

Marriage, Suter, Polspeak

Marriage in Focus

Thank you to all the ACC member congregations and groups who responded to the UCA Assembly Discussion Paper on Marriage. ACC has received copies from a number of congregations, but if you have not yet sent a copy to the ACC office for its information and the interest of our own Task Group on Marriage (TG), please let me know. We owe a great deal to the hard work of the Convenor of the ACC Task Group, Rev Dr Max Champion and the members: Rev Ross Carter (Melbourne; Discipleship & Theology (D & T) Commission); Rev Clive Skewes (Melbourne; D & T); Rev Jonathon Button (Port Augusta, SA; D & T); Rev Shane Kammermann (Cairns, Qld; D & T); Rev Lulu Senituli (Bayside, Qld; Co-opted member for TG); Rev Anne Hibbard (Liverpool, NSW; Co-opted member for TG); Katherine Abetz (Poatina, Tasmania; Co-opted member for TG).

Keith Suter on the Future of the UCA

In this edition of *ACCatalyst* we publish a summary comment from Keith based on scenarios or possibilities he considers for the future of the ACC. Copies of the full the-

sis (367 pages) in PDF format are available from Keith, or if you are not able to access the listed website, please contact the ACC office. It is helpful for people to read this short article and reflect in the final 6 months before the Assembly – What is the future for the Uniting Church in Australia? At the time of the 14th Assembly it will be 38 years in existence. It would be interesting to hear from members about their reflections about the church, the changes and ethos and their experience.

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

Political Speak 4. “People need to understand the Bible better.”

This is perhaps a not so subtle way of saying, “you have got it completely wrong and you will be educated until you get it right”. I am aware that we all need to understand the bible better. It is purely astounding arrogance that promotes the view that the ‘theologically liberal’ approach is the best or only approach. I believe it would now be helpful for those on the ‘theologically liberal side’ to

either admit that there is intellectual foundation for the evangelical and reformed approach to Scripture, or to publicly inform our membership in a more direct way that they do not think so. At present, the language used, like the sentence “People need to understand the Bible better”, makes a mockery of the supposed idea that there are two (or even more) valid positions in the church.

Political Speak No. 7 “We listen!”

Yes, there has been a great deal of listening going on. Sometimes it is good to actually act on what people say, or at least let people know that no matter how much is said, it will not make any difference. Rather than more listening, what is needed is brutal honesty. Church members need to know the whole agenda for the future of the Uniting Church, rather than listen to more political-speak.

Political Speak No. 8 “People are really not sure.”

While there is a group within the church who are not sure when questioned about matters of sexuality, the overall opposition to liberalisation of standards for sexual practice within the Uniting Church has been plainly evident to anyone who has read survey material over the last ten years. It is evident to me from my research and contacts that Synod and area differences are very important in terms of the position of the membership of a local congregation. Also significant is the influence of the minister, and people may be interested to learn that it is actually the lay members with traditional viewpoints who are more suppressed by their ‘theologically liberal’ ministers, and as a consequence are now the ones who are probably becoming less sure. This should not surprise anyone who is familiar with the overt orientation of the leadership in the UCA. There should be an honest and up-front statement from the Uniting Church to clearly outline why the church does not want to listen to the voices of the majority of members on this particular matter, when in the past it had always done so.

Peter Bentley

LETTER

Dear Sirs

In reference to the ongoing saga about same-sex marriage I fail to see the relevance of this discussion on this subject, or whatever you may wish to call it. WHY do you wish to continue with this subject?

If you agree, as I do, that Scripture is GOD given and is always correct and no man could/should be able to, or want to, change it, why do you consider doing it now? Revelation states this, regarding change in 22:18,19. How can you disregard this?

As I have said before, my understanding of Scripture is that GOD does not support such a move.

I have just been reading on how

SATAN wishes to destroy Christianity. One of his ways is to ease his way into Church activities and quietly and secretly cause mischief there so that the Christians within that Church become so confused that they are not aware of what is going on and so drift to become followers of SATAN and not GOD.

While the hierarchy of the UCA appears to want to mollicoddle those who wish to change Scripture so as to appease them, then I feel that I can no longer remain a member of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Yours faithfully,
Harold Ayton,
UCA Ulverstone, Tas