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

***Synod of Queensland***

**Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee**

**Report of Meeting 7th October 2010**

**WELCOME & OPENING:** The Moderator**,** Revd Bruce Johnson, welcomed all to the Meeting and led us in Prayers.

**PRESENT:** Bruce Johnson, Heather Griffin, John Agnew, Ray Richmond, David Kim, Neil Ballment, Garth Read, Don Whebell

**APOLOGIES:** Dorothy Demack, Jock Dunbar, Anne Hulbert

**PRAYER-POINTS:** we welcomed The Moderator following his major surgery. Prayerful sympathy was expressed to Ray, following the passing of his wife, Elaine. Advice had been received that Sandy Yule, Secretary of the Christian Unity Working Group was to undergo major surgery early in mid-October.

**GUEST:** Sharon Kirk, Presbytery Minister, Presbytery of The Downs

**ECUMENICAL CATCHUPS:** Sharon Kirk was present to take us through the new Working Paper, *Living Church in Rural Queensland.* It is the successor to *Being Church in Rural Queensland* and was written by Toowoomba Churches Together. Here are the notes I took from Sharon’s comments on the new document:

* *Living Church in Rural Queensland [LCIRC]* is the outcome of a Summit held at Highfields, Toowoomba, on September 14-16, 2009. Participants represented the Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran and Uniting Churches in Queensland. Ms Glenine Hamlyn, General Secretary of Queensland Churches Together also participated.
* *LCIRC* is a Working Paper – and it is expected that it will be further developed as the four churches implement it in ways that will work constructively in local ecumenical situations.
* *LCIRC* has been launches at gatherings in Townsville [1.10.2010], Rockhampton [15.11.2010] and Cairns [16.11.2010]. A flyer was produced for Cairns event – if I can find it, I’ll pass it on. Some has suggested streaming the *LCIRC* paper to involve other places.
* A person is being employed on The Downs to promote *LCIRC.*
* A Religious Education Steering Group has been established to work wit the State Government’s Religious Education Advisory Committee, involving the whole *LCIRC* spectrum of churches plus the Baptist Church. Working Groups have been set up in regions of The Downs and will report to the Steering Group – whose Chairperson is Sharon.
* The Christian Leaders Network in Toowoomba includes Assemblies of God, Presbyterian, Anglican, Salvation Army and UCA. They have endorsed the RE Program. They are asking for a representative of Education Queensland to be involved.
* Ecumenical Hospital Chaplaincy works very well in Toowoomba.

 Bruce reported his attendance at the NCCA Forum. He fund it very interesting to reflect on the value of the UCA’s Consensus decision-making process in comparison with the NCCA’s processes.

 He found the concept of Receptive Ecumenism to be highly valuable – it was a main theme of the Forum: *each church asking the others, ’What can we learn from each other?’* Two of the resources used at the Forum were by John Gibaut and Gerard Kelly. One has been sent to SERC Members and the other will follow.

 Don Reported that the Report of the RC/UCA Dialogue was launched on September 29th at the LaValla Centre, Paddington. Guest Speaker was Revd David Gill, former General Secretary of the Assembly and of the NCCA.

***BUSINESS:***

1. ***‘SUCCESSION PLANNING’:***

For the future – there is a need for us to give attention to planning for the future, in terms of the Secretaryship of the SERC and SIRC. We need to find one or two people who are in the age-group that is younger than mine, and who have a commitment to the ecumenical imperative of the Gospel as it is expressed in the *Basis of Union.*

***It was agreed that the Secretary contact the people mentioned in the discussion to ascertain possibilities for a new Secretary for either or both Committees.******Contacts have been made.***

***2 VISIT BY REVD DR SANDY YULE:***

Sandy arrived in Brisbane on Monday evening 2nd August. His schedule was:

 Tuesday:

* Visit to Toowoomba, Lunch with Sharon Kirk;
* Meeting with Revd Brian Sparksman, Sharon and a representative of the Lutheran community;
* Evening meeting with Toowoomba Churches Together.

Wednesday:

* Meeting with Glenine Hamlyn at QCT;
* Meeting with David Pascoe, RC Co-chair of the RC/UCA Dialogue;
* Interview with Mardi Lumsden, Editor, *Journey;*
* Various conversations with people at the UC Centre;

Thursday:

* Meeting with John Cox, Chaplaincy Coordinator;
* SERC and SIRC Meetings;
* Guest Speaker at Annual Gathering of the Anglican, Catholic and UCA Ecumenical Committees.

At the Meetings of Toowoomba Churches Together and the SERC and SIRC Meetings, Sandy spoke from the new brochure *An Introduction to the work of the Christian Unity Working Group.*

This was an opportunity to share discussion about the work of the CUWG and more especially about the overall picture of ecumenism in Australia and the UCA’s contributions to it. Sandy pointed to areas in which the new brochure was already in need of up-dating, eg, that there are now two more member-churches of the NCCA, bringing the number to 18, that the Lutheran-Uniting Church Dialogue paper is now available, as is the recent Report of the Anglican-Uniting Church working paper, *A Covenant of Association.* He highlighted the importance of the Report of the Roman Catholic-Uniting Church Dialogue *The Mission of the Church,* which has the endorsement of both Churches and is unique in the world.

Most of this was expanded further at the Gathering with the Ecumenical Commissions, where Sandy’s theme was *Revisiting our Ecumenical Ideals.*

We are grateful to Sandy for his visit, and continue to support him in the CUWG in its work for the UCA – and for our partner Churches. We also hold him and his wife, Fay, in our prayers in view of her recent major surgery and his current medical treatment.

***4 The following items on the SERC Agenda were held over from the February Meeting.***

* **CONVERSATION ON *EPISKOPE:***

Our last discussion on this was at the June 2008 Meeting. ‘Episkope’ was the theme of the 2008 Christian Unity Working Group Conference. The Draft Minutes were circulated to SERC members after the Conference. A complete Report of the discussion will be circulated as soon as it arrives.

 ***Members may have noted in the Minutes of the CUWG’s May meeting [p1 re ‘Trilateral Responses Draft 6, that a 7th Draft is being written by Robert Gribben]***

 ***I collated the papers that I have and sent them to SERC members after the Meeting.***

 ***This item will remain on our Agenda until we receive and discuss the Draft from the Christian Unity Working Group.***

 ***Sandy reported that Robert has been overseas and the Draft he is working on should be ready soon. He commended our keeping this on our Agenda so that it will receive our attention. CUWG will be very interested to receive our comments.***

* ***EXTENDED SERC MEETING:***

At the October 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 to do?’

 Suggestions From August 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.*

 ***Since theAugust meeting, I was advised that the 24th November date was not suitable.***

***After checking with Marian Zaunbrecher, I contacted the Presbytery Ministers re a possible alternative date. All responded saying that February would suit them when they in Brisbane for meetings. Marian suggested that the date be 17th February.***

***I have spoken with Sharon Kirk and she will do a presentation on* Living Church in Rural Queensland.**

***I will contact other leadership people in the Synod. Last year, we had:***

 ***Elaine Rae***

 ***Colleen Geyer***

 ***John Cox***

 ***Bob Harriman***

 ***Robyn Kidd***

 ***Leva Pat***

 ***Michael Jeffrey***

**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:**

***‘what do we want see achieved ecumenically***

***in the State over the next 18 months?’***

**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.

***5 QUEENSLAND CHURCHES TOGETHER:***

* QCT has been advised that Bruce and Anne be our representatives on the QCT Executive.
* We need to find some alternate members for meetings.
* Invitation to Glenine Hamlyn, General Secretary of QCT to a meeting later this year.

 ***She has been invited to the December Meeting. She has been invited to speak about the new Mandate of the QCT Commission for RE and Chaplaincy in State Schools, as well as join in discussion of the various agenda items.***

* Andrew Gunton has been appointed Presbytery Minister for Moreton Rivers and will need to withdraw from his position on the Faith and Unity Commission of QCT.
* Two more churches have asked about membership of QCT: Ethiopian Orthodox and the Metropolitan Community Church.

***6* WEBSITE:**

New item added to it; Report of the August 2010 Meeting

***7 For next meeting: Members to bring suggestions re ‘what do we want see achieved ecumenically in the State over the next 18 months?’***

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?***

***From David Kim’s report to the March SERC Meeting re the Asian Ecumenical Course:***

* it was agreed that the UC will need to consider how David’s insights may be shared. One avenue could be at meetings of the Presbyteries.
* re the proposal for a Liturgy Conference to be held in Australia for the benefit of local Asian congregations: there is a need for an initial conversation about this. ***It was suggested that Rev Rob might have knowledge that could be helpful in this regard. And it was suggested that David raise the possibility with the Assembly Working Group on Worship, of which he is a member.***

 ***David may report on this at our next SERC Meeting.***

***8 DATES FOR MEETINGS***

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

**2010:**

**December 2**

***Grace and peace***

***Don Whebell***

Secretary

15 November 2010