

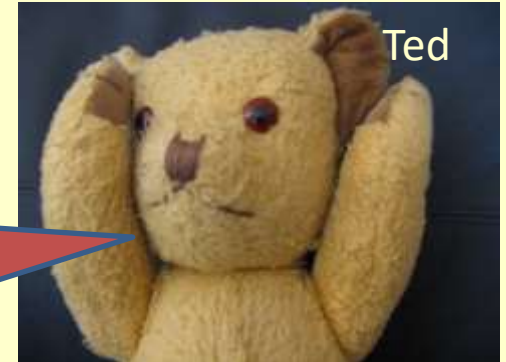
A photograph of two stuffed toys sitting on a black leather chair. On the left is a doll named Ting with a pink face, large blue eyes, red lips, and long yellow braided hair tied with pink bows. She is wearing a blue dress with a floral pattern and a white lace collar. On the right is a light brown teddy bear named Ted with red button eyes and a brown nose. The background is a black chair and a tiled floor.

Ting and Ted

celebrating the Uniting Church's 40th birthday
a dialogue overheard by Bill Loader



Happy birthday, Uniting Church!
40 years old today (22 June, 2017).



Amen! It's been a great achievement.
We have now well and truly established
ourselves as a denomination.



It has been a wonderful vision, “Uniting”, a
commitment to unity and reconciliation.

But really we should now be
called “United”. We've done it!





**Don't you think "Uniting" is in our DNA,
one of our reasons for being?**



**It is the reason we got together, but now
"Uniting" sounds a little strange.
We're not uniting with anyone.**



But we still have a commitment to ecumenism, to follow the Lund principle of doing those things together which we best do together.

Those were heady days, but we need to be realistic. That cost a lot of time and energy. We need to move on as a denomination.
It's time to consolidate and grow.



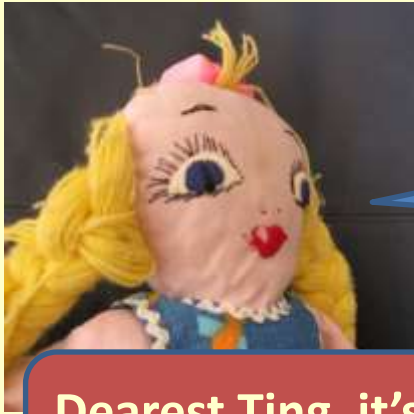


We mustn't lose that vision.

We need to keep exploring ways of being church together with fellow believers in all the churches.

We are already doing a lot of that across a lot of areas, including cross-culturally, but we can't afford to keep hitting our heads against a brick wall. It takes two to tango and most churches are now going it alone and so should we.





But Ted, is ecumenism dead? The “extras” you dismiss are at the heart of our faith. There’s still a zing in the “-ting”.

Dearest Ting, it’s time to move on and put “-ting” to bed. We have new priorities.

Ted



Dearest Ted,
there’s no way I’m
going to bed
anytime soon!



At least, then
let’s celebrate
and blow out
the candles
together!



For Reflection

1. In what ways does “Uniting” influence the way you live your life?
2. In what ways does “Uniting” influence the way your congregation acts in your community?
3. In what ways does “Uniting” influence the way you exercise leadership in the Uniting Church?
4. Does “Uniting” still matter to you?
Why or why not?



“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one.” John 17:20