

the Good Confession



AUTUMN 2021

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Hedley
Fihaki

National Council Chair



Message from the Chair

Greetings in Christ

I pray that this Easter season has been a time of prayerful reflection on what God has done for us. I offer the following words from the Recent ACC Zoom prayer retreat (4 - 5 March 2021) as way of encouragement:

“Do not be afraid Assembly of Confessing Congregations. I am with you. I have called you by name. You are mine”

(Adapted from Isaiah 43:1b).

The Lord called the Assembly of Confessing Congregations into being. He called us by name. We belong to Him. It is His calling not ours. There is

power as we let go and surrender that calling back to Him.

We are to become who he called us to be in all its fullness. THE ASSEMBLY OF CONFESSING CONGREGATIONS OF THE UNITING CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA.

We are to take hold of the uniqueness of the prophetic calling he has given the ACC, not only at a National Council level, but especially at a Congregational Level. He wants to raise up congregations that can confess the Lord Jesus Christ and proclaim the truth with great boldness in the UCA and in society. This in return will renew the church. He wants to raise up, by the power of the Holy Spirit, communities of in-depth disciples of Jesus Christ to shine Christ's light in this challenging age we are in. Then we are to learn what it means to come together as an Assembly not just of individuals or even representatives, but primarily of Confessing Congregations.

Let us continue to give to the Lord, for He is good; His steadfast last endures forever!

Grace and peace

Rev. Dr. Hedley Fihaki *National Council Chair*

ACC National Online Worship Service (ACC NOW)

All members are welcome to join the weekly online national worship service for the ACC each Sunday from 3.00 PM (AEST); 2:30. SA and NT; 12 noon WA.

Details for the zoom link are available from the ACC Office.

Weekly devotionals are posted on the ACC School of Faith website.



The Good Confession is published by the Assembly of Confessing Congregations Inc. | ABN 73 794 518 715 | ARBN 128 001 785 | Incorporated in NSW. INC 9887628.

Liability of members is limited. Opinions expressed in The Good Confession do not necessarily reflect the official views of the assembly.

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The Good Confession is a member of The Australian Religious Press Association

Editor: Peter Bentley | Design & Layout: Wes Selwood (Selwood Media & Design) | Printed: Creative Visions Print & Design

NOTE REGARDING THE ANNUAL ACC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Meeting held in Newtown (and zoom)



14 - 16
March
2021.

More information and decisions will be shared in the coming weeks following wider counsel and further discernment of the way ahead for the ACC. Your prayers for wisdom are appreciated at this new stage in the life of the ACC. The next full council meeting will be held on May 3.

Each National Council meeting (approximately every 6 weeks) is grounded in prayer and reflection led by a council member. The ACC Deputy-Chair Matt Kang spoke at a recent online ACC Council meeting affirming the centrality of the Gospel from *1 Corinthians 15: 1 - 11* from six key observations.

- 1) **v1** – the Gospel is to be preached
- 2) **v3** – the Gospel is a matter of first importance
- 3) **v4** – the Gospel is the fulfilment of Scripture
- 4) **v5** – the Gospel is confirmed by eye-witnesses
(Jesus physically appeared to people! There were eye-witnesses! Christianity is grounded in history, not in hearsay!)
- 5) **v9** – the Gospel produces deep humility
- 6) **v10** – Gospel ministry is God's grace at work through us

BEYOND THE REEF with Peter Bentley

Back in 1988, two 'wild-eyed' and optimistic Christian doctors Michele and Michael Browne, with their two very young children, went to serve on Aitutaki in the southern group Cook Islands for two years through Australian Volunteers Abroad. It was a job-share arrangement at the tiny local hospital, and, along with the elderly local doctor (who kept trying to retire), they provided all medical care on the island. Fortunately, their families saved their letters home (yes, paper letters, a long time before the social media era) and these sparked excellent memory recall, especially of amusing incidents that they encountered. All this enabled Michele, also a regular ACCatalyst writer and valiant 'letter to the editor' contributor to UCA publications, to pen this stimulating and insightful memoir of a time that is indeed now a lifetime away. The title itself comes from her comment in a letter home: "Sometimes it seems as if life 'beyond the reef' is happening on another planet!"

This very readable book is written in short chapters centred around a theme, a topic or an incident. They are written as tales and the setting is like 'tales from the south seas,' though in this case they are not about chests of jewels and pirate ships, but the treasures of people met, faith challenged and experience gained. The tales illustrate a wonderful love and

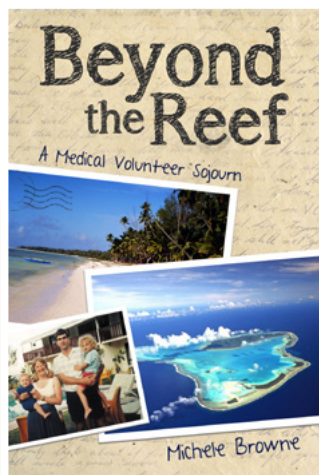
resonance with the local people as they explore the different cultural understandings and local experiences that they encountered. From the

beginning with the interview process, to packing the car (and shipping it – a wonderful practical example of how to pack and travel), leaving family and friends, and briefings, to arriving at the hospital and understanding what the distinct lack of medical equipment would really mean – I have no doubt that this form of 'training' provided the equivalent of many years of post-graduate education in an Australian setting.

There are stories that vividly illustrate the way they were able to cope with minimal medical technology and obtain necessary supplies; and Mike even found time to preach, while juggling cross-nation arrangements to enable an emergency medical evacuation! Chapters abound with amusing vignettes about local people and customs, visitors, holiday excursions, and frequent cultural misunderstandings that illustrate just how much we all have in common. And for all of us who are linguistically and medicalise challenged, there are two very helpful glossaries: one of Maori words and another of Medical and Other Terms.

The most poignant personal reflection is to be found in 'Final Days', and it is worth obtaining the whole volume just to read this one chapter that illustrates their Christian faith in the context of the medical issues that they constantly faced.

I commend this book for its whimsical and gentle encouraging Christian message of service and love. In this time of wider world chaos and anxiety, it will help people to reflect on our neighbours, Australia, and our place in God's world.



Copies of the book are available:

- Amazon, North Nowra Medical Practice (enquiries@nnm.net.au), Nowra Dymocks Bookstore, or by directly contacting Michele Browne: michele.e.browne@gmail.com

For an autographed copy:

- The book costs \$28 (direct purchase) or a variable (but similar) amount through Amazon & Dymocks Nowra.

TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN

with Ian Weeks

“A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

Ecclesiastes 4:12

The Bible tells us we were created for relationships – relationship with God, and relationship with others. This is true not only for us as individuals, but also for Congregations – we are part of the wider Church, and as such we are meant to be connected in fellowship with other Congregations.

Our denomination is meant to provide those bonds of fellowship for the support and encouragement of ministry and mission, and for the mutual building up of Congregations in faith and life. But what happens when those bonds of fellowship are broken?

The Belrose Congregation in Sydney has had a long history of evangelical Bible teaching ministry. Over the years of trending theological liberalism and doctrinal diversity within the UCA, the Congregation had made strong Biblical statements about the nature of the Gospel, and sexuality and ministry. Prior to the arrival of the Rev'd Ian Weeks as its Minister in 2011, the Congregation decided to join the ACC. It saw this as a means by which they could maintain the bonds of fellowship with other like-minded Congregations in the denomination and seek to continue its identification as a Congregation submitting to the authority of God's Word, adhering to the Basis of Union of the UCA.

Through its membership of the ACC, the Belrose Congregation feels it can share in the wider Church through those bonds of fellowship, and hopefully be a source of encouragement to other ACC Congregations – sharing the burdens of ministry in a broken world and in a broken denomination.

It joins with other ACC Congregations in Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, Proclaiming the Truth, and seeking to Renew the Church.

How are we supporting the ACC?

The Congregation supports the ACC in several ways.

It has encouraged the Rev Ian Weeks, and “released” him, to serve on the various committees of the ACC (at times chairing the NSW Network), and on the National Council (he is currently the ACC National Treasurer).

“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2

ACC PRAYER DISCERNMENT 2021

with Anne Hibbard ACC Prayer Network Coordinator

On the 4th - 5th March 2021 a group of 9 ACC members met with Peter and Kathryn Yaxley of Kingdom Presence Ministries for our yearly ACC prayer retreat over two days via zoom. The first day Peter and Kathryn led us in a workshop on hearing the whispers of God. On the second day Peter and Kathryn helped to facilitate a time when we became still and waited on the Lord Jesus together in discernment for the ACC. This was done through focussing on Psalm 23. Corporately we developed a booklet of what we discerned the Lord Jesus Christ was saying to the ACC at this time. This was presented at the National Council Hybrid Meeting in Newtown (14th-16th March) for further discernment. The National Council agreed with a few minor changes that the booklet to be made available for all the ACC members. The booklet is available via email from the office (link provided in the Easter E-News sent direct to members) and will also be on the ACC website.

We invite you to spend time in prayer as you read it in relation to your own congregations, clusters and groups and your own journey and thoughts about the ACC at this time.

Please let us know any response in prayer you might have had as you read the booklet that you would like to share with us.



The Congregation has hosted some ACC NSW events, and encourages its members to attend other ACC gatherings.

The Congregation regularly prays for the ACC and its leadership.

The Congregation sets aside one month per year to support the ACC financially through its Mission of the Month project, whereby Congregation members are encouraged to give over and above their weekly offering to that month's mission project. This is in addition to its annual ACC membership.

Are these some things your Congregation could do?

Now more than ever we need those bonds of fellowship with like-minded Congregations.

It can sometimes feel a bit lonely as a Bible based, Gospel focussed Congregation within the UCA. Praise God there is the ACC that enables us to have that fellowship with, and encouragement from, other Congregations in the UCA

Rev. Ian Weeks

Ian is the Pastor of Belrose Uniting Church, and a member of the ACC National Council, and married to Anne (who has also served on ACC Committees). They have two adult children, one of whom is now a Minister in an evangelical Congregation in America.



FIND US ONLINE

Youth Arise

A National Emerging Leaders Network; A Ministry of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations of the Uniting Church in Australia.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Mission

Finding and knowing our mission is always a priority especially for congregations.

[LEARN MORE](#)

School of Faith

Adherence to the "Basis of Union" is understood as willingness to live and work within the faith and unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as that way is described in this Basis.

[LEARN MORE](#)

New ACC Website

See the new website for ACC information: www.confessingcongregations.org.au

The old website www.confessingcongregations.com is now the Archival Site and a helpful source for copies of past material, including all the magazines and Reforming Alliance material, as well as links to other information and resources.

Donating Online

The ACC has a new donor section now on the website. This is via the donation portal Tithely and provides a quick and easy way to support the ACC financially.



Assembly of Confessing Congregations
@ConfessingCongregations · Religious organisation

About

For more, go to confessingcongregations.org.au Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, Proclaiming the Truth; Renewing the (Uniting) Church (in Australia)

Why are we called the Assembly of Confessing Congregations? The word 'Assembly' has been chosen with the following in mind: In the past we have had an... [See more](#)

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The Resurrection of Christ
1 Corinthians 15: 1-4

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to *remind* you of the *good* I *preached* to you, which you received and on which you have taken your *stand*. *By this gospel* you are saved, if you *hold firmly* to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have *believed in vain*. For what I received I passed on to you as of *first importance*: that *Christ died for our sins* according to the *Scriptures*, that *he was buried*, that *he was raised on the third day* according to the *Scriptures*.

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Assembly of Confessing Congregations 5h · 🌐

John 3:16 KJV

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Facebook

Are you on Facebook? Have you liked the ACC Facebook page? See the ACC Facebook page for encouraging bible verses, quotes from well-known writers and preachers and links to helpful and topical articles and reference material.

WHO WE ARE

Within the Uniting Church context of a very broad range of theology and practice, the Assembly of Confessing Congregations is a nationwide body of congregations and individuals whose vision is confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming the truth, renewing the church.

Our goals include

- Encouraging the confession of Christ according to the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, as that faith is described in the UCA's Basis of Union.
- Providing resources, seminars and conferences to build up believers, develop their gifts, and equip them for life, mission and works of service.
- Encouraging Christian believers in earnest prayer through our Prayer Network.
- Encouraging younger members of the Uniting Church in their faith and participation.
- Communicating about current events and issues through our website, social media and local newsletters.

JOIN US

Membership rates for supporting members:

- 👤 Concession (single or couple): \$10.00 pa. (financial year basis)
- 👤 Full (single or couples): \$20.00 p.a (see website)
- 📞 (0423) 637 576.
- ✉️ accoffice@confessingcongregations.com
- 📮 PO Box 846 Newtown NSW 2042

For more about the ACC visit: confessingcongregations.org.au