



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Pastor Bill Hollingsworth

15 November 2019

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is with great sadness that we write to inform you of the passing of Pastor Bill Hollingsworth on Thursday 7 November 2019.

Bill was a lay pastor in Calvary Presbytery in the Queensland Synod and is well known as a founding member and former Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

Bill began his life in lay ministry around Cairns in 1959 and from the late 1960s was a lay pastor in a number of Pentecostal churches in the Cairns and Gordonvale areas, and on Thursday Island.

He was renowned as a preacher and orator, and was widely respected for his Biblical knowledge, and his command of theology and church history.

Bill was part of the movement of the Holy Spirit that led to the formation of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in 1985, attending key meetings at Crystal Creek near Townsville in 1982 and at Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island in 1983.

Bill was received to the ministry of Lay Pastor in Calvary Presbytery in 1988, working at the Good Samaritan Ministry in Cairns and the Eternal Life Fellowship at Gordonvale.

His colleagues remember him as a true leader of deep humility who encouraged others into ministry with the UAICC.

Bill Hollingsworth served as UAICC National Chairperson from 1992 to 1995.

At the Seventh Assembly in Sydney in 1994 he famously signed the Covenant agreement with UCA President Dr Jill Tabart and presented Dr Tabart with the Covenanting painting.

In his response to Dr Tabart's Covenanting Statement, Bill said:

“It is good and right that the church should repent of any of its actions in support of a policy that violently discriminated against and oppressed God’s stewards of this land.”

“Because it is pleasing to God to love one another, and it is our commitment to do so, we invite you on behalf of Congress members to develop a new relationship by entering into the struggle of those issues that presently are the cause of continuing injustice resulting in broken relationships.”

That response is featured today in Covenanting banners displayed in Uniting Churches all around the country.

Bill was also heavily involved in the growing movement for justice and reconciliation for First Peoples through the 1980s and 1990s.

He was an elected member of the National Aboriginal Conference, the forerunner representative body to ATSIC, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

As an NAC Member in the 1980s he was involved in successfully lobbying former Prime Minister Bob Hawke for back pay for members of the Torres Strait Islander Light Infantry for their military service.

Bill later served on the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, during that body’s first term from 1991 to 1994.

After his term as UAICC Chairperson concluded, Bill served as Chairperson of the UAICC National Council of Elders.

He retired from his placement in Calvary Presbytery at the end of 2002.

A funeral service for Bill Hollingsworth will be held at Cairns Emmanuel Uniting Church, 327 Brown Steet, Manunda at 10.30am on 21 November 2019.

Pastor Hollingsworth is survived by his daughters Patricia Latu, Kerry Hollingsworth, La-Donna Ballangarry-Kearins, Francine and Shirley Hollingsworth and their families. Bill’s beloved wife Ruth passed away in 2016 and his sons William Jr and Timothy passed in 2006 and 2010 respectively.

We share our prayers and love with his family and all those who walked alongside Bill on his faithful journey.

Rev Garry Dronfield President, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

Rev David Baker, Moderator, Queensland Synod

Dr Deidre Palmer President, Assembly

