

## ACC Pastoral Letter Post 15th Assembly



Dear ACC Members

14 July 2018

*Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ*

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia exercised its determining authority on matters of doctrine to 'vary its policy on marriage' to include same-gender relationships. This decision is grounded neither in Scripture, nor The Basis of Union, but on a secular understanding of 'diversity'; a diversity that has now gone beyond the acceptance of a diversity of theologies to include a 'diversity of religious beliefs and ethical understandings'.

### Key points

- The lack of opportunity to debate the Report on Marriage and Same-Gender Relationships made the Assembly process extremely difficult.
- Because of the process, many orthodox and evangelical members did not feel the Assembly was a 'safe space'.
- The failure to seek concurrence on such a matter of vital importance should be highlighted in every congregation.
- Despite stating in 1985 that we are a multicultural church, the Assembly did not allow its 12 Migrant-Ethnic National Conferences to participate fully in the decision-making processes.
- Ecumenical relationships have been placed in a low order of priority and this will have a significant impact on local congregations.

In our view, the UCA Assembly has removed itself from the faith and unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. On behalf of the National Council of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations, we therefore say in the strongest terms possible, that we reject not only this decision, but the authority of the National Assembly and therefore stand aside from this Council of the Church. We continue to stand firmly in the 'Assembly' of Confessing Congregations as a 'distinct' Assembly through which we can continue to **Confess** our sole loyalty to Jesus Christ the living head of the Church and as a way of continuing to express our adherence to the Basis of Union.

Please be encouraged to know that though we were a minority in the Assembly, we did not compromise our stance in anyway. I am very proud of the Assembly members who spoke with grace and truth, including several second-generation leaders who stood their ground well, even in the face of distinct opposition. Thank you for all your prayers for us. It is greatly appreciated. Despite the enormous responsibility we all felt for the whole church as members of the Assembly, we still felt peace and joy knowing that we were simply participating in the reconciling work of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The National Council of the ACC will meet on July 23. We will also seek a national meeting of leaders from the various Networks, National Conferences and cross-cultural communities and UAICC leaders. Peter Bentley will continue to keep you updated on these important meetings.

Please continue to pray for the Church at this critical time.

Grace and peace

**Rev. Dr. Hedley Fihaki**

*On behalf of the ACC National Council.*

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