

# The Society for Ecumenical Studies

## Annual Report 2005

### **The Society's Statues & Objects**

The Society was founded in 1995 and became a Registered Charity, Number 1096515, on 14 March 2003. Its 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 June 2005)

Dr Martin Conway	President (Chairman)
The Revd Mark Woodruff	Secretary
Mrs Hilary Martin	Treasurer
The Revd John Bradley	
Mr David Carter	
The Revd Maximos Lavriotes	
Mr Alan Rainer	

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### **Membership**

The Society's membership at the end of 2005, including speakers who have been accorded honorary membership and certain associate bodies, now stands at 103, our largest number to date.

### **Committee and Newsletter**

During the year the Executive Committee met three times to conduct the Society's business and plan its work. In addition a special sub-committee worked on preparations for joint training week with the Iona Community for young ecumenical leaders of the future, which was 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:

- The Ecumenical Margins – the proceedings of our Study Day in Birmingham in October 2004, involving Jean Mayland, Garnet Parris, Mark Woodruff and John O'Toole
- Papers from the June 2005 Discussion at the Annual General Meeting, between Stuart Wilson and Mark Woodruff on the Westminster Diocese's Ecumenical Faith Sharing Renewal Programme, *At Your Word, Lord*
- David Carter: Covenanting between Methodists and Anglicans
- A preliminary report on the Iona training and study week – Breaking Down Walls in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- A re-issue of Marianne Dorman's fine paper on the continued ecumenical significance of Lancelot Andrewes' teaching, ecclesiology and views on episcopacy. The Society was also represented at the events to mark his 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of consecration, at which Nicholas Lossky gave an important lecture on Orthodox influence on Andrewes' ideas of Anglican episcopal governance.

### **Website – [www.ecumenicalstudies.org.uk](http://www.ecumenicalstudies.org.uk)**

The website has been developed as a means to disseminate these and other papers to a much wider readership. It now constitutes as full as possible an archive of the Society's activities and studies since preliminary meetings in 1994. As not all contributions were from texts, in some circumstances a paper does not exist, but we hope to cover this with retrospective reports in due course. In 2006 the role of the website as a resource for ecumenical study will be further enhanced, with notable material from other ecumenical societies or agencies, book reviews and comment from members on ecumenical news and developments.

### **Churches Together**

In 2004, the Society became a Body in Association with Churches Together in England, which also allies it with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, the Irish Council of Churches, ACTS (Scotland) and CYTUN (Wales). The Society and its members endeavour 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. Representatives of the Bodies in Association meet twice a year to facilitate this process. In October, three members of the Committee took part in the study conference for County Ecumenical Officers on *Sharing the Eucharist in a Hungry World*.

### **Iona: Breaking Down Walls in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

This was the Society's major project for 2005. It was presented as 'A week of Study and Common Life and Prayer on Iona, 10-16 September 2005 - for seeking New Ecumenical Inspiration' and brought together 35 young 'church leaders of the future' from each of the main churches in Britain and Ireland (one or two from each). It was jointly organised by the Society with the Iona Community, under the guidance of Martin Conway and Murdoch Mackenzie. The speaker-facilitators were:

- Dr Alison Elliot, 2005's Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and Director of Edinburgh's Centre for Theology and Public Issues
- The Revd Professor William Henn OFMCap, an American who teaches at the Gregorian University in Rome and shares, on behalf of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, in a number of important dialogue groups, including the WCC Faith & Order Commission and the joint groups with the Pentecostal and Reformed Churches
- The Revd Kathy Galloway, leader of the Iona Community
- The Revd Dr Garnet Parris, Director of the Centre for Black Theology at the University of Birmingham.

.Because much of the contributions were specific to the event and the participants, a formal report has not been produced. However, all the papers and the responses of many of the participants in the Church press have been posted on dedicated pages on our website.

### **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
- More work on the matter of Eucharistic sharing
- The process of 'receptive ecumenical learning' being developed at Durham

Martin Conway, President & Chairman, 23 May 2006

On behalf of the Executive Committee: John Bradley, David Carter, Maximos Lavriotes, Hilary Martin (Treasurer), Alan Rainer, Mark Woodruff (Secretary)