***The Uniting Church in Australia***

***Synod of Queensland***

**Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee**

**REPORT OF MEETING**

**held on August 4, 2011**

**WELCOME AND OPENING:** The Moderator welcomed all to the meeting.

**PRESENT:** Bruce Johnson, Heather Griffin, Jock Dunbar, John Agnew, Dorothy Demack, Anne Hulbert

**APOLOGIES:** Don Whebell

**SECRETARY:** Jock Dunbar has agreed to be the Secretary of the Committee, He will discuss the role with Don Whebell, but also needs to ascertain who should be the Qld representative on the CUWG. Jock said due to this commitment of Secretary he would no longer be able to continue being a representative on the Faith and Unity Commission of QCT. (**Action required)**

**ANGLICAN and UNITING CHURCH DIALOGUE:** A joint meeting of the Anglican Commission and SERC was held at the Synod office on July 20.

Archbishop Philip Aspinall noted that it was the first meeting of the two committees since “For the Sake of the Gospel” was produced. The Anglican Church wants to continue striving to bring the two churches closer to unity, including a mutual recognition of ministries and intercommunion.

It was noted that the Anglican Church has an extensive process to make decisions, as can been seen from the Anglican General Synod Ecumenical Strategies Group document, “Steps to Unity: An Outline Process for Ecumenical Convergence from an Anglican Perspective.”

The Anglican-Uniting Church Covenant of Association has caused a misunderstanding of its intent because its abbreviated title, ‘Covenant of Association’, has a different meaning in Uniting Church terms compared to the Anglican understanding.

Sharing of Eucharistic Hospitality

Regarding intercommunion, the Anglican Church’s Canon provides for Occasional Eucharistic hospitality (whereby it serves a pastoral need of communicant members of other churches on an occasional basis), Mutual Eucharistic hospitality (for local agreements or covenants between partner churches), Interim Eucharistic hospitality (for isolated people in situations of extreme pastoral need), and full visible communion (achieved after a series of agreed statements and the adoption of a Concordat of Communion). Occasional hospitality practised at present in rural communities is not intended to continue for any length of time, otherwise the people are asked to belong to the Anglican Church. In the Uniting Church, this is not the case as people of other Christian denominations who regularly worship in the Uniting Church can become Members-in-Association.

From the Uniting Church perspective, we should ascertain just what agreements with other churches are in place at present, as well as what national agreements are involved with the various local agreements. (**Action required)**

Mutual understanding of ‘Episcope’, and recognition of ministries

The Anglican Church is still working on clarification of its understanding of ‘episcope’ and whether or not personal ‘episcope’ is essential for the faith. Some parts of the Constitution of the Anglican Church in Australia can be changed and others cannot be altered.

Our differences go back to our understanding of ‘who is the church’ and ‘who calls the church into being’. In the Anglican Church a Bishop is appointed and calls forth a community to be a church. In the Uniting Church, church is where ‘two or three gather’ and they call a leader of the gathered community.

Bruce noted that the Dialogue is a National discussion, but on a State level the two committees can continue to meet together to discuss progress. We need to let our Uniting Church people know that the Anglican Church is still actively engaging in this process towards unity. (**Action required)**

**QUEENSLAND CHURCHES TOGETHER:**

The Reverend Canon Richard Tutin was appointed as General Secretary of QCT and will take up this role from October 1, 2011.

It was agreed that the Moderator write a letter congratulating him on his appointment and invite him to the next meeting of SERC (proposed date November 3).

We could ask him to discuss the various Commissions of QCT and their mandates. This would help us in our appointments to fill the various UC vacancies on the Commissions. (**Action required)**

**Lord Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast**

Anne Hulbert has been the UC representative for many years on this ecumenical steering committee that works in conjunction with the Lord Mayor’s office to help organise the annual prayer breakfast held in Brisbane City about March. (It meets on an ad hoc basis.) Anne has asked that she be replaced on this committee. The Lord Mayor’s Events Office will need to be advised of the person appointed.

 (**Action required)**

**ANNUAL ECUMENICAL COMMITTEES GATHERING AND DINNER**

This year the Annual Gathering of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Uniting committees will be held on September 19, at the St Bernard’s Catholic Parish Community Centre, 4 Klumpp Road, Upper Mt Gravatt, commencing at 5.30pm, with dinner at 7pm. The Guest Speaker will address the topic “Receptive Ecumenism”.

**SERC REPORT TO SYNOD**

Don wrote a draft report and Bruce is finalising the report to be placed with the Synod papers.

**THANKS**

As it was the last SERC meeting that Bruce would chair as Moderator, the committee thanked him for his enthusiastic involvement and expressed how much it appreciated the contribution he has made to ecumenical activities.

**NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 3, 2011** (Note different date)

*Consecutive meetings of SIRC and SERC commence at noon, in the Synod Office, with a BYO lunch, and conclude about 3pm.*

The next meeting date set down previously clashes with the commencement of Synod. Instead, it was agreed to hold the next meeting of SIRC and SERC on Thursday 3rd November. A decision will be made at that meeting whether or not to hold the scheduled December meeting.

**Notes of meeting taken by Anne Hulbert.**