament therefore should be kept in mind. How to connect people who come to a conversion experience through chaplaincy with a community of faith that is appropriate for them and the question of follow up is important.
48. So while the sacraments may be given to people in different circumstances, there is the need for discernment and a conscious linking of the sacraments to congregations or faith communities recognised by the Uniting Church through the presbytery. The sacraments are meant to relate to a community of faith and to discipleship and not just be a religious activity in the school or agency. Church schools are often the only link some people have with the church so there are issues and opportunities in relation to this. Such opportunities need to be explored and are not to be reduced to calling schools churches even if they are church schools. The whole school is a mission field and not a congregation though a faith community can be developed within a school context.
49. The Uniting Church needs to be clear as to what is an appropriate sacramental community and recognise them as congregations or faith communities. Schools and other agencies are not sacramental communities in their own right even though chaplains may celebrate the sacraments in them. They may be linked to congregations or even develop a faith community within them. But they are not sacramental communities apart from the oversight of a church council and the presbytery. How best to do this is an issue particularly for presbyteries.
50. Other ceremonies such as marriages and funerals are not problematic except if they are conducted in ways outside the theology and practice of the Uniting Church. They do need to be performed in accord with the approved liturgies of the Uniting Church concerning such services. The chaplain is a representative of the church and not a civil celebrant.

#### **Formation and preparation for the role**

51. Chaplaincy in its pioneering and representative role as part of the mission of the church requires that people be formed and prepared for it. This also raises the question of how people are recruited and appointed to chaplaincy roles. The process should be clear and involve all those who need to be included.
52. While ordained people are trained to be Ministers of the Word or Deacons and are formed and prepared in a more general way, chaplaincy is a particular ministry which would do well to have some specific training. This applies to lay people as well. The issues that have been outlined in this paper could be considered in readiness for moving into the chaplaincy role and particular skills developed further. In some chaplaincy positions specific training is already expected. By providing some training both prior to and in the appointment, appropriate approaches can be presented, skills

grown, hopefully some mistakes can be avoided, and the tensions in the role at least anticipated. How to provide this effectively is an issue.

### **Non UCA Chaplains**

53. If the Uniting Church appoints non Uniting Church people to chaplaincy roles it takes a risk in that the person may not represent the Uniting Church adequately. Yet the person may have gifts and skills that make them the best choice for the position. Appropriate training is necessary and the person needs to commit themselves to work within the ethos and parameters of the Uniting Church. There should be agreed procedures and training either before or early in the appointment so the person becomes familiar with the Uniting Church polity and ethos and does courses such as the sexual misconduct awareness training.
54. Chaplaincy involves having pastoral skills and interpreting the Christian tradition and in particular the Uniting Church perspective. This is inevitably difficult for someone not within the Uniting Church tradition. Providing a generic Christian approach may sound desirable but it is not realistic for people do come from particular influences. In appointing people, the Uniting Church is expressing confidence in their capacity to represent the Uniting Church well. So there is the need to ensure appropriate people are appointed.