



The ACC Newsletter

Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia

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Note: Please circulate this newsletter and the insert to interested members.
Next newsletter July 2007

1. State and Region Reports

New South Wales

The ACC – NSW Movement

A regional group of congregations in Georges River, Sydney held a dinner in May, with guest speaker, Pastor Grahame Abrahams giving a message of encouragement and challenge to be involved in the work of reform and renewal. All members are encouraged to meet each other, encourage local networks, and support in their region. You do not have to wait for the national officers to organise a local gathering, but please contact your state committee when events are planned so help can be provided.

A Day of Learning and Encouragement

Wesley Institute has planned a full day seminar with bible messages and resources for ACC congregational and group members. The date is Saturday August 11 and NSW members will receive information about this very soon.

The Hunter

The Hunter regional group continues to meet regularly and have decided to undertake Phil Marshall's Galatians Study. The regional contact is Alton Bowen (contact the office for further details). This is something that other groups could consider doing. Copies can be downloaded from the website.

ACC Tonga Group Launch

It is with great joy that we report Tongan ACC members in NSW are forming a group to help support the reform of the UCA. The launch will be held on **Saturday July 14** at Roger Page UC, Macquarie and Parramatta Roads, Auburn at 12 noon. Max Champion will be a guest speaker. Please continue to pray for our Tongan members and for all those in migrant-ethnic churches.

QUEENSLAND

The Queensland state committee reports that its first goal is to promote the confessional cause with as much good will as it can muster and quietly and steadily set the record straight. ACC Queensland has offered to pay for an extra 1000 copies of the first edition of the ACC catalyst so that the magazine can be freely distributed to interested parties. National Council member, Revd Ivan Kirk led encouraging deputations to the Mary Valley near Gympie and Tingalpa in Brisbane during May and June, and a visit by Rod James is planned for the near future. Queensland ACC are also planning to set up some ACC groups in local regions such as the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Darling Downs and Gold coast/Northern Rivers NSW in the near future. The Qld steering committee met following the general meeting in March, and are seeking to involve a number of people through co-option. A group is also being organised in North Queensland, and the members there will be involved as corresponding members with the State Committee. Links are being made with like minded confession movements in other churches and solid biblical and theological educational opportunities are being promoted, including the recent Australian visit by Don Carson which was sponsored by the Queensland Theological College.

Don McKay represented Queensland at the first ACC Networks commission meeting. Please pray for the UCA leadership in Queensland that it will promote the mission of Christ and reflect and lead the vast majority of the synod in the faith most share.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia had a significant time of direct input from the National Chair, Revd Dr Max Champion who toured a range of areas from 12 – 20 June. He also met with key Synod leaders and ACC officers. Many thanks to all those involved in this organisation and the provision of hospitality and support to Max.

The SA committee have been active in promoting ACC by mail, using their well established previous EMU network (which is no longer officially operating) to encourage members to consider joining the ACC. The committee meets monthly to devise ways of providing support and contact for ACC members and then sends out an update with news and information. A new initiative started in May is the provision of resource papers. The first paper prepared by Revd Dr Phil Marshall, *'In what way is the Bible Authoritative?'*, provides an excellent and succinct commentary on a very contemporary debate, and was sent out to all SA members with their May newsletter.

TASMANIA

The Steering Committee has now completed its work under the convenorship of Rev Walker Abetz, and a State Gathering to consolidate the State ACC Movement is being planned for later in the year at Legana when the Movement will be formally established. A visit from Gill Cann is planned for some time later in the year. Gill will speak to both the Southern Group and ACC Congregations on the North West Coast.

Previously two representatives from EMU were officially recognised as EMU reps on Presbytery. The Tasmanian group is hopeful that that will continue under the name of ACC. It is very encouraging to note that the Convener and Secretary of the Steering Committee met with the Rev Alan Thompson the Assistant General Secretary of the Vic. Tas Synod and he indicated his willingness to put our suggestion before Presbytery. The Southern Group (Cluster) will meet again on **Sunday 17th June** when we will think about "What It Means To Be An Evangelical Member Within the Uniting Church.

Also ACC Southern Group member Garry Kelly will be speaking about the Presbytery endorsement of the “Jesus All about life” programme. Garry is the Convenor of the DDC Committee of the Presbytery.

VICTORIA

The Victorian group are concentrating on having regional gatherings to spread the word, and in particular those congregations which are often alienated from the wider church. The latest meeting at Kyabram on 2 June saw over 35 members attend to hear Revd Dr Max Champion and Victorian ACC Convenor Revd Graeme Harrison talk about the ACC and develop plans to their plan to bring encouragement to scattered ACC members.

Update of happenings in Western Australia

Rod James provided the National Council with an encouraging report of a recent trip to WA. The evangelical congregations have formed a network call PNEUMA – Pastoral Network of Evangelicals Uniting in Mission Action. They have a positive regard for the ACC and their member congregations are free to join the ACC. Three WA UCA congregations have joined the ACC to date.

The following notes are from the first meeting record of the PNEUMA committee and are provided for information by agreement with PNEUMA.

Note 1: In Greek, the acronym PNEUMA means “breath” or “spirit”, as in “to pneuma to hagion” – “the Holy Spirit.”). It should be pronounced “new-ma” as in “pneumatic”].

Note 2: In the light of our previous discussions, this name is effectively our mission statement. It combines a commitment to providing Evangelical Christians with pastoral support and joint involvements in mission activity. The word “Uniting” has a double meaning – as a participle it implies working together. But it also hints at the Uniting Church background of our founding members, without excluding the possibility of other Evangelical Christians also linking up with us.

2. Report of the Latest ACC National Council meeting (May 14)

National Council: After consideration of the nature of the executive, the ACC executive decided to approve the term **National Council** in the constitution to replace the term executive.

Commission of Inquiry: Letters have been sent overseas to theologians asking them for a brief doctrinal statement on the question of sexuality and leadership. They have been asked for a reply by the 30 June 2007, and Council members will collate replies and report further.

ACC Logo: National Council members are working on an explanation of the logo.

Constitution: The Constitution has been finalised and has been lodged by the Public Officer, Revd Steve Estherby with the Office of Fair Trading to take effect from 1 July 2007, along with an ABN and a TFN for the sole use of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations. This will mean that from 1 July the financial accounts will be completely separate from the Reforming Alliance.

Budget: The National Council considered again the income needed, especially in the light of the production of a high quality magazine, and agreed to increase the budget by \$35 000 to \$160,000 for the financial year beginning the 1 July 2007.

Change to Treasurer: John Mason advised the ACC that he was unable to take up duties as the ACC Treasurer due to ill health. The convenor of the Board of Management (Administration and Finance), Dr Colin Adam has since kindly offered and been appointed as treasurer of the ACC from 1 July 2007.

Staffing: An advertisement was promoted in May-June for the office-clerical assistant.

Office Space: The ACC office will be relocating in the future. Board of Management convenor, Colin Adam has made arrangements for office space to be provided for the ACC at 117 York Street Sydney. This offer was graciously received by the National Council. Some matters are to be finalised, and it is envisaged that the Newtown Office would be retained as the office for the Reforming Alliance.

Wesley Institute: The ACC National Council endorsed courses of study at Wesley Institute and agreed to encourage lay people to consider the Wesley Institute as a suitable place for learning about the Christian faith.

3. Network Developments Commission

On May 28th the Networks Development Commission held its first meeting at the Healing Centre, Newtown Sydney. The NDC has responsibility for the oversight and encouragement of the state ACC Movements, the National Prayer Network, and the Association of Confessing Ministry Workers.

Unlike all of the other ACC Commissions the NDC is made up of a representative of each of the networks which it oversees plus Rev Rod James as Convenor and Dr Max Champion as National Chair of the ACC. The NDC meeting was therefore a great opportunity to have people together from around Australia and to share with each other the unique situations of each state and territory.

The state movements of the ACC are not 'stand alone' organisations, but work in cooperation with the NDC to further the aims of the ACC as a National organisation. The NDC meeting is establishing Guidelines for the state movements and will act as a venue to share and communicate with each other. The purpose of the state movements is to promote the goals of the ACC, as stated in the Charter, and particularly to

1. Encouraging the development of ACC congregations, congregational groups and regional clusters.
2. Encourage concerned and interested members of the UCA to become individual members of the ACC.
3. Invite ministry people within the Synod or Presbytery to join the Association of Confessing Ministry Workers, and facilitate ACMW activities and resources within the Synod or Presbytery.
4. To encourage participation in the ACC Prayer Network by members of the ACC.
5. To circulate and promote the ACC national magazine *ACC Catalyst* and the ACC Newsletter communication mediums.

4. Doctrine and Theology Commission

The Doctrine and Theology Commission has met twice and has begun preparing a confessional statement as a response to many issues in the church and society, including the postmodern age of relativism, new age spirituality, the question of history, and the role of the creeds in addressing particular heresies. The Commission takes seriously the need to address the increasing move to separate the Lord Jesus Christ from history, and the Gnosticism inherent in many of the 'progressive' movements, and hopes to provide resources for local congregations and members to help them combat these developments.