
July / August 2004
Issue 6

The Next Step



Second Service (June)

Our first service on Pentecost Sunday (30th May) was based on Acts 2: 1-12 and on June 27 our preacher, Rev. Abraham Tang brought us a message also from the second chapter of Acts (v 42), which is very relevant for our new Christian Fellowship. The believers in the first infant church devoted their time to learning, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. We thank Abraham for his strong, simple and sincere message to all of us and hope that he may be able to preach again soon. HB

Third Service (July)

On Sunday July 25, Dr. E. Dennis preached on the subject "I believe". The breadth and depth of this excellent address covered his belief in God as creator of everything from the infinity of the universe to minute atoms and to the wonders of plant and animal life. He also spoke of the wonder of God's plan to do away with sin by sending Jesus, His only son, to die on the cross for our sins.

Thank you Ted for your sermon and also for a memorable children's talk about a camel and the eye of a needle. HB

A Christian Fellowship in the Methodist tradition

JOIN US TO WORSHIP GOD

5-00pm, Sunday 22nd August 2004

Preacher: Rev. Ron Peters

We meet at the
Campbell Gospel Chapel,
Chauvel St., Campbell
on every 4th Sunday of the month at 5-00pm

Preachers

Rev. Ron Peters will preach on 22 August
Rev. Abraham Tang will preach on 26 September
Mrs. Mary Hawkes will preach on 24 October
Rev. Ross Kingham will preach on 28 November

A combined activity with the Campbell Gospel Chapel congregation has been suggested for December

After our July service there was some discussion about increasing the frequency of our gatherings. Initially, a fellowship tea will be organised before the date of our next service (information will be circulated) and teas, hymn sing songs or other activities will be considered for the second Sunday (most likely) of each month.

We are grateful to Rev. Abraham Tang for his strong encouragement and the pastoral support he has given recently when it was required.

REPORT ON REFORMING ALLIANCE FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE BRISBANE, JULY 15-17, 2004

The first national conference of the Reforming Alliance (RA) within the Uniting Church (UC) was held at Grace College, St Lucia on July 15-17, 2004. About 130 people attended the conference which commenced on Friday, July 16 at 7.30 with prayers.

After a Bible study by Dr. Max Champion, the national chair of RA, there were several talks and discussions including one by Peter Bentley who spoke on Liberalism, Sexuality and the Future of the UCA. He was the author of the Bentley Report in 1996 which showed that over 80% of responses to the Draft Sexuality Report in 1995 were negative. The recent RA National Survey found that 88% of 27014 attenders opposed the ordination of practising homosexuals as ministers. This survey has been rubbished by liberals in the church just as the earlier Bentley Report was. Peter said that the 2003 Assembly dealt a mortal blow to the UC, because it cannot continue to function with the extreme diversity that resolution 84 has produced. It has established high levels of distrust within the church.

The impact of resolution 84 was discussed in a session where people from Tongan, Korean and Chinese churches and an aboriginal youth worker spoke of its negative effects. Mary Hawkes said that most congregations are split on resolution 84 and there is no way through without pain. Many congregations are in denial and not even allowed to discuss the problem. Mary believes that the church is in a state verging on paralysis. Philip Leslie, a lawyer from Sydney, spoke of the necessity to send RA delegates from the presbyteries to the 2006 Assembly, in order to get resolution 84 turned around.

Dr. Max Champion from Melbourne was elected unopposed as chair of RA with Mrs. Mary Hawkes as deputy chair and an 11 member executive. Mary is chair of EMU. Friday night we had a very interesting public rally at Chapel Hill UC with a strong Tongan choir to lead our worship and excellent addresses by Max and Mary.

Saturday started at 7.30 am with prayer, worship and bible study and a talk on the subject of unity and diversity, which included the point made by previous speakers that the 2003 Assembly had instituted division in the church. We also had a very interesting talk on the interpretation of the Bible. In South Australia a provisional presbytery called the Hope Presbytery has been formed that covers the whole state, still to be ratified by the SA Synod, in which practising homosexuals would not be accepted as ministers. A related approach is being taken in NSW. Eight motions were passed (a sheet with the motions is available for those wanting it), including "to work toward a contingency plan for amicable separation following the 2006 Assembly, should the UC not return to the gospel of Christ as testified in Scripture and the Basis of Union". After a communion service the conference concluded at 4 pm. At this very difficult time, could I ask for your prayers for the UC, for the Reforming Alliance and for those who have left the UC, that they may not lose their faith but may find another place of Christian worship.

Howard Bradbury
July 24, 2004

Contacts

Ted Dennis (Dunlop)
02 62593487

Ian & Joyce Hall (Ngunnawal)
02 62412085

Ian Denton (Downer)
02 62487953
iand@naa.gov.au

Alec Arnel (Page)
02 62544241

Howard & Ruth Bradbury (Campbell)
02 62489574
bradbury@cyberone.com.au

Need help with transport? If so, ask. Someone may be able to help.

TNS editor : Ian Denton – e-mail : iand@naa.gov.au

Be ye fishers of men. You catch them - He'll clean them.
