

The Society for Ecumenical Studies

3 September 2003

Dear Friends,

2003 so far

It has been an eventful year so far. Members have been active in many inspiring events.

The Association of Interchurch Families hosted the John Coventry lecture, delivered this year by Bishop Crispian Hollis, on the Mississauga Initiative for building into denominational structures ways of working ecumenically (among other strategies). This was covered in *The Tablet*, and the full text is in the latest number of *One in Christ*.

Focolare teamed up with Churches Together in England for *Dare to Share* at which many of CTE's ecumenical Bodies in Association took part.

Two English-language conferences have taken place to celebrate and reawaken Paul Couturier's vision for the unity of Christians (one in London, another in Bruges), marking fifty years since he died and seventy since he transformed prayer for unity spiritually and theologically into the Week of Prayer we recognise today. Full details of this are on the site www.paulcouturier.org.

St Albans Conference – May 2003

But the principal occasion for hopeful and thoughtful celebration was the Society's collaboration with the Hertfordshire Newman Association and the Christian Study Centre at St Albans Cathedral, '*May they all be one'....But How?* in May. This brought together the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, Cardinal Walter Kasper of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, the Revd Elizabeth Welch, former Moderator of the URC, and Bishop Joe Aldred of the Church of God of Prophecy with other panellists for a magnificent day of thought provoking talks, a panel discussion and Choral Evensong, with the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, a sermon from Bishop Joe and a special hymn written by Fred Kaan. Sadly it is not feasible to send you copies of everything that happened, but all available details are on our website – www.sfes.org or <http://sfes.faithweb.com>. Cardinal Kasper's address has been published substantially in *The Tablet*. The organisers hope in due course to publish all the proceedings in a collection, but in the meantime we enclose the full text of Rowan Williams' speech. Around 20 members took the opportunity of spending a weekend of invaluable discussion and reflection for the weekend at nearby London Colney, looking to the future and the role our Society could usefully play.

AGM 2003

This took place at Church House in February by kind hospitality of Dr Paul Avis. There was a heavy amount of business, largely concerned with plans for the May conference at St

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Albans. The following officers were elected: President : Dr Martin Conway; Secretary : The Revd Mark Woodruff; Treasurer : Sister Fidelis Daly. Mr David Carter, the Revd Maximos Lavriotes, the Revd Dr Paul McPartlan, and the Revd Gareth Powell were elected to the Committee. A paper delivered on the thought and significance of Paul Couturier is enclosed.

Membership Subscriptions

The Society is now a registered charity, no. 1096515. This means that we can receive tax relief payments from government for subscriptions made under Gift Aid. The following annual membership rates were set at the AGM:

- Individual, £10
- Students, unwaged or retired, £5
- Married couples, £12
- Retired married couples, £6

You will be aware that the membership has not been collected for two years. David Carter has still kept us all in contact and circulated us with informative news and a number of engaging papers, so I hope – given the success of the St Albans conference – you will agree that this has been very good value for money. Can I invite you to renew your subscription for 2003-4? I enclose a form (to enable update of contact details) and a Gift Aid form. I also enclose spare in the hope that you can commend the Society to friends and colleagues interested in ecumenical study.

November Day Conference

This will take place on **Saturday November 8th at St Peter's Church, Eaton Square**, London SW1, very close to Victoria Station. The theme is "What Next? - Pointers from the Holy Spirit for the next steps in the Ecumenical Pilgrimage". Tea and Coffee provided. Please bring a packed lunch – there are a number of cafés and sandwich shops nearby.

The title takes up a phrase of Rowan Williams' speech in May. It will bring together the leaders of the country's major centers of ecumenical study and life – including

- **Dr Tim Macquiban from Sarum College**
- **Dr Israel Selvanayagam from the new Selly Oak Initiative for Ecumenical Study and Action and**
- **Dr Noel A. Davies of the Welsh National Centre for Ecumenical Studies.**

It promises to be a stimulating day, looking at the 'explorations and research of committed pioneers'.

Publications

One in Christ comes out four times a year. Subscriptions of £26 can be sent to the Monastery of Christ our Saviour, Turvey, BEDFORD MK43 8DH. Please look out too for David Carter's new book on Methodist ecumenical pioneers. We hope to carry fuller notices on books, including David's, in the next Newsletter. A book containing the wide range of addresses at the Paul Couturier events will be available soon, entitled, *Spiritual Ecumenism: the Vision of Paul Couturier for the Unity of Christians*, pp. 120. Papers included come from David Carter, Francis Frost, Adelbert Denaux, Thaddée Barnas (editor of Irénikon) and many others. The cost is likely to be £6-99 and copies will be available from the Secretary.

Enclosures

Martin Conway on the launch of the Selly Oak Initiative; Rowan Williams on 'A Vision of Christian Unity for the Next Generation'; and the AGM Address on Paul Couturier.

Mark Woodruff, Secretary