

# the Good Confession



## SUMMER 2022

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Anne  
Hibbard

National Council  
Secretary



☪ Grace and peace to  
you from our Lord  
Jesus Christ"

## A blessing from the ACC National Council

2021 was another huge year with many challenges to the Church due to continuing restrictions and lockdowns, along with ongoing conflicts in the UCA. As we embark on this new year of our Lord may we be so filled with the wonder of the incarnation, that in joyful response, our mouths may proclaim, and our hands might display, the

glory of God's love to those in need.

May our Loving Father truly bless you and your loved ones during 2022 with the joy and hope in believing.

Grace and peace

Rev. Anne Hibbard *National Council Secretary*

Congratulations to Rev. Robert (Bob) and Miriam Imms on the occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary on the 14th of January 2022. Bob and Miriam have been faithful servants of reform and renewal groups in the UCA over many years and stalwarts in Tasmania, providing support and encouragement to local ACC members, particularly in the Southern Tasmanian area. Bob would be well-known to ACCatalyst readers through his Seeds for Harvest devotionals over ten years.

We pray God's blessing on Bob and Miriam's witness to God's faithfulness and love, and may they enjoy the loving company and support of family and friends on this significant occasion.

70th  
Wedding  
Anniversary

## COMING EVENTS

### Propel Conference 2022

Tuesday, 15 March 2022 6:15 pm  
- Thursday, 17 March 2022 12:00 pm ACDT

Like many groups in 2021, Propel Network postponed their annual conference. Their conference was to be held just before the planned joint ACC and HopeNet SA conference in September in Adelaide. Several ACC members were planning to attend Propel and will be pleased to note that the new date for the Propel Conference has been set. Location: Journey Church, Ridgehaven, Adelaide.



Propel 2022 seeks to bring together a shared sense of urgency to make disciples who make disciples, continuing their mission of championing renewal in the church.

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# Devotional

with *Matt King*

National Council Deputy Chair

## Matt calls us to refresh our minds about who Jesus is.

Friends, I want to begin by asking a question and the question is this.

### Is it possible to be truly secure in this world?

As we as a nation come out of this pandemic, we have lost over 2000 lives in this country and five million people dead in the world. This tells us that five million people had not planned to die. They had planned to go on living, to go to work, on a holiday, to raise a family.

We were not ready for a pandemic, and it makes us ask is possible to be truly secure in this world today?

It is estimated that more than 500,000 people have lost their jobs in the last five years, and in the last three years more than 50,000 small businesses have gone under and shut down.

We are going to look at a day in the life of Jesus and this will tell us that the answer is No and the answer is Yes.

We come to the portion of the gospel where the disciples are getting into a boat to cross the sea. So far up until this point Jesus has been teaching and healing.

They plan to cross the sea of Galilee. As they try and cross, a furious storm arises. The bible highlights it is a furious storm.

I have lived in Sydney most of life and I have seen many types of storms; wind, rain, hail, thunderstorms, but I don't think I have seen a furious storm before.

We have to imagine what it was like to be in that situation. Imagine you were one of the disciples. You can see Jesus in front of you and you know how powerful he is. You have four professional fishermen with you. They know how to swim and handle a boat and they know the Sea of Galilee that is a few hundred metres below sea level. They are used to storms, but this day something was different. This storm was so furious it makes four professional fishermen scared for their lives. They are utterly convinced they are going to die.

*<sup>25</sup> The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"*

Imagine you are on this boat and you are convinced you are going to die. Your friend over there is probably crying. It is remarkable and crazy, but what is more remarkable is what we read in the next verse. We see these words "*But Jesus was sleeping.*"

It makes us ask Jesus, how could you sleep?

What I really love about this section, it that gives us a good clue

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Matthew 8:23-27 (NIV)

as to who Jesus is. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He is not half God and half man.

Why, because here he is sleeping. He is not afraid. He is God and can command the waves and the wind, and our Lord has been doing ministry all day and he is tired. Fully man, and he needs to nap.

Look then at verses 26 and 27.

*He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"*

Friends, as we see this story in the bible and we see Jesus take complete authority over nature. When we see his supreme authority and power over the winds and the waves, it causes us to ask the same question the disciples ask. Who is this man?

Now I want to tell you what this passage does not mean.

This doesn't mean that if you put your faith in Jesus, he will calm the storms of your life, or that he is going to make ministry easy and flourishing.

It confirms who Jesus is. He has

complete control over the winds and the waves. It means Jesus is God. This shows us his identity and authority.

In the gospels we see Jesus doing a lot of things, healing, feeding people, casting out demons, preaching the kingdom, but the bible makes it clear why he came to earth. He came to die to reconcile us back to the father, so that we may be filled with the Holy Spirit, sanctified and welcomed by God in heaven.

Friends of the ACC, you and I worship the risen saviour. Jesus who is the image of the invisible God. He did not stay dead, he rose from the dead. This has great implication for our lives.

As we go on with this meeting, and with our lives and ministries, I want us to remember this Jesus who is God. This Jesus who has complete authority over the winds and the waves in all our lives. He knows the concerns we have in our church and ministries. This passage is causing us to trust in him.

Friends, are you trusting him with your lives, with the future of the ACC?

My hope and prayer is that as we gaze afresh on Jesus, that in his kindness Jesus will refresh our minds and trust in him.



## Report on special meeting on November 20, 2021

(held via Zoom)

On Saturday 20th November this year ACC members from every state and territory (except the Northern Territory) gathered for a special meeting of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations to consider proposals arising from the review and report presented to members at the September AGM about the future of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations.

The meeting was held in two sessions with a half hour break in between. The first session began with a worship time, including a song of praise 'In Christ alone'.

Matt Kang, Deputy Chair of the ACC provided the opening devotion from Matthew 8: 23 – 27 (NIV). Matt called us to refresh our minds about who Jesus is and began with a question.

Is it possible to be truly secure in this world? Matt's message is included in this edition of the newsletter, and available on the ACC Facebook and website.

The ACC Secretary, Rev Anne Hibbard then provided a short training session on zoom skills, including raising hands and voting. The formal part of the meeting began with the ACC Chair, Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki outlining the responses that had been received from members to the consultation report. He then presented the proposals for the day and explained the background and reasoning. A good discussion time followed with ample time for both voting and non-voting members to ask questions concerning the proposals. Rev Mike Fawcett, a national council member from Western Australia concluded this time in prayer.

During the second session the proposals were put, and after some deliberation as to amendments a number of resolutions were agreed by the meeting. This is an

extract from part of the decisions of the unconfirmed minutes.

- That the ACC, remembering its adherence to the Basis of Union, stands together on a united front with Generate Presbytery, Propel Network Ltd, and HopeNet SA Inc.
- That the ACC intentionally commit to prayer, issues around interim staffing and administrative arrangements as well as legal matters.
- That the National Council update the members on a regular basis with specific points for Congregations to pray about.

The meeting also acknowledged the work of Peter Bentley over the last two years and expressed the ACC's grateful thanks for Peter's faithfulness and generosity.

(Note: Peter's work over the last two years has been voluntary)

The meeting concluded with a time of group prayer, the hymn 'The Church's One Foundation', and a final prayer by the Chair.

We praise our living head, the Lord Jesus Christ for leading and guiding us on this day and for the unity and good will of all who came. We would also like to thank everyone who came to the meeting and for their contribution.

Please remember in prayer the matters that were decided, and for the National Council as the council works through the practical arrangements and wider contact.

***Please pray for discernment and wise decisions to bring together helpful administration and office arrangements during 2022.***

# FIND US ONLINE



## 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.

## New ACC Website

See the new website for ACC info: [confessingcongregations.org.au](https://confessingcongregations.org.au)

The old website: [confessingcongregations.com](https://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.



# Confidence in the Gospel and the Scriptures



Rev. Dr Stuart Lange, who spoke at the ACC Conference in Townsville in 2017, provided a helpful message on Reformation Sunday for 2021. A brief article in the latest edition of the Presbyterian AFFIRM Newsletter (November 2021) provides a precis and the link to the video message (see QR Code below).

Wherever the church of Jesus has truly thrived, as in the early church and in many times since, it has demonstrated a deep confidence in the Gospel and the Scriptures. Wherever the church has fallen away from confidence in these, and has sought to reinterpret the Gospel and the Bible to fit the prevailing cultural moods, it has usually lost its spiritual power and vibrancy, and has withered on the vine. In the fourth century, Saint Augustine was miraculously converted, preached from the Bible, and emphasised the grace of God. In the medieval period, God was still at work in his church, in countless lives, and in the continuing expansion of the church across many formerly pagan societies. By the late medieval period, however, the western church in its doctrine and practice had significantly lost sight of grace, and the scriptures were often overshadowed by religious tradition. The Reformation was a time of spiritual and doctrinal renewal, founded on the power of the Gospel (the message of God's grace through Jesus, received by faith) and the primacy of biblical authority over the church. It was out of that Reformation reawakening

that we got Protestant Christianity, later waves of revival, the global expansion of Christianity, and even the Presbyterian Church. How much confidence do modern Protestants have in the Gospel and the Scriptures? How much confidence do the people in our own congregation have in the Gospel and Scriptures? How much do we? Do we doubt the power of God in the Gospel of Jesus, the power to save those who are sinful and lost? Do we doubt that the Scriptures are the authoritative Word of God? Do we water these down, and accommodate our Christian beliefs to the thinking and ways of our world? We are of course free to do all those things. But not if we want to see the lifechanging power of God, or a thriving church.

*AFFIRM is a network for Action, Faith, Fellowship, Intercession, Renewal and Mission within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and the National Association of Presbyterian Evangelical Churches (NAPEC)*



Scan to  
access the  
YouTube  
video






## 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)
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