

**‘The Uniting Church commits its ministers to preach’ (BoU, Para 5):
a review of the foundational and historical documents of the Uniting
Church in Australia, identifying the place and importance of
preaching in the life of that Church.**

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SUMMARY

In the documents of the Uniting Church in Australia and its former denominations (the Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia) there is an implicit acceptance of preaching as a valid act of communication in the life of the Church.

This thesis examines *The Basis of Union (1971)* of the Uniting Church, along with its antecedent documents (*The Faith of the Church*, and *The Church, Its Nature, Function and Ordering*, including *A Proposed Basis of Union*) and the historical documents mentioned in Paragraph 10 of *The Basis of Union (1971)* [*The Scots Confession of Faith (1560)*, *The Heidelberg Catechism (1563)*, *the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)* and *the Savoy Declaration (1658)*, along with John Wesley's *Forty-Four Sermons (1793)*] to show how these various documents establish preaching as an important part of the Uniting Church's life and work.

After an introductory chapter, the first section of the thesis examines the antecedent documents and the *Basis of Union (1971)*, with an excursus into the way in which Karl Barth's theology was a framework within which those who formed the documents were working.

The second section of the thesis concentrates on the documents named in Paragraph 10 of the *Basis of Union (1971)*. After an introductory chapter which briefly establishes the historical context of each of the documents, each of the

documents is reviewed, and implications for preaching are drawn. John Wesley's *Forty-Four Sermons*, being themselves the result of preaching, do not give many clues to Wesley's understanding of preaching, and so Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* are also examined for implications about preaching.

The final section, Chapter 12, draws together that implications for preaching in the Uniting Church which have been identified in each of the other sections.

For ease of expression in the thesis, the term "preaching" is used to cover the variety of forms of proclamation which are possible in this generation. It is outside the scope of this thesis to consider and describe these forms of proclamation, but it is assumed that "preaching" is not limited to traditional sermonic forms.

This study shows that some form of proclamation of the Word of God which is the message of salvation through Jesus Christ is an essential element of the life of the Uniting Church.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graeme Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'G'.

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