

**All of this is us**

**A Pilgrim People : 40 Years on**

**And a new Uniting Church National History Society**

The first UC National History Society came into being on Sunday 11 June at Pilgrim Church in Adelaide at the recent National Uniting Church History Conference hosted by the South Australian UC Historical Society. A small committee comprised of representatives from across the synods was elected to guide the fledgling Society through its first steps, which include publishing the first journal containing all the papers and presentations made at the conference.

The conference, which ran over three days, was an outstanding success, thanks to the first-rate organisation of the South Australian society members and the generosity of the people of Pilgrim Church.

Worship was led by the Moderator of NSW Synod, the Rev. Myung Hwa Park, and we were honoured to have present also the Moderator of SA Synod, the Rev. Sue Ellis, the President of the Assembly, Stuart McMillan, and the President-elect, Dr Deidre Palmer.

The keynote speaker was Associate Professor Renate Howe AO, who called for a reinvigoration of the theological debate on ecumenism but also spoke of her concern for the increasing corporatisation of the Uniting Church and decline of the fundamental interconciliar nature of the church.

On the Saturday night, a panel addressed the topic of ‘The church in the public square’, with panellists being the Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney (a past President of the UCA), the Rev. Dr Dean Eland (who has had wide experience in urban ministries), the Rev. Professor the Hon. Brian Howe AO (Professorial Fellow at Melbourne University and Deputy Prime Minister 1991-95), Dr Deidre Palmer (President-elect of the Assembly), and Pastor Mark Kickett, who is the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Development Officer in South Australia.

16 people presented individual papers on topics as diverse as Methodism’s influence on public policies, the ‘unfinished’ business of the Diaconate, ‘What John Wesley might say to the Uniting Church’, and ‘Extinct volcanoes: the role of former missionaries in shaping the Uniting Church’. All the papers, including the keynote address, will be printed in the first edition of the journal of the new society.

For further information, contact Dr Judith Raftery, President of the Uniting Church SA Historical Society (judith.raftery@adelaide.edu.au).