



Report to members on Conference review – No.2, May 2017

On May 3rd and 4th 2017 the review process was broadened to invite anyone from any of our churches to participate in an open forum consultation. On the afternoon of May 3rd a specific conversation for Churches of Christ ministers was arranged at Dulwich/Rose Park United Church where 19 ministers were in attendance. On the evenings of May 3rd & 4th members of congregations from all over Adelaide attended Brighton Church of Christ (76) and Salisbury East Church of Christ (47) respectively.

The objective of this report is to communicate common themes raised in each meeting from notes taken by three different individuals at the three meetings.

A question that arose in the first meeting among ministers which carried through the following two conversations is, **‘what is Conference?’** It became clear in all three meetings that there are variations on what we mean by the term ‘Conference’. Some referred to Conference as an annual event, others the State Office and others the relationship between Churches of Christ in SA & NT.

The Wednesday night group came up with a definition to describe the Conference of Churches of Christ in SA & NT. **“Intentional relationships between churches under the banner of Churches of Christ, committed to each other and the Gospel with God working through us for the benefit of God’s Kingdom.”** The definition was agreed to on the following evening and reflected the sentiment of what was expressed by the ministers. It was agreed that this

was an aspirational description of Conference.

Our facilitator, Derek Linsell, instructed everyone to form cluster groups to discuss how we think we are currently reflecting this definition of Conference and to rate ourselves out of 10 in terms of effectiveness. The combined scores of both evening groups reflected an average score of 3.5 out of 10. Derek reflected that we have failed as a Conference to express this as our identity. He asked us to sit with the discomfort of that.

Reflections around the meetings resonated with a sense of disconnect from each other and the State Office. It was reflected that churches only relate to the State Office when they want or need something, usually in a time of distress. Reflections were shared about our sense of autonomy as a movement of churches expressing themselves in different ways. The language often used in this context was to talk about independent or individual churches. This is a shift even further away from autonomy, which is about being an association of churches working together yet expressed locally in different ways, to each church seeing themselves as independent churches with no need to relate to the association.

We have an aspirational belief that the Conference (as defined) enables churches to do ministry, outreach and care through resourcing and relationships, but that’s not actually what occurs. In all three meetings the term **‘we can’t do this on our own’** was expressed a number of times.

Common threads that were expressed include; a perceived lack of information/communication from

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State Office to members of churches, and between churches; lack of compassion; lack of awareness; fractured relationships; we've lost our will to work together; we've become lazy in our conversations with each other; we feel isolated from one another; we don't work together. The vote not to endorse the reappointment of the State Minister was raised as an example of our lack of relationship with each other because many people were shocked at the outcome.

Comments were made in each meeting about our assumed theological differences or different understandings of the Gospel. While it was recognized that it is part of our DNA to allow a diversity of theological opinion and interpretation in the spirit of unity and love, it appears this is problematic because we don't really relate to each other or talk about our difference or celebrate our common unity. This is a conversation flagged for further exploration.

While many found the meetings uncomfortable, people expressed a sense of celebration that so

many people from so many churches came together. There were opportunities to listen to each other and catch up with each other afterwards.

In each meeting Derek reminded everyone that the objective of these meetings was not to come up with solutions but to become aware of the problem and sit with the discomfort and pain of what we are discovering together. He said we can't move forward unless we understand where we are now and work from there.

The team leading the review is now reflecting on the information gathered from the three meetings and will initiate the next phase of responding to a way forward together.

*Mark Riessen
Mission & Ministry Co-ordinator
State Ministry Team*

South Australian Council of Churches 70th Birthday Celebration April 29, 2017

South Australian Council of Churches: nurturing and nourishing the understanding, spiritual growth and practice of ecumenism across the Churches of South Australia

On April 29 the South Australian Council of Churches celebrated 70 years with a pilgrimage from Pilgrim (Uniting) Church to St Francis Xavier Cathedral Hall, St Mary Magdalene's (Anglican) to St Stephens Lutheran Church in Wakefield Street.

At each place we were nourished by the Spirit and provision of simple and sustaining food. There were stories told and greetings from the participating churches. About 100 people

place to place, leading worship and leading the singing of the Taizé chant as we arrived and departed from each of the churches.

We give thanks for this day: for life - and one more day to love

For opportunity - and one more day to work for justice and peace

For neighbours – and one more experience of God's presence

For these, and all blessings, we give you thanks, eternal, loving God, through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Adapted from 'Prayers of our Hearts' ©1991
Vienna Cobb Anderson and used in worship
at Pilgrim 29/4/17

It was a wonderful day of fellowship with fellow Christians who travel with the SACC in nurturing and nourishing the understanding, spiritual growth and practice of ecumenism across the Churches of South Australia.

Ngaire Llewellyn (Churches of Christ delegate to the Executive of the South Australian Council of Churches)



Gilbert Materne (Lutheran) Doug Walladge (CoC) and Refaat Medalli (Coptic Orthodox) share together over lunch at St Mary Magdalene's.

attended and 46 participated in story telling, greeting, carrying the Bible and candles from

Introducing Three New Staff Members

Mathew Green

Business Manager

Coming from another community-centred role as the Finance and ICT Manager at Asthma Foundation SA and after a decade of service, the time came for Mathew to find a new place of work, so he was



excited to hear of a vacancy for Business Manager at Churches of Christ SA & NT State Office. Mathew sees his new role as an opportunity to contribute his experience to God's work in his home state. It is a union of what he does, and what he loves.

Mathew and his wife Rachel recently purchased a home in Goolwa, which they share with their eight children aged between 2 and 13, Mathew's parents, and an energetic Miniature-Schnauzer-cross, and a few chickens. A committed Christian, Mathew volunteers on the Board and the Finance Committee of Tyndale Christian Schools, the Board of the Morialta Trust, the Board of Management of the Presbyterian Church at Mt Barker as the Treasurer, and is to be ordained as an Elder of the Adelaide Presbyterian Churches in a fortnight.

At the Churches of Christ SA & NT Mathew is overjoyed to be enabled to use his abilities and experience to serve God resourcing the church's mission to be light and salt in the world. He looks forward to meeting many of you in the near future!

Wayne Shepherd

Minister to Ministers

Wayne is married to Kay and they have 3 children and 5 grandchildren who are a delight. They love visiting Asia, especially Cambodia, and have just returned from 10 weeks of their Long



Service Leave spent there. He thinks he is perhaps a little obsessed with motorcycles - especially the Moto Guzzi brand. Kay & Wayne are members of the Christian Motorcyclists Assoc. He enjoys watching AFL and NRL and supports the Sydney Swans and the Canterbury Bulldogs.

They moved from their home church in Ungarra and lived in Sydney for 8 years which included his Theological training at Carlingford and ministry at Belmore. They spent 10 wonderful years in ministry at Cowandilla followed by several significant years

Adrian Blenkinsop

Youth Ministry Coach

Adrian is married to Karen, and dad to Micah (12) and Imogen (10). He's been in youth-based ministry for around 22 years now, and in fact one of his first paid roles was with the Churches of Christ State Office



here in SA, establishing State Youth Games in 1997. Since then he's served in a diverse range of roles, including high school chaplaincy, youth mentoring with the State Government, Youth ministry coaching with a number of churches, working with Scripture Union as their State Youth Co-ordinator, and starting his own music ministry, called Sacred Stone.

Most recently he was the National Youth Ministry Development Manager with Bible Society Australia for 11 years. That role was focussed on supporting and equipping youth influencers (youth leaders, chaplains, parents and Christian teachers) to engage young people with scripture. It included developing resources and training, undertaking research, and lots of public speaking in Australia and around the world. As a result of research he initiated into Australian young people and the Bible, he co-wrote and edited a book called 'The Bible According to Gen Z' in 2013, which was really well received.

He's very much looking forward to coming alongside Churches of Christ youth leaders and their communities here in SA and supporting them in their ministry to young people.

attending the Parafield Gardens Uniting Church. Wayne is currently at the Hampstead Gardens Church of Christ 4 days per week and is very thankful for their Kingdom mindedness to allow him the opportunity to be part of the Minister to Ministers team.

Wayne and Kay feel very blessed to know they are forgiven and loved by Jesus and to have the positive influences from their family and friends. A verse that gives Wayne direction is, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10, NIV. He is very grateful for all of the care he has received from many people over the years and is hopeful that, with God's help, he can be a support to those ministers that he meets with.



Support GMP'S Mid-Year Appeal 17

GMP's mid-year appeal "Let's Bring Change Together" has launched. The Mid-Year Appeal supports relief and development projects across the world. These projects are tax deductible. This year's focus is Thailand, Vietnam and South Sudan.

You can give \$50 for chickens to help families in Thailand, \$100 for a sewing machine to assist a vulnerable woman start a business in Vietnam or \$160 towards an ox for farming in South Sudan.

Your generosity offers people a chance to earn their own living and support their family.

Your gift means that more lives can be changed. Let's bring change together!

To donate or find out further information see <http://www.inpartnership.org.au/mid-year-appeal-17> or contact the GMP Office 8352 3466.



Morialta Charitable Trust Fund

Morialta Charitable Trust Fund has been supporting disadvantaged Children, Young People and their families in South Australia through its annual program of Distributions for 40 years.

To enable the Fund to continue this support through Community Organisations in South Australia Morialta Charitable Trust Fund seeks donations from the public.

Donations of \$2- and above are Tax Deductible and can be forwarded to the Morialta Charitable Trust Fund
38 Donegal Street, Norwood SA 5067.



CareWorks SA **Winter Appeal**

The front page of this months 'CareWorks Connect' tells two stories which illustrate the kinds of issues that CareWorks encounters on an almost daily basis. (If you've not read it, contact the CareWorks office to get a copy)

One is about a family struggling in the wake of a horrific car accident and the subsequent financial loss. The other of a woman fleeing domestic violence.

Usually, when people reach out to CareWorks for support, they have done as much as they can to avoid stepping through our doors. But when they do ask for help, it can be a first step on a pathway to a better future.

CareWorks cannot provide assistance without your help.

Please partner with CareWorks this winter as we stand alongside Churches of Christ with practical expressions of God's love.

You can make your tax deductible donation by contacting the CareWorks office, or by visiting www.givenow.com.au/careworkssa

Save the Date!

Conference 2017

November 17 & 18

Marion Church
of Christ

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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