

ACC SA ACTING CONVENOR'S REPORT

AGM 22-7-11

Since our AGM in June last year the SA State Movement of ACC has been very active in conducting a range of meetings and events.

In August last year we began holding our **Monthly Meetings on a Friday evening**—prayer at 5, tea at 6 and meeting at 7pm. This format, together with the intention to take the meetings around to different ACC congregations, has changed our monthly gatherings from a 'nuts and bolts' committee style meeting, to an opportunity for prayer, fellowship and information sharing that has engaged the congregations we visited and others from those areas—Glenunga (August), Golden Grove (October), Coromandel Valley (November), Tea Tree Gully (February), Lobethal (March), Balaklava (April), Golden Grove (May).

In addition to these general meetings we have held a number of special events:

A **'Dig Here' Seminar** was held on August 21st 2010 in Waikerie on the theme of *Confessing Christ—in our hearts, in our church, and in our world.*

The major event of this last year was the **Emerging Leaders Award** weekend held at the Longwood Campsite on 3rd—6th February. 18 young people from 14 congregations in SA, NSW and Victoria were treated to three days of resourcing, envisioning and encouragement. The weekend was the brain-child of Rev Don Purdey, and a huge appreciation must go to him for the vision, courage and persistence required to bring this dream to reality. With a budget four times our annual SA budget, the weekend was, from first to last, a venture of faith, and by all accounts was an outstanding success.

Last month we held a combined **Resourcing and Encouragement Event** with Hope Network at Port Augusta. Entitled *Christ's Living Gospel, Today; Living in, and fulfilling, God's local mission*, it sought to assist folk with the mission of God in their local community. The event was attended by about 40 people from Port Augusta, Whyalla, Port Pirie and other places in the North. It was agreed that we succeeded in providing both resourcing and encouragement.

ACC SA also held a **Prayer Retreat** at the Halbury campsite in May. A full account of this is given in the PrayerNet Report.

On Saturday 29th October we will hold a **'Living Waters'** seminar at Mt Gambier. The theme will be *The Gospel Mission to Marriages and Families.*

In addition to the above activities, ACC has been represented through occasions of **ministry and preaching** conducted by myself and Rev Ben Usher. When preaching in different places we have carried with us and displayed ACC resources for people to take. This has occurred at Clarendon, Delamere, Lobethal, Coromandel Valley, Bordertown, Yankalilla, Mallala, Two Wells, Port Augusta, Quorn, Port Broughton, Waikerie, Mt Gambier (by Rod), and Kangarilla, Meadows, Prospect Hill, Range Road, Strathalbyn, Myponga, Inman Valley (by Ben).

In April Ben conducted a **Spiritual Gifts seminar** at Kingscote, Parndana, American River and Stokes Bay on Kangaroo Island. This was found to be very helpful and the seminar is available to other congregations wishing to undertake it.

We have one active Regional Cluster in SA—the **Inner Northern Suburbs Cluster**. Numbering about 10, the group meets once a month for study, prayer and sharing. This opportunity is much appreciated by the participants who belong to congregations not sympathetic to the ACC or to evangelical theology.

As most of you will know our past Convenor, **Rev Don Purdey**, has contracted motor neurone disease. This sad occurrence has been tempered by Don's amazing sense of well-being in God's gracious care. Don and Annette have recently returned from about 10 weeks overseas touring Europe and the UK and visiting family there. They have been able to sell their house in Canberra, and hope soon to purchase a home here in Adelaide. Don's main difficulties at the moment have to do with the functioning of his tongue for talking and swallowing.

On behalf of the ACC both within South Australia and nationally we would like to thank Don for his faithful ministry over several years, which he has carried out with vision, and with good humour. In particular we would like to thank the Lord for the vision that He gave to Don for the Emerging Leaders Award camp. It has turned out to be a resounding success and a great blessing for all who have taken part, not least the awardees, and has provided a model of encouragement for the next generation of young leaders and also to the ACC movement as a whole.

Don's contribution to the confessing movement within the Uniting Church stretches over about 20 years, and compasses the eras of EMU, RA and ACC. As the ACC-SA Movement we wish to acknowledge all that you have done, to thank you most sincerely, and to assure you that you are not forgotten in these present times.

While the past year has been full and fruitful, we have found that **leadership** has become a concern for the SA Movement. Rod James and Ian Croft have been acting Convenor and Secretary this year pending permanent appointments to these positions. Ian has done an excellent job as Secretary (when Phil Marshall was Convenor), and since then as Acting Secretary. We thank Ian, most sincerely for his perseverance in this vital role. But he now feels he must press the need to hand over to someone else. My primary contribution to ACC is at the National level as a member of the National Council, and a member of the Task Group on Marriage and Family. Consequently having leadership responsibility at state and national levels is more than I feel able to continue with.

Recently discussions have been held with Hope Mission Network with a view to **cooperating in the planning of future events** as we did with the Port Augusta event. Hope Network is affiliated with ACC and many of our objectives overlap. With limitations on our leadership and other resources it makes a lot of sense to work together. At this stage we are planning to make the 'Stir the Fire' event in March/April 2012 a joint event.

Rod James, Acting Convenor SA Movement

ACC NATIONAL REPORT

SA AGM, July 2011

The Assembly of Confessing Congregations continues seeking to provide a confessing presence within the Uniting Church in Australia. Our objective is to confess Christ according to the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, as that faith is described in the Basis of Union of the UCA. To this end our **National Conference in September 2010** took the theme of *Marriage and Family*. The conference was held at Camden SW of Sydney and was well attended. This year's conference will be held in Melbourne and will take the theme of *Evangelism*.

The ACC's bimonthly magazine, ACCatalyst, has continued with its high standard of publication. The move from four editions a year to six has increased the cost, but has provided a more frequent opportunity to communicate with our readers. Recently Peter Bentley received a letter of appreciation from a Uniting Minister in WA in which he said, "I await each issue of ACCatalyst with great eagerness in anticipation of being brought up-to-date with affairs concerning the UCA from the ACC perspective. The magazine is a great encouragement to me and I am grateful to God for the spirited manner in which contributions to its contents present the Gospel message as well as responding on how well the 'battle' rages in the ground. .. God Love you all."

Several helpful **printed resources** have been produced this year by our National Commissions. The Social Responsibility Commission has produced *Abortion in the Australian Community* and is currently publishing a most helpful statement, *A Christian Response to Euthanasia and Medically Assisted Suicide*. The Discipleship and Evangelism Commission has produced and widely circulated a DVD and study book resource entitled *Conversations in Discipleship and Evangelism* featuring Rev.s Deane Meatheringham, Derek Schiller and Simon Dent. Following the popularity of this resource another DVD is being prepared entitled *Conversation about the New Heavens and New Earth*. The D & E Commission are currently publishing a study entitled *The Longest Journey* by Rev. Greg Pearce, which is designed to assist someone to work through the essentials of the Christian faith with a mentor. It can also be used in a small group.

A national **Task Group on Marriage and Family** has been formed and has produced an ACC statement on Marriage (copies available). As a member of that task group I attended a **National Conference on Marriage and Family** in Sydney in May. The quality of speakers was world class and I have written two resources incorporating some of the insights of this conference. These are entitled *The Gospel Mission to Marriage and Families* and *The Closeness of our Heavenly Father* (copies also available).

In June of last year the Uniting Network (a support group for gay and lesbian people within the Uniting Church) conducted a 'Sacred Union Ceremony' in Brunswick, Melbourne. During this ceremony four same gender couples made vows in a marriage-like ceremony. An SUC liturgy has been prepared by Uniting Network, and recently they have sought to have it approved by the Uniting Church as an official liturgy of the Church. Recently a Uniting Church Minister conducted a mock wedding in the centre of Adelaide to publicise the current push for gay marriage in Australia. An organisation

called 'Christians for Gay Marriage' has been formed, and is being led by two Uniting Church Ministers.

In this context the Assembly President Rev. Dr. Alistair McCrae and the Assembly Standing Committee have reaffirmed that the Uniting Church's doctrine and polity firmly state that marriage is the life-long union of one man and one woman. It has been stated that this is not about to change. ACC has called on the President to make this known publicly, and has called on the doctrine and liturgy working groups of the Assembly to articulate the Uniting Church's doctrine on marriage and sexual relationships before any decision is made about same gender relationships. The SUC liturgy will probably come to the full meeting of the Assembly in Adelaide, in July 2012. If this is the case, the whole Church will have a year to prepare for debate on this proposal.

During the last 12 months our National Chair Dr. Max Champion and our Executive Consultant, Peter Bentley, have undertaken visits to different parts of the country on behalf of the ACC. Such visits are recognised by the National Council as desirable as a means of representing the work of ACC to Uniting Church folk in their own locality. In October Max has been invited to WA to speak at the PNEUMA 'Campsite' conference and also to visit Geraldton. In November I have been invited to Queensland to speak at ACC meetings in Brisbane, on the Sunshine Coast, and on the Gold Coast.

A Robert Iles Memorial Trust Fund has been launched by the ACC and to date the response has been encouraging with over \$8000 being received. Other donations are expected, so that amount could increase to \$12,000. This fund will provided for an annual lecture to be delivered in memory of Robert and for the further expression of the orthodox/evangelical faith for which Robert so ably contended.

Over the last 12 months the National Council has been seeking to establish a full-time **National Director position**. An appeal has been made for funds for this purpose; however insufficient support as been forthcoming for a full-time position. The National Council will, therefore, recommend to the National Conference in September that Rev. Dr. Max Champion be designated National Director, and the funds received be used to support him in a part-time capacity.

The present moment in which we in ACC find ourselves is unusual in the sense that it is like **the calm before the storm**. It is hard to generate discussion or concern out around the traps about issues within the UCA, but at the same time we know of momentous issues that will come upon the Church in the next 12 months. Typically, when there is a calm in matters of controversy, confessing movements tend to receive nominal support. That would seem to be the case for ACC with respect to current interest and financial contributions.

On the other hand, I have the feeling that we are going to be busy over the next 12 months! With the current pressure being applied in Australia for gay marriage, and Uniting Network pressing for a Sacred Union Ceremony to be recognised in the Uniting Church, we will be certainly be living in vital times! It is in such circumstances that we receive expressions of appreciation for the work of ACC. Indeed people do say to us that it is the existence of the ACC that enables them to remain within the UCA.

Rod James, Member of National Council