

SOCIETY FOR ECUMENICAL STUDIES

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1998

Secretary's Notes

This newsletter contains notes on recent past and projected activities, the formal notification and agenda of the AGM and a couple of book reviews. I am particularly grateful to Donald Norwood, Martin and Ruth Reardon and Barney Milligan for their input. Donald has kindly written a short description of the European Ecumenical Assembly at Graz last June and the Reardons and Barney have kindly contributed material summarizing the seminars they gave to the London Group last term.

Recent activities

These include the highly successful meeting at the Selly Oak Colleges in October, organised by Martin Conway, to whom we express our grateful thanks. The Conference was entitled 'The marks and processes of unity in Christ for the world-wide Church in the age of unity-in-diversity' and Martin, himself, gave the keynote paper. Bishop Mark Santer kindly gave us a response in the afternoon. The meeting was less well attended than we had hoped for, but we are also most grateful to Gareth Powell who, amidst all the pressures of starting in circuit as a probationer minister, gave generously of his time in organising this meeting and liaising with Martin Conway.

The London Group continued its series of meetings at Heythrop. We are grateful to Paul MacPartlan for hosting these seminars. We had two particularly thought provoking seminars this term; firstly, from Barney Milligan, who gave us the full benefit alike of his knowledge of modern history and ecumenism and his Strasbourg experience, and, secondly, with the Reardons, who spoke of their experience of interchurch families. In both cases, we were looking at issues that, so to speak, transcend their formally defined spheres. The reconciliation of European memories, both ecclesial and secular, has immense implications for the future both of work in ecclesiology and its practical outworking in 'life and work' issues. The Association of Inter-Church Families is doing theological work that goes beyond its immediate sphere of concern and may have profound future general applications. I was personally very impressed with some of the material in their most recent newsletter. I am sure Ruth would be happy to answer any queries anyone has about this and you can contact her at Interchurch House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL TN 0171-620-4444. You can read further details of both seminars in the enclosed summaries.

The AGM

This will be, as already notified, at Church House, Great Smith St, London SW1, through the kind offices of Mary Tanner, on Thursday 5 February. Please note, however, that we will be starting a little later than previously advertised, at 4-50 pm. This is to allow a breathing space to those of our members who are involved in the Anglican FOAG Group, which meets just beforehand. The Agenda is as follows.

1. Opening prayer by Convenor.
2. Minutes (see the March 1997 newsletter)
3. Secretary's review of events in 1997
4. Treasurer's Statement (copies will be available at Meeting)
5. Future plans. Any member is welcome to propose possible future activities at this point
6. Election of Committee
7. AOB.

The full minutes are as in the March newsletter. I will have a few other copies available at the meeting for anyone who wishes to check them and has not got the original. May I remind you that there were three changes in the Committee last year, with John Coventry, Martin Reardon and Martin Cressey standing down? Paul MacPartlan took over as Convenor, Sister Fidelis Daly as Treasurer and Fr Maximos Lavriotes filled the remaining vacancy on the Committee. Other, continuing members of the Committee are Rodney Matthews, Martin Conway, Gillian Evans, and myself as Secretary.

After the business section of the meeting, Rev. Dr Nick Sagovsky will speak to us about the current state of progress in ARCIC.

Future Plans

We hope to have a normal range of meetings in 1998. Some of our plans are still being sorted out, but I can give you the following details.

March 11, at Heythrop at 5pm, Rev. Dr James Cassidy will give us a seminar entitled, 'Baptism: The Real and Experienced Basis of Unity'. This will be closely related to his recent doctoral thesis on membership in Local Ecumenical Partnerships. Please draw this to the attention of any friends particularly interested in such matters. You will note that, so far, there is only one London seminar arranged for this term. If I am able to arrange another one, I will inform London and Home Counties members. We are looking for volunteers to offer us papers in future terms, so, if you want to do so, please let me know as soon as possible.

On April 25 there will be a meeting at Westcott House, Cambridge, kindly organised by Fr Maximos Lavriotes. It will

have an Orthodox flavour. Fr Maximos and Nick Sagovsky will be the main speakers. Full details will be issued soon, hopefully at the AGM, and certainly in the March newsletter.

We will have a meeting on June 20, on the subject of recent progress in ecumenical reception of the Petrine ministry. The main speakers will be Colin Davey, who will concentrate on the responses from other churches to 'Ut Unum Sint' and Paul MacPartlan, who will talk about recent developments in Roman Catholic thinking on the subject. Details of time and venue (probably Campion Hall, Oxford) will be announced in the next newsletter, in March. We also hope to have a meeting in October on the subject of the contribution of women to ecumenism. Sister Fidelis is currently exploring possibilities for the latter, and we hope that she will give a historical presentation on this together with input from one or two other women with long experience in this field.