



Assembly of Confessing Congregations Inc

Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia

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

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Incorporated in NSW INC9887628; Liability of members is limited

13 September 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I am writing to you about the Marriage Plebiscite on behalf of the National Conference of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia that met in Townsville, 11-13 September 2017. The postal survey on marriage is being distributed. This comes at a time when large sections of the business community, the media and many others are actively and aggressively promoting the necessity of same-sex marriage and silencing other voices.

We believe that, if the outcome of the postal vote and subsequent resolutions by the Federal Parliament change the definition and meaning of marriage away from being between a man and a woman, then our public institutions and the church will be irrevocably damaged. We therefore strongly urge you to vote 'No' in the postal vote.

Marriage between a man and a woman has been the foundation of societies for millennia. Inherently it models gender complementarity and best provides space in which children are raised by their biological parents. Changing the law will prioritise the desires of adults over the needs of children and intentionally break the bond between any child involved and their biological father and mother. The ACC notes that President Stuart McMillan acknowledged in his pastoral letter of 28 August 2017, 'The Uniting Church's official definition of marriage is between a man and a woman.' The Uniting Church's understanding of marriage is more fully set out in Doc.bytes Worksheet 3: Marriage at www.assembly.uca.org.au/doctrine.

The Assembly of Confessing Congregations has already responded to the current debate in its Declaration on Marriage and the Family (November 2016) (www.confessingcongregations.com) Scripture also teaches that human beings are created in the image of God as male and female (Genesis 1:26) and that marriage is the union of a woman and a man in heart, mind and body (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:9). We also believe that marriage symbolises Christ's union with his church. That is; a man's sacrificial love for his wife mirrors Christ's sacrifice for his church and the wife's love for her husband mirrors the church's devotion to Christ (Ephesians 5:21-33).



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We believe that changing the definition and meaning of marriage will drastically affect the church's liberty to preach the Gospel and serve the world for which Christ died. It will restrict the church's freedom to express that faith in her schools, colleges, hospitals, welfare agencies etc. It will also significantly affect the freedom of Christians to live out their faith in their work places and other day-to-day activities. Conflict will arise for parents who do not want their children to participate in school programs that reinforce the logical corollary of radical gender theory.

We write this letter mindful of same-sex attracted people, many of whom are our friends, colleagues and family members. Our love and support for them is undiminished.

We rejoice that all members of the church are called to costly discipleship of Christ by supporting one another in our strengths and weaknesses.

We totally reject the actions of those on both sides of the debate who charge their opponents with being haters and bigots and we are distressed whenever same-sex attracted people suffer from vilification, prejudice and hate speech.

We urge you to respond to threats, real or imagined, by standing firm, turning the other cheek, and praying for our opponents and our nation.

We issue this letter in the power of the Holy Spirit as we seek to serve God who has revealed Himself as Father through Jesus Christ, our Lord and brother.

Yours in Christian fellowship,
Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki
National Chair

Note: This letter is a pastoral letter intended as an internal communication for ACC members, and is provided on the ACC website for reference and downloading.

In accordance with s 6 (5) of the Marriage Law Survey (Additional Safeguards) Act 2017, this communication was authorised by Hedley Fihaki of Buderim for the Assembly of Confessing Congregations Inc.