** ***The Uniting Church in Australia***

***Synod of Queensland***

**Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee**

**Report of Meeting 7th April 2011**

**WELCOME & OPENING:** The Moderator, Revd Bruce Johnson, welcomed all to the meeting and led us in prayers

**PRESENT:** Bruce Johnson,Heather Griffin, Anne Hulbert, John Agnew, Jock Dunbar, Don Whebell.

**APOLOGIES:** Dorothy Demack, Neil Ballment, Ray Richmond, David Kim, Garth Read.

**ECUMENICAL CATCHUPS:**

* The Roman Catholic-Uniting Church Report on *The Mission of the Church.* Now has a study guide for group discussion by local ecumenical groups. The material is appropriate for groups that include people of other churches as well as the RC and UCA. It is on our website and has been circulated to people on our mailing lists.
* ‘Living Jesus’ Gatherings have received very warm and positive responses. They were very well attended.
* The Synod has asked Louise Edwards to be its representative on an Ecumenical RE training group.

**BUSINESS:**

1. ***SUCCESSION PLANNING’:***

**Bruce has had some conversations, but no results yet. More names were suggested.**

1. **CONVERSATION ON *EPISKOPE:***

 ***On the 3rd January, Robert Gribben sent an e-mail which included the following paragraph:***

It is true that the next draft on Episkope/episcopacy is in my hands.  At the moment, the dismaying response of the Anglican General Synod to the long-studied, carefully-produced mutual Covenant is occupying my spare time, because CUWG has asked me to draft a response to the Primate. That is a delicate matter!  We are all aware, of course, of the likely impact of any proposal for episcopacy in the Uniting Church, but I believe the matter must be faced, or else we narrow our ecumenical vision to a bit of cooperation between the last remaining Protestants (over irrelevant 16th C arguments).  Progress depends not only on what we put to our church, but when we put it. That means that draft 7 is not going to come soon, though I hope I can get it to discussion stage sometime this year.

 ***We agreed to leave this on the Agenda awaiting further information.***

1. ***EXTENDED SERC MEETING:***

**Don was asked to contact Sharon Kirk for advice re the possibility of an Extended Meeting in May or August, and to send her the notes from our conversations as follows:**

At the October 2010 Meeting, we agreed that an Extended Meeting of the SERC be planned each year, when Presbytery Ministers and other leaders are together for meetings at the UC Centre. It was felt that the great values of the meeting are in its opportunities for sharing the stories of ecumenical activity at various levels and the raising of questions to explore further.

The key question for the next Extended Meeting would be; ***‘what do we want see achieved ecumenically in the State over the next 18 months?’***

Bruce advised that the date we had set in consultation with the Presbytery Ministers and other leaders – 17th February - will not be possible as it clashes with other meetings. ***We will decide on this at our Meeting.***

On 15th January 2011 I sent this e-mail to SERC Members:

**From:** Don Whebell [mailto:donwheb@dovenetq.net.au]
**Sent:** Saturday, 15 January 2011 4:35 PM
**To:** Don Whebell (donwheb@dovenetq.net.au)
**Subject:** SERC Extended Meeting 2011

**Greetings all**

**Many of you will recall that there was to have been an Extended Meeting of the Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee on 17th February. As this clashes with other meetings, we have had to postpone it. Apologies for the oversight in arranging the meeting!**

**The SERC meets on 2nd February and will try to set another date. And hopefully choose one that won’t clash with others!**

**The Extended Meeting last year was a helpful opportunity for Presbytery Ministers and other leaders in the Synod to share stories of ecumenical activities in their areas – both the positive things that have happened and the challenges encountered. We also see the Extended Meeting as an opportunity for the SERC to do some visioning and planning for its work in the Synod. For this Year’s Meeting, we would also like to have some discussion of recent ecumenical documents, such as *Living Church in Rural Queensland, A Covenant of Association* [Anglican – Uniting Working Paper] *The Mission of the Church* [Catholic-Uniting Dialogue Report]**

**We should try to arrange the date of the Meeting for a time when the Presbytery Ministers are in Brisbane for other meetings.**

**Grace and peace**

**Don**

Suggestions from August 2010 Meeting:

* Re-visit the 2004 NCCA Covenants, with reports of any local responses to it. The study kit written by Rockhampton Churches Together continues to be a useful resource and is available from QCT. It is used in the Ecumenism part of the Basis of Union Course at Trinity College. Perhaps it could be used at a meeting.
* A presentation on the new document *Living Church in Rural Queensland.*

* I suggest the following be the program, which we’ll finalise at the meeting:

**9.30am Opening Prayer**

**9.35am Outline of the purpose of the Gathering**

**9.40am Sharing stories of ecumenical activities currently happening**

**9.45am Exploring the Working Paper: *Living Church in Rural Queensland***

[Attached to e-mail inviting people to the Gathering]

**10.45am Coffee break**

**11.15am Overview of Dialogues with the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches**

[Website addresses given prior to the Gathering]

 **12.30pm Lunch**

  **1.30pm** **Question from the SERC:**

**2.30pm Finish**

**This is from Bruce Johnson’s Introduction to last year’s Gathering:**

“The purpose of our meeting today is:

* to take time to get a snapshot of what is already happening;
* identify the areas of difficulty and impediments to ongoing ecumenism;
* provide some wisdom about how more might be achieved locally, regionally and nationally.”

***We will need to have further discussion on this at our next meeting***

1. ***QUEENSLAND CHURCHES TOGETHER:***

* At the previous SERC Meeting, an e-mail was received from QCT asking that we nominate a UCA person to the QCT Commission for Religious Education and Chaplaincy in State Schools.

***The following have been asked – and agreed:***

Revd Wendi Sargeant: Religious Education Advisory Committee;

 Ms Jenny Busch: Commission for RE and Chaplaincy in State Schools;

* Ms Glenine Hamlyn tendered her resignation as General Secretary on medical advice, effective from 1st March 2011.
* We need to find some alternate members for meetings.
* Two more churches have asked about membership of QCT: Indian Orthodox and the Metropolitan Community Church.
* Progress Report on the revision of *Christians in Dialogue* study kits. At the February meeting it was reported that a start had been made with the kit ‘The Faith we Confess’.
* Revd Dr Clive Ayre is preparing material for a study kit on the Environment.
* Queensland Churches Together will celebrate its 20th Anniversary on 1st December. The plan is for this to be celebrated at St Peter’s Lutheran School Chapel – where the Inauguration was held. The Gathering will start at 6.00pm with coffee, and the Service will commence at 7.00pm. Anne reported that planning for the event has commenced.
* It was also noted that it will also be the 20th anniversary of QCT’s Joint Churches’ Domestic Violence Prevention Project.

***5.* WEBSITE:**

New items added to it:

* Report of the February 2011 Meeting – in the **Reports** page.
* Study book re The Mission of the Church – in the **Dialogues** Page
1. **CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES:**

Initiate conversations with Pentecostals? Meet together with a group of them for shared prayer and reflection? Conversation about school chaplaincy?

 ***Bruce to chat with Wayne Alcorn about this.***

Wayne Alcorn is now the national leader of the AOG and John Hunt Leader of the AOG in Queensland. The rhetoric in relating to the AOG is that they are open to working together – but it’s not a big priority. In many local areas they work with other churches functionally. Bruce: “It is important that people of faith stand together in the face of rampant atheism.”

**Anglican-Uniting Church Dialogue:** the Working Paper *A Covenant of Association,* has been endorsed by the Assembly Standing Committee. The Anglican General Synod requested that “copies of the affirmations and commitments be sent to the Doctrine Commission and the Dioceses for consideration, reporting back to General Synod Standing Committee by 31 December 2012.”

 In e-mail Correspondence with Revd Geoff Hoyte of the Anglican Committee for Ecumenical Relations, he suggested that their Committee meet with the SERC to talk about this – noting that the Working Paper is to be discussed in each Diocesan Council.

 We noted that the final decision-making is at the national level of the churches’ Standing Committees.

***Bruce agreed to meet with the Anglican Primate, Archbishop Philip Aspinall, to discuss the matter of a meeting of the two ecumenical relationships Committees.***

***He has since met with the Primate and a date for a joint meeting is being discussed by the Chairperson of the Anglican Ecumenical Committee, Revd Geoff Hoyte, and Don They will discuss it at their meeting on 1st May, and suggest dates.***

***MEANWHILE, it would be advisable for our members to read and become familiar with the document, ‘a Covenant of Association’, which is in our website, in the Dialogues Page. It’s the last article you’ll find as you scroll down.***

1. ***DATES FOR MEETINGS***

*Meetings of the SERC and SIRC commence at noon with a BYO lunch and conclude at about 3.00pm.*

**Dates of Meetings in 2011**

**June 2nd**

**August 4th**

**October 6th**

**December 1st**

***Don Whebell***

Secretary

2 May 2011