



Assembly of Confessing Congregations Inc

Assembly of Confessing Congregations of the Uniting Church in Australia

Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, Proclaiming the truth, Renewing the church

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ACC E-News April 2020

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
Colossians 3:1-3 (NIV)

PASTORAL LETTER AND EASTER GREETINGS FROM ACC CHAIR

REV DR HEDLEY FIIAKI

10th April 2020

Greetings to you all in the name of Jesus Christ.

I hope and pray that you are all in good heart despite the unprecedented situation that we find ourselves in as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Though we are certainly in challenging times, the situation is not all bad. There are many hidden blessings that have come out of this. For example, one thing we have a lot of now is time; time to be with our families, time to be with God, time to reflect deeper on the essential things of life.

My son said to my wife and I as we were eating dinner together a couple of weeks, “wow, isn’t this good”, in terms of eating together as a family at the dining table. Last week, however, he moved to the end of the dining table because he said my eating was too loud. (Note, I was hungry at the time and the food was great, so I should be excused).

Anyway, being close together as a family is a great thing at this time. But, as you know, it also comes with challenges as a result of being in the same space together for a long period of time. I find trying to make a joke out of seemingly serious situations helpful. If you run out of jokes, however, going back to the old tested and tried saying is always the best and safest way to go - ‘happy wife, happy life’.

Having said that, I understand that this pandemic is having a significant financial impact on our congregations. Some congregations will struggle to recover, and some may even be forced to close permanently. Our prayers are particularly with those congregations.

Our Church Council last night had to make some tough financial decisions in the light of the current epidemic. But we made them, noting the temporal nature of the situation and the necessity to make sacrifices for the sake of the greater good during this critical period. In all this, we trust that God's grace will continue to be sufficient for all our needs, whatever happens in the future.

Throughout Easter we reflect on the reality of life; that we are always walking in between the 'magnetic field', as Lesslie Newbigin put it, setup up between the appalling sin of the world and the amazing grace of God. As a church in our post-modern society, we often try to slacken this tension. However, "to live in this magnetic field", represented by the cross of Christ, "is to live in an atmosphere which is charged with power, tingling, as it were, with electricity. One is always in the (humanly speaking) impossible position of knowing that one is – along with all others – at the same time the enemy of God and the beloved child of God. To live in this charged field of force is always at the same time supremely demanding and supremely affirming" (Newbigin, L. Gospel in a Pluralist Society).

On behalf of the National Council, may I convey our love and prayers to each one of you during this time.

May the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding, continue to be with each one of you, both now and forevermore.

Grace and peace

Hedley Fihaki

ACC News

CANCELLATION OF ACC CONFERENCE

Unfortunately, because of the Coronavirus and its ongoing impact the ACC Conference scheduled for early September 2020 has been cancelled. This also means that the 2020 AGM will need to be rescheduled. Please remember in prayer Christian conference centres like Alexandra Park Conference Centre that are finding this a particularly difficult time. The ACC National Council will meet in late April and arrangements for the 2020 AGM and the 2021 Conference will be considered.

WEEKLY SCHOOL OF FAITH DEVOTIONAL

If you would like to subscribe to the ACC School of Faith weekly devotional, please click on the following link.

<https://confessingschooloffaith.us18.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=a9ced43fe7bd3c9cf68100e1c&id=31e0659a2d>

CHANGES OF STAFFING

We want to let our members know of the changes to Mr Peter Bentley's position. Late last year Peter resigned from the paid position as our National Director and is now acting in a volunteer position as a Resource Consultant at least for 2020. Peter is providing time for the development of the confessing movement in this new era of the Uniting Church. Please remember Peter and his wife Colleen in your prayers. At our Face to Face National Council meeting (March 10-12) we had a dinner that honoured Peter for his amazing diligence, wisdom, excellence and faithfulness in the variety of paid roles he has held within the ACC. We give thanks to God for the blessing of Peter especially during the last few years. Please pray that as we move forward in the ACC in our new season, new people will rise up to fill the gaps that are needed.

PRAYERS

- Please remember in prayer all ACC Congregations and other congregations that are going through a difficult time due to the virus – for the Lord's provision, encouragement, wisdom, and strength.
- Pray for our ACC National Council meeting on the 27th April for the Lord's direction and guidance
- Pray for ACC State Movements for wisdom how to support ACC congregations in this critical time due to the virus.
- Give thanks to the Lord for the ACC School of Faith and for the new ACC lay preachers course Wesleyan leadership and the Basis of Union. Pray for the current ACC students that they may grow in leadership and understanding.
- Pray for wisdom, strength and protection for our prime Minister, Scott Morrison
- Give thanks to the Lord that the virus curve seems to be flattening in our country. However even though other crime has decreased with the social distancing, domestic violence has increased. Please pray for miracles of healing in Australian families during this season and for protection of people facing very difficult home situations they can't get free of with the social isolation. Today's figures in the papers released what people spent their money on with the initial stimulus package. This also was concerning. What topped the list wasn't food, electronics online subscriptions, or even alcohol (which also was high) but rather online gambling. Please pray fervently for all Australians in this difficult time that instead of going to addictions to medicate the trauma many are feeling, they may call out to the Lord, hear the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ and respond in faith to it. Pray also that the grip gambling has on our nation would be broken.

WEEKLY ACC ZOOM COMMUNION SERVICE EVERY SUNDAY FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE

If you don't have an online service to go to yet, please check out this list of ACC congregations. <http://www.confessingcongregations.com/news-views/item/wesley-mission-to-live-stream-services-this-sunday/>

Or you may consider attending our ACC Sunday afternoon Zoom Communion Service. Sundays 3pm NSW, Vic, Tas, Qld; 2:30pm SA, N.T; 1pm WA.

Please come 5 minutes early if you can. On Sundays, remember to have some bread and wine ready.

**How to enter by phone, computer or tablet.
Please contact the ACC office for all the details.**

If you are entering the worship communion on a phone and you have a computer, go to this page which is updated every Sunday before the service. It has the bible readings and prayers we will be using so you can join in.

<https://www.confessingschooloffaith.com/copy-of-day-6-communion-10th-june>

We also have a prayer meeting every Wednesday at 8am NSW, Vic, Tas, Qld; 7:30am SA, NT; 6am WA. Please let me know if you have any problems. You may like to do a trial run before Sunday or Wednesday.

May the reality of Christ's resurrection fill you with much joy and hope

Anne (Hibbard)

ACC National Secretary