

ACC E-news July – August 2019

Greetings to Members

Please keep the ACC in your prayers – especially your own congregation, individual members, and the council as we are all the ACC as we confess Christ together.

Your prayers are also appreciated for the upcoming AGM and conference: 23-25 September – the time is drawing near, and we value your involvement and support at this AGM and gathering as the future direction of the ACC is considered.

*Peace and grace
Peter Bentley*

2019 – 2020 Membership Renewals

Membership Renewals for individual, couple and family supporting memberships will be arriving later in the week starting 29 July. We appreciate your early attention to this and provision of support for the ACC at this changing time.

You do not have to return the form if it is more convenient to pay on-line please by direct deposit. Please indicate your name and postcode as the reference for the payment. **(Direct Deposit details have been provided on the forms)**

2019 ACC Conference – 23 – 25 September 2019

Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Sunshine Coast. This will be a wonderful time of fellowship, learning and blessing. Please let the office know if you are attending – closing date 23 August. Registration details can be obtained from the website. Note: Accommodation arrangements at the Conference Centre are on a shared basis.

Decision of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania on Voluntary Assisted Dying.

A personal reflection

Many members have expressed their amazement and grief at the recent decision of the Vic-Tas Synod in July 2019 to resolve that **(among many parts and different provisions)** *“exploring, accessing, and conscientiously objecting to voluntary assisted dying are all within the range of faithful Christian responses to the Victorian Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017.”* And ... *“give permission within Victoria to UCA institutions (Uniting VicTas and Uniting AgeWell) and the UCA-affiliated hospital group (Epworth HealthCare) to make voluntary assisted dying allowable within the context of their facilities and services for their patients, clients and residents, under the conditions described in the Victorian Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017.”*

Note: the full decision is available on the Vic-Tas website (links provided on ACC emails)

The decision reflects the developing idea of ‘two integrities’ (or perhaps many beliefs) that was used as the foundation for the change to marriage and seems to be taking on a life of its own. One wonders what will be the next matter that will utilise this context?

The situation within the whole Uniting Church is even more odd when one considers that the Synod of Queensland at its Synod meeting in May 2019 considered this matter and stated that *“... we do not support the legalisation of voluntary assisted dying in Queensland. If legalised, our facilities will not provide this as a service and our staff, in the course of their employment, will not participate in medical acts to end a life through voluntary assisted dying.”*

The ACC has a position paper on these areas of contemporary debate, and it is commended to you for understanding the Christian position on euthanasia and assisted suicide. **Look under Resources on the ACC website** – see Social Issues, or contact the ACC office.

My own view on this is that no matter how many provisos and warm sounding statements are also made in the same resolution about life, palliative care and conscience, they are negated by approving of what is suicide, and/or assisting in this (I prefer the reality of expressing it as it is, rather than using 'voluntary assisted dying' as this term can tend to provide an appearance of abstract neutrality)

Please pray for the members, staff of Uniting Church facilities and residents in Victoria as the implications of this decision are considered and come forth.

Peter Bentley

Bill to de-criminalise Abortion being discussed in South Australia Parliament

SA members would be aware of this matter from the pastoral letters/columns of the SA moderator and material in the Synod news (including the helpful provision of past decisions in the Synod and other material for reference – with the usual disclaimer).

ACC has also a statement on abortion. This is a very helpful reference document for all ACC members. You can download a copy from the ACC website – see Resources, or request a printed copy from the ACC office.

ACC in the news

A listing of mentions of ACC in the wider news is now available on the ACC website:

<http://www.confessingcongregations.com/resources/item/acc-in-the-media/>

The Future of the Uniting Church

A comment from **Peter Bentley about some of the UCA happenings and future was provided in the June ACC magazine** and can also be viewed here:

<http://www.confessingcongregations.com/news-views/item/future-of-the-uca/>

ACC National Council Meeting

The council will meet on Monday 5 August and are preparing recommendations for the 2019 AGM in September. It is a changing landscape and time in the Uniting Church, with different groups responding in different ways, and ACC maintaining its confessing witness in an era of institutionalised diversity and pluralism.

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