

Proclaiming Christ Today and Forever

Feedback from the annual ACC gathering has confirmed again that it is a wonderful time of encouragement, with excellent Christian speakers and helpful business sessions. The 2017 Conference held at ACC Congregational member Mount Louisa House of Praise in Townsville, enabled ACC to connect more with many of our members in the North Queensland area, though a good number of members from around Australia also ventured to Townsville. A special highlight was the Tuesday night rally with over 150 people hearing Katy Faust speak on Proclaiming Christ in the Family (and make sure you watch the video of her presentation - Katy has a wonderful Christian ministry of love and support for all people).

ACC was very well looked after by the local team at Mount Louisa House of Praise; from all the catering, (and it was a big local effort to cater for nearly 100 people), to leadership of music, and all the practical arrangements, the conference was indeed blessed. Thank you to MLHOP members; you are all Christian servants. Thank you to Dr David Pohlmann (Lead Pastor) for his challenging word to help us consider our Christian identity today.

Among the keynote speakers, Ashley Saunders from Family Voice encouraged our members to remain firm and remain in the public space during these increasingly challenging times. Ashley's paper is included in this edition of the magazine.

Historian Dr Stuart Lange from New Zealand spoke about the NZ church experience with many similar issues to that in Australia, providing a timely word connecting our common responsibility to confess Christ in whatever situation we are in.

Bishop Bill Ray (North Queensland Anglican Diocese) gave a wide-ranging and stimulating address on true Christian ministry today, encouraging a hands-on approach to mission, and highlighting the need to reinvigorate the pastoral ministry as a pastoral ministry.

Dorothy Stanley (Aboriginal leader) shared about her experiences and hopes in a personal talk filled with biblical references encouraging people to continue to serve God and never to be discouraged as God is with us.

Among the reception of reports and discussing the work of our commissions and state groups, a major part of the business session was led by Rev Dr Max Champion as the gathering spent considerable time considering marriage and the ACC's continuing response to the issues that have been raised. The pastoral letter affirmed by the meeting is included in this edition of the magazine as a record. Discussion also centred on the future of the ACC, post UCA 15th Assembly, and many ideas and thoughts were raised. Further comment will be included in the March 2018 magazine.

If you have not attended an ACC conference, please consider now to take time to plan to come next year. It is a blessed time of support and fellowship, especially for members from non-ACC congregations, with the local prayer gatherings, state networks, and for congregational representatives, it enables them to gain a first-hand account, and to report back to help more members understand the local work and ministry of the confessing movement. **The 2018 conference** is scheduled for Sydney and is shaping up to be a very important meeting: include the dates in your diary now: **17-19 September**.

Peter Bentley

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