

The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans in Australia, is a reform movement within our denomination, to enable us to reform ourselves by the Biblical Gospel.

We see in the New Testament that from the very beginning of the Church there is a temptation to wander away from truth to error. The Apostle Jude said, there *“are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord”*

He wrote to urge believers to *contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the Saints.*

Down through the centuries faithful men and women have done just that; contended for the faith once delivered, that the church might be continually reformed.

In each generation there have been different issues for which the church has needed reform. It seems that we are forever inventive in the ways we can pervert the grace of God.

While the particular perversions of grace, might be different from the time of Jude the same task is before the church to resist them and to contend for the faith.

As Australia becomes more and more secular there will be increasing pressure on the Church to give up the Biblical Gospel and especially to modify its teachings about the exclusivity of Christ, his resurrection, his claims of Lordship and biblical morality, to conform with a more palatable agenda. In the US and Canada, in Britain and New Zealand, we have already seen the church cave in to these pressures as key teaching gives way to all kinds of error.

It would be foolish to think that the ACA was immune to these pressures and that we will not also see the biblical faith eroded by the world and end up in a similar place.

The pressures of secularism and the perception that the Church is out of touch with the world will only increase as time goes on. And if we are to be a pure church faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Scriptures inspired by His Spirit then we will need to be a continually reforming church.

Right now, it is true to say we have been well served by the Bishops of the Australian Church who have kept to orthodox teaching and have protected our church from doctrinal and moral error. We have much to give thanks for. However we must be always vigilant for reform.

Some are of the opinion that what are doing here tonight is schismatic and divisive; that we are causing a rift in the church by entering into this fellowship. I beg to differ.

FCA Australia has, as its foundation documents both the Jerusalem Declaration and the and Fundamental Declarations of the Constitution of the ACA. These two documents are not in conflict with each other. The constitution expresses our foundations and the historic faith of the church. The JD tries to express these historic truths and apply them to the contemporary issues of our day.

We believe (in the line with the Constitution) that schism will only happen when people walk away from this historic faith. In fact, FCA is about promoting and maintaining the unity we already have in our faith in Christ; in that faith that was delivered to us.

What we reject is a superficial unity that is based merely on association, and Anglican niceness or on overlooking difference on matters that are central to our faith. Of pretending that we have unity when we are deeply divided on matters of doctrine. Real Unity matters and real unity is found in Christ.

Some have asked what difference FCA will make in Australia.

First my hope is that we will live up to our aims; that we will promote positive and vibrant orthodoxy through conferences and publications, talks and resources, electronic and social media, that we will help ministers and churches contend for, and continue to keep the biblical faith.

There is (of course) a secondary aspiration here that promoting orthodoxy we will help promote lively churches, active and effective witness that the Gospel message might be proclaimed and its implications lived out in Anglican churches right around the country, so that vitality and health will be the hallmarks of our church.

My second hope is that it will provide assistance if a part of the Anglican Church in Australia departs from this historic faith entrusted to us. I liken it to those small red boxes you see on the walls of public buildings: “in the case of an emergency – break glass”

That is, if we have a crisis in our church over orthodox faith or practice the FCA might be positioned to provide fellowship and support to people should they find themselves excluded from fellowship by the unorthodox actions of others. We need to be ready to stand with brothers and sisters who want to stand for truth in the face of error.

If we achieve our first aim well enough then there will be no need for the second. However, already joining the FCA Australia will immediately put you in fellowship with other Anglicans around the world, who are currently out of communion with us. eg the Anglican Church in North America is full of Anglicans just like us; Bishops, Priests, Deacons, lay people; who believe the historic faith, who subscribe to Anglican doctrine, but who currently are out of communion with the official “instruments of communion” and therefore maybe even out of communion with your Diocese. Being part of the FCA Australia puts you in fellowship with them.

This movement has been well described as the “Anglican Realignment” as we re-align with those who continue to hold to Anglican doctrine as we have received it.

FCA Australia is intended to be a fellowship of people who are concerned with this kind of reform and fellowship.

- who love the scriptures and want to submit to them as the final authority in doctrine and morals
- who are not afraid to stand against the world to honour Christ and His word
- who are prepared to call out error in the church and press for its reform
- and who want to be in fellowship with other Anglicans who together with us hold to this historic faith.

If this is you, I want to invite you to join FCA-Australia. To join this fellowship and be part of a movement for reform and change and join others to do the same.

Richard Condie
Chair – FCA Australia.