

South Australian Council of Churches Inc



Annual Report July 2014 - June 2015

President

Bishop Michael Putney, in his book "My Ecumenical Journey", names the ecumenical task as to deepen the existing communion with other Christian Churches and this task has been a joy and a pleasure within the South Australian Council of Churches as we continue our ecumenical journey.

Communion would be the experience of our time together both at the Annual General Meeting at the Coptic Orthodox Church and also at our General Council Meeting hosted in Port Pirie by the Anglican Diocese of Willochra. The narrative which ran throughout the presentations was very much about invitation, hospitality, the building of relationships and living and working with intent.

At the Annual General Meeting last year, we were inspired by the wonderful stories of the Hewitt girls' experience of being at Taizé and this year we have been delighted to be able to support Candace and Jordan who were nominated by Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (SA), with a scholarship to go to Taizé during 2015.

Catherine Clifford spoke last year in her address in the lead up to the 50th Anniversary of the Decree on Ecumenism saying "The Second Vatican Council embraced a vision of ecclesial unity that has since been characterized as a communion of diverse churches, bound together by a common faith that is enriched by a legitimate diversity of expression in liturgy, theology, spirituality and canonical structure." I would like to add that for me it is also a communion experienced through listening, sharing experiences, friendships and conversation.

The Emmaus Conversations which began this year over a simple meal were particularly helpful in building relationships and new friendships as we shared our stories. It is hoped that many more Emmaus conversations will spring up both intentionally and organically amongst communities. "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the Scriptures to us?" Luke 24:32

The South Australian Council of Churches has much to give thanks for. There are many devoted people across all of our member Churches and committees who have offered themselves so freely in all our endeavours towards Christian Unity. I would particularly like to thank our Executive Officer, Geraldine Hawkes, who always has such wonderful vision and carries this vision out to its fullest possibilities and our administration staff including Melanie Macrow, our current Office Administrator. I am very grateful to have served as President throughout 2015 and feel honoured to have had this opportunity to grow in my own ecumenical journey and to work alongside such faith filled people.

Receptive Ecumenism continues to pave the way for us to draw on each other's gifts as we continue to learn from each other and to apply these learnings. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, affirms the direction that ecumenism is taking and says "Through an exchange of gifts, the Spirit can lead us even more fully into truth and goodness." (par 246)

Jill Gallio
President