

# the Good Confession



SPRING 2021

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## Message from the Chair

“Whoever watches the wind  
will not plant; whoever looks  
at the clouds will not reap”

Ecclesiastes 11:4.

In *Ecclesiastes* 3:2, the Preacher reminds us that there is ‘A time to plant and a time to pluck what is planted’ or ‘uproot’ (3:2). The conditions for planting and reaping, as we know, will not always be perfect or ideal. It is why the Preacher goes on to say, that simply gazing or staring at the effect of the wind and the darkness of the clouds will mean no sowing or reaping.

One commentator put it in this way, ‘Lack of complete knowledge is no excuse for inactivity’ (E. Jones 1961). ‘The life of joy will not come to the waverer’.

The fact is, if we wait for the ideal condition, we will rarely achieve anything worthwhile. *We must, therefore, as Paul put it, make ‘the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil’* (Ephesians 5:16, NIV).

This year has been a time of wrestling with God regarding the future of the ACC in its current form.

Does our current vision and role as the ACC adequately address the fact that the 15th Assembly’s decision to adopt R64 has instituted a ‘new gospel’ into the heart of the UCA, putting it ‘outside’ the Christian faith?

## The ACC National Council 2021-22

**Chair:** Rev. Dr Hedley Fihaki (Queensland)

**Deputy Chair:** Pastor Matt Kang (NSW)

**Secretary:** Rev. Anne Hibbard (NSW)

### Council Members

Rev. Walter Abetz (Tas)	Frank Reale (Vic)
Rev. John Blazé (Vic)	Barry O’Ryan (Qld)
Esther Bishop (Qld)	Rev. Ian Weeks (NSW)
Rev. Mike Fawcett (WA)	
Rev. Lulu-’OHa’angana Senituli (Qld)	

This is what apostasy means!

Sadly, many are blind to this fact.

I believe we are now in the dangerous zone of ‘complacency’. Living within the ‘two integrities’ framework is rapidly becoming ‘normalized’, and we will soon no longer see a problem living in a compromised and contradictory state of existence.

We have some important decisions that we must make in the very near future for the sake of the ‘gospel’. Is it time to uproot and plant a new?

The conditions for planting and reaping will not always be ideal. If we simply gaze at the wind and the clouds, then, we will end up not sowing or reaping at all. We must ‘*make the most of every opportunity because the days are evil*’.

Please help us Lord! Give us boldness and courage to do your will for your honour and glory alone. In Jesus name, Amen

Grace and peace

Rev. Dr. Hedley Fihaki *National Council Chair*

# The Transforming Power of the GOSPEL

The joint ACC and HopeNet SA Conference was held online 9 – 10 September with four excellent speakers presenting on the theme of *The Transforming Power of the Gospel*. These powerful and pastoral messages prompted a vibrant question and discussion time.

## How to speak and act confidently regarding the transforming power of the gospel in the light of Conversion Prohibition Bills

Christopher Brohier  
with Rev. Ian Clarkson

## Opening worship and introduction with Bible study

Rev. Kevin Brown

*Kevin is a minister at Box Forest Wesleyan Methodist Church and Principal of Kingsley College.*

## How the Gospel can help people to form a healthy sexual self-identity, and behave in healthy, appropriate ways

Monica Cook

*Monica is a qualified sexologist and educator who currently works at the Australian Centre for Sexual Health and The Mindspace.*

 **WATCH ONLINE**  
[youtube.com/watch?v=4w5y8gMuTc0](https://youtube.com/watch?v=4w5y8gMuTc0)

## How the Gospel transforms lives of those with unwanted sexual attractions and gender confusion

James Parker,  
True Identity International

*James is a leader in ministry and support of people often marginalised with broken identity and sexuality, providing rigorous political advocacy in those areas*

The presentations will be added to ACC YouTube and members will be advised of the links.



# REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL SECRETARY *by Anne Hibbard*

The National Council has been active serving our Living Head the Lord Jesus Christ since the last AGM in November. The National Council elected at the 2020 AGM included: Rev. Dr Hedley Fihaki (chair); Pastor Matt Kang (deputy chair, NSW); Rev. Anne Hibbard (secretary, NSW); Rev. Ian Weeks (treasurer, NSW); Rev. Mike Fawcett (WA); Rev. John Blazé (Vic); Rev. Walter Abetz (Tasmania); Rev. Lu Senituli (Qld); Barry O’Ryan (Qld) and retiring member Rev. Trevor Faggotter (SA). The AGM acknowledged Trevor’s service and support over several years. We also had the privilege of having Peter Bentley join many of our National Council Meetings in the role of Honorary Executive Resource Consultant. One of our first roles of the Council was to co-opt onto the National Council, Esther Bishop (Qld) who has joined us in our ongoing meetings.

As a council we have met monthly on a Monday evening, except for the holiday period of December and January. A different member has given the devotional each month. There has been good attendance by the council, and I give thanks to the Lord for the faithfulness and wisdom of every member of the National Council. They have shown commitment and perseverance through this difficult time not only with COVID-19, but also due to what we see as the increasing hostility of some councils of the UCA towards our movement and the pain and stress this has caused some of our ministers and congregations. We praise God that he doesn’t leave us without a faithful witness and gives us the wisdom and strength through the Holy Spirit to do what he is calling us to as a confessing movement at this time in history.

In March we were able to have a hybrid meeting in Newtown, NSW. Some National Council members who were unable to come physically because of COVID-19 restrictions joined in via zoom. The meeting began with a wonderful dinner at

the Thai Restaurant in Newtown where other ACC members in NSW were invited to join us and we shared together what we believed the Lord is calling the ACC to at this time.

One of the main foci of the face-to-face meeting in March was a review regarding our governance and structure. Over the past few years, we have delayed such a review even though it was needed. Since the Assembly in 2018 much has changed in the UCA, however as a movement we still haven’t caught up with the full effect of the UCA Assembly decision about marriage on our confessing movement, and how we might restructure ourselves amid these difficult changes.

The National Council decided that consultative help was needed to explore what the Lord was calling us to do now as a movement and to consider what governance or structural changes might be needed for the future. A focused discussion facilitated by a member of St Michael’s Institute was held at the March 2021 Council meeting. This helpfully raised the context and issues for the ACC. After further consideration and liaison by the Council, Philip Pogson from the Leading Partnership was engaged for a full consultation. During August Philip began the first part of the consultation through a process of interviewing all the members of the National Council plus several ACC leaders and connected members. The initial results of the consultation were presented at the AGM on September 11, allowing discussion and feedback from members. A copy of the report to members is available by email for interested members who did not attend the AGM. Please contact the ACC office.

We ask for your ongoing prayers and support for the National Council, for strength, boldness, unity, wisdom, discernment, compassion and humility in all we do, for the sake of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

# World Confessing News

Members of the Confessing Movement in the United Methodist Church (USA) are hopeful that the twice-postponed General Conference will go ahead ahead in 2022. This will allow the division of the denomination, the largest Methodist grouping and the formation of a new denomination with the proposed name of 'Global Methodist Church'. Executive Director Patricia Miller provides an update in the latest Confessing Movement Newsletter.

## THE GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH

The Transitional Leadership Council, of which I am a member, has been meeting with few exceptions weekly for a year to establish an interim process for a new denomination with the proposed name of Global Methodist Church. It will have its own logo, Book of Discipline, Vision and Mission. Once the new denomination is officially and legally formed it will have all the authority for the new church. There may, therefore, be changes and amendments to the interim documents. All that follows applies only to the interim.

"The Global Methodist Church's logo brings together in its three circles the one God — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit — who alone we worship. The circles intersect at the center of the cross of Jesus Christ, the symbol of our deliverance from our slavery to sin and fear of death. The outer circumference of the rings represents the globe. As a whole, the logo communicates God's sending of the church into the world. The sky blue color reminds us that even though Global Methodists live all around the world, they are all united together in God's great creation."



**THE MISSION** is exciting and compelling - to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

**THE VISION** is to join God in a journey of bringing new life, reconciliation, and the presence of Christ to all people, and to helping each person to increasingly reflect the character of Christ.

The proposed GMC includes historic Methodist documents such as the 25 Articles of Religion adapted by John Wesley from the 39 Articles of the Anglican Church.

## a proposed New Denomination

by Patricia Miller

Also included are the Apostles and Nicene Creeds.

The new denomination will maintain the current language in the UMC Discipline on marriage. It is understood the post-separation UMC will delete current Discipline language on homosexuality, opening the way for same sex unions and ordination of LGBTQ persons. In the new denomination local churches will own their own property including buildings and assets. This differs from the current Trust Clause in the UMC where the property and assets belong to the church denomination. Bishops will have term limits. All pastors keep their retirement/pension benefits regardless of which denomination they affiliate.

The proposed Discipline for the GMC is currently about 1/5 the size of the current UMC Discipline. It is far easier and simpler to use and understand, less bureaucracy and rules, with more local church control.

The proposed Discipline begins with our heritage of faith which reads: As a Wesleyan expression of Christianity, the Global Methodist Church professes the Christian faith, established on the confession of Jesus as messiah, the Son of God, and resurrected Lord of heaven and earth. This confession, expressed by Simon Peter in Matthew 16:16-19 and Acts 2:32, is foundational. It declares Jesus is the unique incarnate Word of God, and He lives today, calling all to receive Him as savior, and as the one to whom all authority has been given.

It also includes the Wesleyan Way of Salvation which states: The gift of grace is available to all persons. Our Father in Heaven is not willing that any should be lost (Matthew 18:14), but that all may come to "the knowledge of truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). With St. Paul, we affirm the proclamation found in Romans 10:9, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Permission has been granted to include this article for information.

Source: We Confess Newsletter of the Confessing Movement within the United Methodist Church, Spring 2021

The 2021 AGM of the ACC was held online on Saturday September 11. The minute record will be available for interested members on request after confirmation by the National Council.



# MEMORIAL MINUTE

Rev. Dr. Maxwell Lloyd

26.11.1947 – 18.6.2021

## Passed with acclamation at the 2021 AGM, and in the (online) presence of Mrs Ruth Champion.

Max Champion was ordained in 1975, having studied in W.A. and Victoria. He undertook further study in the USA, completing a doctorate on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1988.

Max and his wife Ruth served in city and rural parishes in Victoria and overseas for forty years. During their ministry they raised four children: Lachlan, Tanya, Rachel, and Marcus (who sadly predeceased Max in 2019).

Dr Champion presented the truth of the gospel at every opportunity, encouraging countless people through his sermons, public writings, and pastoral contact over more than five decades of sacrificial service.

His wider involvement in the Uniting Church included opportunity to provide leadership

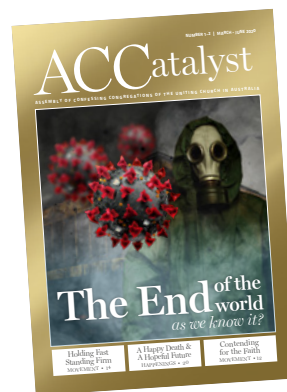
in several areas, particularly with groups in the Victorian Synod that focussed on a robust encounter of the Gospel with modern society by providing a well-informed and powerful voice for theological orthodoxy in the Uniting Church and the wider community.

Dr Champion was the foundation chair of the Reforming Alliance (RA): 2003 - 2009, and the Assembly of Confessing Congregations (ACC): 2006 - 2013. He succeeded in holding together a variety of groups and individuals with differing aims, but sharing a commitment to Catholic, Reformed and Evangelical convictions.

Dr Champion travelled and spoke widely in Australia and beyond on behalf of the ACC's confessional convictions, seeking always to uphold the Basis of Union. This helped to create a national sense of confessional unity within the UCA and sister churches with similar concerns.

The ACC places on record our deep gratitude for Dr Champion's untiring witness to the costly grace of Jesus Christ. He fought the good fight and kept the faith. Well-done good and faithful servant.

# WINNERS



ARPA  
Awards  
2021

## BEST EDITORIAL / OPINION PIECE

**GOLD**

**The End of the World as we Know it?**  
by Malcolm Prentis

*"An arresting article that puts the current pandemic in perspective—while telling how practical love and care for others during some past pandemics led the small persecuted Christian church to later become a major influence in the Roman Empire."*

## BEST COVER MAGAZINE

**BRONZE**

**No. 1-2, March-June 2020**  
by Wes Selwood

*"Well balanced page, a good use of colour, typeface, contrasting light and dark. This is a triggering cover graphic, it holds no apologies and requires attention."*

The awards were presented at an online ceremony on September 4. Congratulations to Wes Selwood, the designer for ACC Catalyst and Dr Malcolm Prentis for his article that Wes used for the focus of the cover of the march – June 2020 edition of the ACC Catalyst Magazine.

## WHO WE ARE

For more about the ACC visit: [confessingcongregations.org.au](http://confessingcongregations.org.au)

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.