

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In rapidly changing times and with the Christian faith at the margins of Australian society, a consistent and focussed leadership is called for. Some of our ecumenical partners and some of our Synods have sought to meet the changing leadership requirements by inviting moderators or presidents to put their names forward for an additional term. Like the Queensland Synod has done with the second term of Rev David Baker, we are asked at this meeting to consider an exemption from the regulations so the WA Synod may do the same. Our friends in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ may also seek another term for their Moderator although it won't be concurrent. The question for us all becomes what models of leadership best serve the mission of God, lived out through the people of God in the Church of 2016 and beyond?

The Assembly General Secretary comments in her report on the four Synod meetings she has attended this year. I have attend three of these with her, together we have prioritised Synod meetings beyond our shared Assembly reporting as the communities of our Church which enable us to experience the heart of our Church, the things people are passionate about and the things we are concerned about. Further it enables people to have one on one conversations with us. I have valued these opportunities. It occurs to me that the vital and life giving aspects of our gatherings are: worship, prayer, deep reflection, stories or truth telling in which at times we are vulnerable. Each synod has been different but every Synod has enabled these elements to enhance the fellowship of the Spirit, the community of Christ.

In Christ relationships enable synergy and the mission of God to be fully manifest amongst us. I have given and intend to keep giving attention to relationships with: UAICC leaders; Multi-Cultural Cross-Cultural Ministry leaders, including their National Conferences; Assembly leadership team members and Committees; Synod leaders; ecumenical partners; national leaders of our Church; and our international partners. Sometimes these are formal meetings however often and importantly they are opportunities to share life over coffee or a meal.

I continue to give priority to the work of our National Task Group for Royal Commission work together with the Synod Task Groups in our collaborative and coordinated responses to the work of the Commission. I have taken the initiative to call a meeting of Heads of Church and/or their delegate to discuss our ability to share in a consistent approach for a Redress scheme. We shall as the General Secretary also notes meet again next week.

On Monday I will convene a meeting to discuss what we have learnt in the respectful conversations and listening so far and to map out a process through to the 15th Assembly 2018 for the tasks set out of the Theology of Marriage discussion at the 14th Assembly 2015 and the first ASC meeting this triennium. We shall then bring a report to the November meeting of ASC.

The Moderators met in Victoria in May with our Ecumenical friends from the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches of Aotearoa NZ. To share ones journey with those who carry similar responsibilities of call are a true blessing, enhancing the quality of service we are able to give Christ's church.

In November we shall meet again without our Aotearoa friends this time but in a shared location with the General Secretaries. This will allow for a strategic engagement and importantly fellowship.

The Moderators will also have time with the Multi-Cultural Cross-Cultural Ministry National Reference Committee during this November meeting. Most importantly, as you will be aware on the Saturday during the ASC we shall have time together with the National UAICC leadership. I have invited the Moderators who are not on ASC to stay and join us for this time together.

Public advocacy including media, speaking and preaching opportunities are all a significant parts of the President's ministry.

The Easter and Anniversary message via video have I hope modelled shared leadership, highlighted the significance to our identity of the Covenant relationship with First Peoples, and drawn attention to what God is doing among us as our cultural diversity grows, enriches us and as the Spirit transforms us into a truly intercultural community.

Prayer and calling the Church to pray have become normal for the Uniting Church since the Destiny Together time we shared in 2013. And so we have in this last little while called for prayer for China, South Sudan, and West Papua amongst other concerns.

Finally I want to say, what an awesome group gathered for the NYALC2016 on the Gold Coast last week. These are amazing, intelligent, passionate young leaders in the life of our Church. This community is a vision of how God through the Spirit is transforming our Church. An intercultural community that demonstrates love for one another and has a unity in Christ which held together regardless of theological diversity.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the Church and spend so much of my life in the richness which is the people of God in our Church and the Christian community universal.