

Some Information about the Congress

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

The UAICC:

- consists of Aboriginal and Islander members of the Uniting Church in Australia and members in fellowship who may also be members of any other denomination;
- ***is made up of Aboriginal and Islander people seeking to fulfil their calling as Christians among their own people, especially in the area of wholistic community development;***
- determines its own goals and objectives and decides its policies and priorities;
- runs its own programs and institutions;
- aims, in collaboration with other people, to bring to an end the injustices which hold Aboriginal and Islander people at the bottom/on the fringes of Australian society.

We are Aboriginal and Islander Christians from all over Australia, who have come together to form a national Congress as a result of a vision grasped in a conference held at Crystal Creek, North Queensland, in 1984.

The Congress seeks to unite in one fellowship all Aboriginal and Islander Christians who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord, accept the authority of the Scriptures and desire to follow and serve Christ as his disciples.

The UAICC was established by resolution of the Uniting Church Assembly in 1985. We are part of the Uniting Church, but Congress determines its own goals and objectives and decides its policies and priorities.

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress is now the largest non-government indigenous agency in Australia. It operates in all States and the Northern Territory, as Regional Councils in Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and as Calvary Presbytery in Queensland.

In South Australia (2008) the Congress has three congregations; Salisbury in Adelaide, Port Augusta and Kalparrin near Murray Bridge.

We desire to share in the struggles of our people, not for gain but because obedience to God demands nothing less.

Wholeness

Congress has developed a style of ministry - wholistic ministry - based on the way Jesus ministered and taught.

We proclaim the gospel as it relates to every part of life: the physical, social, emotional, spiritual, cultural, political and economic areas of human existence. No area escapes God's saving power, or avoids God's judgement.

The Congress does not exist to call people to itself, but to go to them and share in their struggle, wherever they are. Only by so doing can we follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We work under the guidance of God, the Holy Spirit, reaching out to those who are lost from God and in need of salvation, and to the poor, the hungry and those who are sick, oppressed, imprisoned or hurt in any way.

A Congregational Covenant

Many congregations are seeking to strengthen their commitment to covenanting with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Indigenous communities of Australia.

We suggest that it is the journey with Indigenous people which is most important – so we would emphasise that the process towards making the statement is just as important as the statement itself.

It is a journey for the congregation and a journey the congregation takes with Indigenous people. This means that it is important that there is an educational process for the congregation and a process of developing relationships with your local/regional Congress folk and your local/regional Indigenous community. Any statement needs to be the outcome of negotiations with Indigenous people – it is a covenantal statement after all, a statement of partnership.

For a congregational covenant to be meaningful it needs to say something about

- **Recognition and acknowledgement** of the problems of European contact, including the impact with the church.
- **Respecting and listening** to Indigenous people.
- **Understanding** our place in Australia.
- Recognition of traditional **Indigenous relationship to the land**.
- **A commitment to covenant and journey together**.

Further information on Covenanting can be obtained from the Covenanting Coordinator, Presbytery Synod of South Australia. **Email:** ksumner@sa.uca.org.au

Website: <http://www.mrn.sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/covenanting-home.html>