



## 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 June 2020

## PASTORAL LETTER FROM ACC DEPUTY CHAIR – PASTOR MATT KANG

*To our ACC members, churches and friends.  
Greetings!*

I hope that you and your families are doing well in the Lord.

It is a wonderful truth that we belong to a God who can use tragic circumstances to bring about His good purposes. In other words, a God who can use evil and suffering, to achieve good.

Towards the end of Genesis, we read about Joseph's life. His brothers do a wicked thing in selling Joseph into slavery (Gen. 37:12-36). He is wrongly accused and as a result, thrown in prison (39:19-20). In God's providence, Joseph is enabled to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, gains favour with Pharaoh, and is then granted power over the whole land of Egypt (41:41-43). As the narrative unfolds, we see a terrible famine causing Joseph's brothers to go to Egypt. Once the identities have been revealed, the brothers are filled with fear and in a pathetic way, they throw themselves at Joseph's mercy (50:15-18). At this point, Joseph reveals a massive truth about God. He says: "...you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (50:20).

God has used tragic circumstances, to bring about His good purposes. Through the deplorable actions of the brothers in selling Joseph into slavery, God has used Joseph to "save" many lives – with the provision of food during the famine.

This God uses even tragic circumstances to bring about His good purposes.

**This is our God.**

These last few months have been challenging times – to say the least. As a nation, we were reeling from the devastating bushfires, when we were hit with a global pandemic in COVID-19. At the time of writing, 102 people have lost their lives, and many thousands have lost their jobs or businesses.

It is not all gloom though, for a moment, let me share with you some brighter news. Last week, I was in a "Zoom meeting" with eight other pastors. We were talking with each other about the newfound challenges of ministry: preaching to a camera, shepherding people from a distance, and the exhaustion of too many "Zoom meetings".

My highlight from that conversation was to hear that many more people were tuning in online to our online worship services. A friend who pastors a church of 50 people, had around 100 people “watching” their Sunday service. A friend who pastors a church of 100, had around 150 people tuning in. Another man pastors a 300-member church but found that 450 people were watching online. All eight of us, who pastor eight different congregations, had the same experience!

This tells us that more and more people – who normally would *not* walk into a church building – are hearing God’s Word and the message of Jesus taught, explained and proclaimed. The Apostle Paul tells us that *“faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”* (Romans 10:17).

### **What a God!**

A God who uses even tragic circumstances to bring about His good purposes.

### **Praise the Lord!**

During this global pandemic, I urge you:

- (1) evangelise with great urgency, and**
- (2) rejoice and rest in our sovereign God!**

May God grant many more people saving faith! – for our joy and His glory.

*Pastor Matt Kang*

## **ACC NEWS**

### **AGM 2020: Online via Zoom on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 10am-1pm.**

As we explained last Eletter, the ACC conference in September has been cancelled this year due to the coronavirus and its impact on congregations. However, in keeping with our ACC constitution and also because it is important, the National Council in May decided we will have an online **AGM** via zoom this year **on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 10am- 1pm**. We encourage you all to mark down this date in your diary. It is also helpful for ACC congregations to begin appointing delegate/s for the AGM. We don’t want anyone to be excluded because of lack of technology. It is possible to enter the meeting by phone if you don’t have a computer. Members may also like to gather in a regional location and join the meeting together. Those without technology in congregations could aid delegates or members without technology. We will send out training guidelines and hopefully hold a trial session for people to check everything is working okay. More details about this meeting to come.

### **BARNABAS CORANOVIRUS EMERGENCY NETWORK**

*“Persecuted Christians left to starve under Covide-19 lockdown: help Barnabas feed those who have nothing.” (Barnabas website)*

In April, the ACC National Council agreed to join and support the Barnabas Coronavirus Emergency Network (BCEN) and commend the work of the Barnabas Fund to our members. While members of the ACC have a difficult time in the UCA, how much more are the difficulties that the persecuted church are facing throughout the world heightened even more due to the coronavirus.

With the money we saved as the ACC from not having a conference this year we were able to become a member-donor of the BCEN. You may also like individually or as congregations to support the work of the Barnabas Fund in prayer and financial help. There are also other valuable ministries that support the persecuted church that you may already be involved in and we encourage you also in those.

What is the Barnabas Fund and in particular the Barnabas Coronavirus Emergency Network?

On the Barnabas Fund website, it says: *“Barnabas stands alongside our Christian brothers and sisters where they suffer discrimination and persecution by providing aid through our partners on the ground, encouraging prayer, telling their untold story and speaking out on their behalf.”* <https://barnabasfund.org>

Barnabas Fund has formed the Barnabas Coronavirus Emergency Network (BCEN) to monitor the evolving situation as the coronavirus spreads globally and how it impacts their project partners around the world, assessing how to best support them. As the ACC we are now a part of this global supportive network. Please remember BCEN in your prayers.

Here is an example from the Barnabas Fund website from one of their partners in Nigeria as to the effect the Coronavirus is having on Christians in the Kwara State, Northern Nigeria.

*“Despite the fact that Kwara State has a large population of Christians, it is considered as a Muslim State, because it is considered part of Northern Nigeria. This means that in appointment, opportunity, amenities and even admission to state educational institutions, Christians and Christian-populated communities are being discriminated against. This has been the usual practice before the advent of corona virus. The advent of the virus accentuated this discrimination, so that when food items are distributed, Christians know that they will not get, and they do not.”*

**VALDEDICTORY NOTE: DR JIM PENDLEBURY OAM: 21 May 2020.**

Jim was a faithful supporter of reform movements in the UCA, a regular attender of ACC conferences and a keen advocate for his (late) wife Thelma’s tireless voluntary work for the RA and ACC. The ACC Council has extended our sympathy and prayers to the Pendlebury family and passed a resolution at its May meeting recognising Jim’s wider ministry and service to the whole church, especially within Bexley Uniting Church and Wesley Mission. Well-done good and faithful servant.

### **ACCatalyst Magazine**

A combined March – June edition of the ACC magazine is being produced and will be available online later this month. Printed copies will be mailed to members who have an individual membership and to local congregations. We encourage local congregational contacts to pick up and distribute as they are able during this time of limited physical attendance.

**ACC PRAYER:**

- Praise God for the continuing decline in the Coronavirus in Australia. Please continue to pray for those countries that have not yet turned the corner and have diminishing resources to cope
- Pray for Australia's recovery and for wisdom for all our national leaders
- Continue to pray for all ACC Congregations that the Lord would be at work in strengthening them during this time of social isolation
- Pray for the next ACC National Council Meeting via zoom on 29<sup>th</sup> June 7pm that the Lord Jesus Christ would be supreme and lead and guide us in all decisions.
- Pray for ACC Network Meeting. 15<sup>th</sup> June 2pm. Pray that all the states would be empowered in developing supportive networks for their ACC congregations.
- Pray for ACC School of Faith Meeting: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 10am. Pray for the Lord's wisdom, unity and purpose for the development of training for ACC Pastors.
- Pray for preparations for the ACC online AGM on 24<sup>th</sup> October – for the Lord's way forward so no one is excluded, and that the technology needed would be provided.
- Pray for comfort for members of Jim Pendlebury's family on his coming home to glory.
- Pray for healing for Beryl Curnow and strength for Ted in his caring for her.
- Pray for the persecuted church around the world especially during this time of Coronavirus that the Lord would provide for their daily needs of food and shelter.
- Give thanks for Peter Bentley's ongoing valuable voluntary work as our ACC executive consultant and pray for ongoing wisdom, strength and provision for him and Colleen his wife.

**WEEKLY SCHOOL OF FAITH DEVOTIONAL**

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

**ACC ONLINE SERVICES**

Most congregations are still unable to meet in person. If you don't have an online service, please check out the list of ACC congregations on the ACC website.

Or you may consider attending our **ACC Sunday afternoon Communion Service by Zoom**. This service going now for 2 years will continue even after the restrictions have lifted.

Sundays 3pm NSW, Vic, Tas, Qld; 2:30pm SA, N.T; 1pm WA.

Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5061472018>

Contact the office for code log-in details

We also have a prayer meeting every Wednesday at 8am NSW, Vic, Tas, Qld; 7:30am SA, NT; 6am WA. (same zoom link)

*Now unto Him who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, forever and ever. Amen*

*Rev. Anne (Hibbard)*