

## SYNOD ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS COMMITTEE

<p><b>Context:</b></p> <p>The Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee has been tasked with encouraging throughout the Synod a culture of ecumenism and recommend to the Synod appropriate ecumenical action through Biblical, theological and practical consideration. The Committee meets six times per year. Current membership of the Committee: Rev Kaye Ronalds (chairperson), Rev Jock Dunbar (secretary), Mr John Agnew, Rev Dr Clive Ayre, Mr Neil Ballment, Revs Anne Hulbert, Craig Batty, Ray Richmond, Don Whebell, David Won Kim and Bruce Johnson. In addition to our connection with the Assembly Christian Unity Working Group, we have within the membership of the Committee, people involved in a variety of ecumenical activities. The Committee acts to raise awareness of and to respond to issues of an ecumenical nature, as well as growing our own and the wider Queensland church's understanding of and interaction with people of other faiths.</p>	
<p><b>Responses to our Vision since last Synod</b></p>	<p><b>Working towards our Vision in the future</b></p>
<p><i>Forming active and accountable disciples of Jesus</i> <i>Confident in sharing faith</i></p>	
<p><b><i>Interacting with other areas of the Synod</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presbytery Minister's Meeting: Information is exchanged and awareness raised at annual meetings with presbytery ministers. Receptive Ecumenism and the paper by Gerard Kelly, as well as the work of Paul Murray were recommended.</li> <li>• The Basis of Union short course offered by Don Whebell and sessional speakers through Trinity Theological College builds awareness not only of the Basis of Union but of ecumenism as a core value of the Uniting Church in Australia. The ecumenical relationship between Trinity and Australian Catholic University frames the training of ministry candidates, agents and lay people within an ecumenical context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a resource bank of models, stories and other resources to assist Presbyteries and Congregations in their ecumenical ministry.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>SERC Website</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our website (<a href="http://www.ecumenical.ucaqld.com.au/">www.ecumenical.ucaqld.com.au/</a>) was part of the website migration process. It contains many useful resources and links for ministry agents and people passionate about ecumenism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further develop the website</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Assembly Christian Unity Working Group (CUWG)</i></b> (Synod representative Rev Jock Dunbar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee had conversation around a discussion paper on lay presidency and offered some comment and feedback to CUWG.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to report on the work of the CUWG including dialogue progress and joint-statements</li> </ul>
<p><i>Engaged in Authentic community relationships</i> <i>Reaching out and speaking out for justice and peace</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Moderator (our chairperson) attends Heads of Churches meetings bi-monthly to build relationships and talk about issues in common or difference and at time to make public statements and representations to government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in head of churches meetings as they occur...</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Queensland Churches Together</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representatives of UCA attend the Executive and this year Rev Bruce Johnson has been appointed as President of QCT.</li> <li>Queensland Churches Environmental Network. Committee member Rev Dr Clive Ayre has been instrumental in the formation of this group which occurs as a network between member and non-member churches of QCT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for opportunities and projects to build ecumenical relationship and understanding</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Other Ecumenical Initiatives</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecumenical Tertiary Chaplaincy Committee supports the ministry of Chaplains in Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology and the Qld Synod contributes financially.</li> <li>Ecumenical Covenants exist in a number of locations including Injune, Wandoan, Jericho, Winton and Roma. A new covenant was signed in Mt Mee in May 2012.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support localities through the process of establishing ecumenical covenants where that will further the mission of the church in that place.</li> </ul>

**Key achievements/initiatives:**

The work of SERC since last Synod has been reviewing and remembering the reason for the committee, primarily in understanding our role based on the by-laws of the committee. This has helped in the committee gaining clarity and direction. We are looking forward to setting some goals for the upcoming 18 months which have arisen out of an internal review process emphasising priorities for the Synod (Synod leadership, presbyteries, agencies and congregations).

**Challenges/risks as we progress:**

The committee feels that working for christian unity has lost energy across the church, particularly in congregations and their ministers in placement. Our future goals will take this into account, and we are hopeful that we can remind the church of the passion and gift that God has given us in this area of ecumenism.

**Recommendations/issues to be addressed:**

In order for christian unity to regain a priority in our church, particularly as we welcome a new generation of leaders who have only known a post-union church, then I would suggest we look very seriously at allocating funding for a part-time position to give to this defining characteristic and value of our church.

**Contact for Report questions:**

**Name:** Jock Dunbar

**Preferred contact method:** email: [jock.dunbar@gmail.com](mailto:jock.dunbar@gmail.com)