

The Society for Ecumenical Studies

Annual Report 2004

New Charitable Status

The Society was founded in 1995 and became a Registered Charity, Number 1096515, on 14 March 2003.

The Society's Objects

The Society's objects as a registered charity are the advancement of religion and the education of the public by fostering as widely as possible the Christian Ecumenical Movement, in a way that combines practical experience in social, international and interfaith fields with theological reflection and exploration in regard to divisions between Christian denominations, in particular by providing occasions and a regular forum within which persons and groups of different backgrounds, races and theological convictions can meet for exchange of information, for discussion and to work together on study projects, where appropriate in collaboration with other groups or agencies.

Executive Committee (elected on 21 February 2004)

Dr Martin Conway	President (Chairman)
The Revd Mark Woodruff	Secretary
Mrs Hilary Martin	Treasurer
Mr David Carter	
The Revd Maximos Lavriotes	
The Revd Dr Paul McPartlan	
The Revd Gareth Powell	

Membership

The Society's membership at the end of 2004, including speakers who have been accorded honorary membership now stands at 101, an increase of 14% on the previous year.

Committee and Newsletter

During the year the Executive Committee met twice to conduct the Society's business and plan its work. In addition a special sub-committee met three times to plan the joint training week with Iona for young ecumenical leaders of the future, to be held on Iona in September 2005. There were two mailings to members, each with a newsletter, reports on events with which the Society was involved, and the texts of related papers. These included:

- Papers from the February 2004 Discussion at the Annual General Meeting, with Ruth Reardon and Judith Maize-L-Long: 'The Experience of the Eucharist in Ecumenical Study : Revisiting the Debate on Eucharistic Sharing'
- John Bradley: Further thoughts on Eucharistic Sharing from CTE
- Amanda Luscombe-Hill: George (Ignatius) Spencer, Ecumenical Enthusiast

Website

<http://www.sfes.org.uk>

<http://www.ecumenicalstudies.org.uk>

The website is being developed as a means to disseminate these and other papers to a much wider readership, and it has been possible to place there a greater range of papers than it was possible to circulate with the Newsletter. These include:

- All the previously mentioned papers
- Bishop Joe Aldred: Sermon at the May 2003 St Albans Conference
- David Carter: The Spirituality of Ecumenical Dialogue
- Martin Conway: Marks and Processes of Unity in Christ for the World Wide Church in an Age of Unity-in-Diversity

- Martin Conway: The Open Secret for the Open Society - Unity, Mission and Social Responsibility
- Martin Conway: Can Britain Re-Imagine Itself as a Multi-cultural Nation?
- Martin Conway: Tradition in Eastern Orthodoxy
- Martin Conway: November 2002 Selly Oak Conference : 'Where is the Ecumenical Movement Going?'
- Mary Tanner: The Work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC in a Broader Perspective (from the November 2002 Selly Oak Conference)
- Michael Ipgrave: Reflections on Conversion in Inter-Faith Contexts (from the 2002 Societas Oecumenica conference at Salisbury)
- Cardinal Walter Kasper: Keynote Address from St Albans May 2003
- St Albans Speakers, May 2003: Transcript of Panel Discussion and Questions
- Elizabeth Welch: Keynote Speech from St Albans May 2003
- Archbishop Rowan Williams: Keynote Address from St Albans May 2003
- Mark Woodruff: Paul Couturier and the Unity of Humanity in Christ

In 2005 the role of the website as a resource for ecumenical study will be further enhanced, with more papers from previous years added, notable material from other ecumenical societies, book reviews and comment from members on ecumenical news and developments.

Churches Together

During the course of 2004, the Society became a Body in Association with Churches Together in England, which also allies it with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, ACTS (Scotland) and CYTUN (Wales). The Society and its members hope to be a supportive resource to the 'ecumenical instruments' as they explore theological issues around the work for the Unity of Christians. It also looks forward to working closely with other Bodies in Association on joint ventures and studies.

The Ecumenical Margins

In October, a substantial Day Conference took place at St Martin's Centre, the Bullring, Birmingham, on the theme "The Ecumenical Margins - Christian Unity for the Edges of Church and Society". The four speakers were the Revd Jean Mayland, Co-ordinating Secretary for Church Life at CTBI to 2003; the Revd Dr Garnet Parris, Director of the Centre for Black Theology, University of Birmingham; the Revd John O'Toole, Director of the Christian Education Centre, Archdiocese of Southwark and member of English ARC; and the Revd Mark Woodruff, of the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts and Secretary of the Society. The papers have been collected as a booklet are available from the Secretary.

Work for the Future

For the future, the Committee has kept a number of ideas for study, locally and nationally under review. Other than those already referred to, these include:

- Closer links with other ecumenical societies
- Ecumenical collaboration with reference to the environment and contemporary society
- The ecumenical dimension to the life of the churches in the countryside
- The Ecumenical Acceptance of the Practice of Baptism
- The 400th Anniversary of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes and his involvement in early dialogue
- More work on the matter of Eucharistic sharing

It has been a quieter year in terms of public events for the Society than the momentous 2003, with the Paul Couturier anniversary and the major conference at St Albans, but considerable attention has been devoted by the officers to planning ahead, especially for the important training and discovery event on Iona in 2005. We continue to see extension to membership numbers and horizons, especially as we are now commissioned with a role by Churches Together to play a more active role in promoting theological dialogue and ecumenical learning.

Martin Conway, President & Chairman, 21 June 2004

On behalf of the Executive Committee:

David Carter

Maximos Lavriotes

Hilary Martin, Treasurer

Paul McPartlan

Gareth Powell

Mark Woodruff, Secretary