

# The year of visiting

*The wandering National Director of the ACC reports from the road to the National Assembly*

It was wonderful to be able to visit so many ACC member congregations and groups last year (23 congregations and ACC Clusters). I travelled extensively around NSW, some parts of Queensland, a significant part of Tasmania and also Adelaide.

In that city it was a pleasure and privilege to be present at the Robert Iles Trust Memorial Lecture, and hear The Hon. Kevin Andrews speak about Marriage, giving an overview of his excellent book: *Maybe I do: Modern marriage and the pursuit of happiness* (reviewed by our own Pat Noller in *ACCatalyst* in February 2013).

## I find it refreshing to hear frank and direct questions

Part of the focus for my visits was the UCA *Discussion Paper on Marriage*, though it was also an opportunity to preach, and speak about the role of the confessing movement. A highlight for me was the (often) question time at morning tea, lunch or other special events. I find it refreshing to hear frank and direct questions and I hope I was able to give reasonable and open answers.

During the year I enjoyed hearing from members via email, telephone and letter as well, and very much ap-

preciate all the feedback, including the constructive criticism.

I am especially grateful for the practical support I received during my visitations, and my personal thank you to all the generous people who hosted me during the last 12-18 months. Christian hospitality abounded in providing for a place to stay, and I was fed, watered and chauffeured very well.

Visitations in 2015 will be less on the Eastern Coast, with a focus West, especially as the 14th Assembly of the Uniting Church to be held in Perth approaches (12-18 July). If you would like to arrange a visit please contact me at the ACC office.

## Poll Speak

From the near past – Peter Bentley continues his series originally published in the Reforming Alliance newsletter *Reforming* March 2006, No. 12 (and slightly edited). There is nothing new under the sun.

*Political (Church) Speak 5 & 6. "The migrant-ethnic churches need more time." And "There are other voices in migrant-ethnic communities".*

Please, let us not patronise our migrant-ethnic churches. This issue is about strongly held positions.

Why can't the Uniting Church recognise that migrant-ethnic churches have well-grounded and maintained positions on sexuality and sexual practice?

Our migrant-ethnic churches know the value of family life for the

vitality of, and development of their communities.

This is a very interesting attempt to bring doubt mainly into the minds of Anglo members who dominate the councils of the church. It is a subtle way of raising issues without reference to the real situation and real beliefs of the members of our migrant-ethnic congregations.

Yes, of course, in any debate there are other voices, but in most debates it is important to base your argument in reality. The Uniting Church needs to recognise that 95% plus of our migrant-ethnic members are supportive of traditional [biblical and orthodox] understandings on sexuality.

From my discussions with leaders and members in these communities, there is also overwhelming support for traditional [biblical and orthodox] positions from all generations, and it is not a matter of 'give them more time or let us hear other voices' so they can change their minds. We should affirm our brothers and sisters, as they affirm and encourage traditional marriage and family life in their communities.

## 2015 Conference

It will be a pleasure to be back at the UCA Nunyara Conference Centre for our annual conference. Note the different meeting pattern for 2015: Lunchtime Monday 14th September – Lunchtime Wednesday 16th September.

*Peter Bentley*

*From page 14*

us. The more 'independent' we claim to be, the more dependent on the works of others we become. Do the truly independent make their own clothes, distil their own petrol, bake their own bread, grind their own flour?

Euphemisms add to the confusion. What do we make of 'adultery' being 'defined' as 'a coping mechanism to a mid-life crisis'; and 'pedophilia' defined as 'intergenerational intimacy'. There are sociological degrees of sin but no theological degrees. What is "SIN"? Simply put it is failure to do the 'good' I recognise, AND 'failure to abstain from the 'wrong' I recognise'.

To conclude; and make a point:

*Said an angry young man of Miletus  
These doctors use jargon to cheat us.  
They are quite reconciled to killing a child.  
For they are only aborting a foetus  
Which really is devilishly smart*

*The devil who plays a deep part  
Has won his way into our hearts  
By his insistence  
On his own non-existence  
Which really is devilishly smart*

*Dr Arthur Hartwig is an ACC member in Queensland.*