

The Society for Ecumenical Studies

Registered Charity Number 1096515

21 January 2004

Dear Friends,

Annual General Meeting - 23 February 2004, at 5pm

I write with notice of the Society's forthcoming Annual General Meeting. I must apologise that it was not after all possible to secure the dates I asked you to pencil in. Instead, by kind permission of our member Prebendary Paul Avis, it will take place at 5pm in the offices of the Church of England Council for Christian Unity, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1, on Monday 23 February 2004. As we are now a charity, a few more procedures have to be attended to than in the past. And so I enclose a Notice and Agenda with draft Accounts, Minutes of the 2003 AGM, and a draft Annual Report. Please let me have nominations for the Executive Committee three working days in advance of the meeting. Sister Fidelis has signified her desire to step down as Treasurer. We thank her for great help on this over the last few years.

AGM Study & Discussion - Revisiting the Debate on Eucharistic Sharing

At the May residential meeting attended by around fourteen members, there was a strong sense that we should take a hard look at our experience of the Eucharist in our context of ecumenical study. We were challenged to think how such a forum as this Society could set itself to keep our study and collaboration steadily focused on this issue and maintain the momentum towards achieving eucharistic unity. We are fortunate in finding two excellent speakers to take this discussion forward, one who has long thought through the relation of the marriage union, baptism and eucharistic separation to each other; the other whose career has repeatedly explored how faith and order apply in pastoral contexts.

The Study will be led by:

- **Ruth Reardon, founder member of the Association of Interchurch Families; and**
- **Judith Maizel Long, the new Co-ordinating Secretary for Church Life at CTBI.**

We hope as many as possible will come and take part in this important discussion. This part of the meeting will be open to a wider public.

2003 Membership Subscriptions

As you will see from the Annual Report, the Committee and the Society as a whole have been busy. Four SfES conference events and three newsletters with papers in 2003 followed 2002's five newsletters and two events. We hope you agree that this has been excellent value for money, as we only asked for subscriptions to be made once in the whole two year period. Thank you to those who have sent me your subscription (£10 for individuals - or £5 for religious, the unwaged, students and retired persons - and £12 for married couples, or the £6 concessionary rate. Unfortunately 45 members - including three of us committee members! - have still not yet paid. If you are unsure whether you are up to date with a subscription, there is an address label on this letter which bears a red star if your subscription remains due according to my records. Please get in touch immediately if I am in error over a payment of you have already made.

If still outstanding, can you please send your payment as soon as possible? If you do not wish to continue to be a member of the Society and receive our Newsletter, please let me know. Subscriptions for 2004 will be requested in the Newsletter after the AGM.

Membership Details

Please examine the label on this letter. I apologise if the details are wrong or incorrectly recorded. Please let me know if you would like me to amend our records.

A list of members is enclosed for your information. We number 87, of whom 16 have joined since the St Albans event. The Committee hopes this may encourage local contacts. Members may wish to meet socially, or to arrange study opportunities under the Society's aegis in their area. Please let us know if we can support anything that comes of this.

Events - Saturday 15 May 2004, Birmingham

Taking up Bishop Joe Aldred's challenging question at St Albans - 'Who is not here today?' - we plan a day in central Birmingham to consider Christian Unity for the sake of those at the Ecumenical Margins. Jean Mayland, who recently stepped down as CTBI Church Life Co-ordinating Secretary, has been researching in this area and has agreed to speak. We await confirmation of speakers from the black-led Church community, from a charity working with young people at risk, and a perspective on secular voluntary sector collaboration as a model for the churches to emulate, indeed re-receive, ecumenically.

Events - Saturday 30 October 2004

You will notice from the various papers enclosed, that members have set the Society demanding agenda. The 2003 Annual Report and the Report of the London Colney residential weekend indicate we should look at the role of the ecumenical movement in terms of society, its sustainability and the shape of a developing Europe. We have been asked to examine the ecumenical dimension to environmental concerns and the position of the churches in the countryside. We have also been asked to develop events and relations with other ecumenical societies, such as ESBVM, the International Ecumenical Fellowship, the Fellowship of St Alban & St Sergius, the Society of St John Chrysostom, the Eastern Churches Association, Societas Oecumenica, and the ecumenical study centres around the country. The Committee will be planning the October and subsequent events in the light of this. Please let us know how you feel the Society should be responding to these calls.

Enclosures

1. The book collection of all the addresses given at the various events in honour of Paul Couturier is now published, pp. 150, price £7. The flyer is enclosed.
2. The Report on the London Colney weekend, responding to St Albans and looking at problems surrounding the ecumenical experience of the Eucharist
3. The Keynote Speech of Elizabeth Welch at St Albans, with special reference to the possibility of churches in common offering 'sacred place' for 'sacred space'.
4. The Report on the November 2003 Study Day on Pointers from the Holy Spirit on next steps on the Ecumenical Pilgrimage.
5. List of Members
6. AGM Notice 2004 & Draft Accounts 2003
7. AGM Minutes 2003
8. Draft Annual Report 2003

Yours sincerely,

Mark Woodruff, Secretary