

# SOCIETY FOR ECUMENICAL STUDIES

## NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1997

### Secretary's Notes

The main event this Autumn will be the day conference at the Selly Oak Colleges on Sat 25 October, organised by Martin Conway to whom we express our thanks. It was advertised in the last mailing. Though it is not absolutely vital that you return the form enclosed in that mailing, it would still be helpful if you would let me know, preferably as soon as possible, if you wish to come. I can then give Martin some idea of likely numbers. If you have already sent me the original form, there is, of course, no need to do any more.

The subject of the day conference is 'The marks and processes of unity in Christ for the world wide Church in the age of unity-in-diversity. It will be held at the new Orchard Learning Resources Centre of the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, beginning at 10.30 am with coffee. Travel directions, which were not available at the time of the last mailing, are enclosed. Martin has also slightly revised the programme in view of the fact that we now know that Bishop Mark Santer, Bishop of Birmingham and Anglican co-chair of ARCIC, will be present. Martin will be giving the keynote address. This should be an excellent occasion. If anyone requires further details, please contact Martin (phone at end of his instructions) or me (phone as above).

Genny Tunbridge and I have recently come back from the 31st international ecumenical seminar organised by the Lutheran Centre for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg. I think Genny would agree with me that this was a valuable experience. The aim was to update us on ecumenical developments as we approach the new century. We had several main papers on key developments and some shorter presentations on the key ecumenical concerns of particular churches, viz. the Anglicans, Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Methodists. Gillian Evans, who is one of our committee members, dealt with Anglican concerns. Six groups, working in four separate languages, did a tremendous amount of reflection both on the lecture material and the particular concerns of the members of the groups. About sixty of us were present representing four continents and eight communions. Six came from England, all, except for myself, Anglicans.

A key personal reason for my attendance was a desire to have some serious contact with Lutherans, a hope that was amply fulfilled as over half the participants were Lutheran, the largest contingent coming from Germany, but with substantial North American and 'other European' representation, as well as Lutherans from Asia and Latin America. The whole conference was excellently run by the American Director of the Centre, Michael Root, and one of his colleagues, Risto Saaranen, who is Finnish.

The seminar is an annual event. I understand that next year's topic will be 'Ecumenical Spirituality'. It normally takes place for a week in July, this year's seminar being an exception for domestic Lutheran reasons. If you want to find out more about it, or indeed about any of the Lutheran Centre's activities, the address

is: Centre d'Etudes Oecumeniques, 8 rue Gustave Klotz, F-67000 STRASBOURG FRANCE. It is centrally situated and also has an excellent library.

### The London Seminar

We hope to continue this term at Heythrop College, Kensington Square, W8, very close to High St, Kensington Tube Station. Any members within reach of Central London are welcome to attend. On Wednesday 26 November at 5 pm Martin and Ruth Reardon will talk about the ecclesiological implications of interchurch families. We hope to have another seminar earlier in November but details are not to hand yet. I will inform all London and Home Counties members if and when arrangements are confirmed.

### The Forum of Churches Together in England.

Quite a few of you attended this and several members have spoken to me of the the positive atmosphere at it. I was especially interested to read section 4 of the Report of the Forum to the Enabling Group. This identified several issues requiring further reflection and discussion. These included

1. ecumenical discussion concerning the future of establishment
2. the question of how to integrate denominational heritage with the discovery of our common Christian identity
3. the theology of the future of local ecumenical partnerships
4. the question of exploring and resolving the various positions on eucharistic sharing
5. reception of the results of inter-church dialogues.

It struck me that on these, and indeed other issues in the list which I have not mentioned, there is a lot of work to be done to which I hope many of us can contribute creatively.

Following on directly from item 5 in the previous topic, may I mention an initiative in the reception of Roman Catholic-Methodist dialogue? On Saturday 22 November and 9 May 1998, there will be Study Days held relating to the development of Catholic-Methodist dialogue within the wider context of current ecumenical developments. Both days will last from 10.30 am to 3.30 pm approximately. The first will be held at the Lambeth Methodist Mission, SE1, and the latter at the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Christian Education Centre in Crawley. We shall be looking particularly at the latest dialogue report, 'The Word of Life', the sixth in the series.