

Interchurch Families *REVIEW 2005*

AIF helps set up Interchurch Families International Network



When in Rome for the meeting with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, representatives of interchurch family associations from around the world agreed to form an umbrella group, Interchurch Families International Network (IFIN). AIF's work is becoming more focused on the international dimension of the interchurch movement. IFIN will facilitate international cooperation and discussion,

acting as a pivot for further theological study and mutual support for member associations and groups. This is another legacy of the 2003 Rome Conference which had been planned and delivered by the ad-hoc "PrepRoma Group". With such a network future planning becomes easier and simpler and, in today's jargon, "joined up". IFIN will play a significant role in the future work of the Association.



' You live in your marriage the hopes and the difficulties of the path to Christian Unity. Express that hope in prayer together in the unity of love.' Pope John Paul II, York, 1982

Annual Conference



The 2005 AIF Conference at Swanwick was a truly family affair; over two-thirds of the 120 participants were children of interchurch couples whose “parallel conference” was facilitated by leaders from local Derbyshire churches. There was also a crèche. With their enthusiasm for meeting each other, the children and young people contributed enormously to the worship and fun of the weekend.

This year’s meeting had a particular poignancy. Revd Canon Martin Reardon, co-founder of AIF and ecumenist; Fiona van Kroonenburg, wife of Tim and mother of Jonathan and Katie; and Revd David Butler, one-time AIF co-chair and member of the Association’s Panel of Reference, had died in the course of the year. Their rich contributions to members’ spiritual growth were remembered at Saturday night prayers.

The overall theme was *Issues That Face Interchurch Families in the 21st Century*. Our first speaker, Canon Gregory Cameron, Director of Ecumenical Affairs for the Anglican Communion, spoke of being led in new and unexpected directions through his marriage to his Roman Catholic wife, Clare. He looked at what held him within his own Christian tradition in the context of his interchurch marriage, and spoke of valuing ever more deeply the habits of the tradition within which his own spiritual life was nurtured, while experiencing the enrichment of dialogue and growth through his wife’s tradition.

Monsignor Andrew Faley, Assistant General Secretary of the Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, also responsible for the Department of Dialogue and Unity, spoke on the bishops’ teaching document on the Eucharist, *One Bread*

Interchurch families gather at Swanwick

One Body, encouraging us to see it as generous in its response to the situation of interchurch families, but accepting that there was no escaping the difficulties that lie in this area. He spoke from an understanding of the Eucharist as celebration of unity achieved, and suggested that we can also experience the real presence of Christ in coming together with fellow Christians in Jesus’ name and in exploration of the Word.

Revd Peter Whittaker, Methodist Minister and Chair of West Yorkshire Methodist District, spoke on Jesus, the Key to our Unity. We have many images of Jesus: he challenged us to ask ‘Which Jesus?’ and suggested that interchurch families should seek Jesus as the companion, with whom we share bread in our life’s journey. His approach emphasised the sharing of the Body of Christ as food for our spiritual journey, rather than the concept of the celebration of unity achieved.

As ever, the speakers challenged both the families at the conference and their separated churches, and we were delighted that they were able to worship with us in three memorable services where children and adults alike offered their stories in music and dance.

Prayer Day/Weekend

During the annual Weekend of Prayer in May, AIF members joined together spiritually, and in some cases physically, to pray for interchurch families throughout the world and for Christian unity in general. Some local groups met for fellowship and some members requested prayers for inclusion in their church’s weekly intercessions.

Young Adults Group



The Young Adults Group visit York Minster

The Young Adults Social Weekend was this year held in York.

Despite the freezing cold and the hard floors, an enjoyable time was had by all. There was an agape meal and members took part in the Sunday service at the local church and explored York city centre.

At the Annual Conference at Swanwick YAG followed their own programme. It was a large group with many new members. They discussed the differences between the major denominations as well as the future for YAG.

YAG members participated in many other activities, including World Youth Day and the group formerly known as CTE Youth Forum. Another edition of *The Interdependent* was published in October.

To see what else YAG gets up to visit: www.IFYAG.org.uk.

The London Meeting

Review 2003-04 reported on the death of Martin Reardon, a co-founder and central figure in the life of the Association for some 36 years. The meeting at Heythrop College in February provided an opportunity for members and supporters to give thanks for all that Martin was to them and all that he did for them. The whole day was dedicated to Martin’s memory. Many speakers gave recollections of him as pastor, ecumenist, negotiator, friend, wise counsellor, administrator, boss – and other facets of his full life.

Most spoke of Martin the person, but also of his immense contribution to ecumenical initiatives, including his championing of the “Called to be One” process. Others considered not only his legacy in helping to bring the churches together in the past, but drew on his life and work as an inspiration to us for the future. Mgr Andrew Faley gave a particularly powerful address in which he referred to Martin as a shepherd, and his work with interchurch families as prophetic.

Fellowship Abroad

We believe it important that AIF members support our sister organisations and, when appropriate, attend their national conferences.



The 2005 English-speaking international conference followed the one held in Edmonton, Canada, in 2001. AIF (GB) helped in planning and financing the conference and five of our members attended. There were more than 50 participants with couples also from Canada, New Zealand, and various parts of Australia, with a combination of Catholics married to members of the Anglican, Uniting, Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, and many church leaders. Some couples told us that, sadly, they still experience difficulties that were familiar 40 years ago.

“The Rome Paper” produced at the Second World Gathering of Interchurch Families in 2003 was presented by Ruth Reardon and provided a basis for studies led by a Catholic theologian and a minister of the Uniting Church. The conference also studied the guidelines for Eucharistic sharing issued by some Australian dioceses since the 1993 *Directory* appeared. The 2001 guidelines of the Maitland-Newcastle diocese (where the conference was held) recognise that some interchurch spouses may experience a real need to express their



Bishop Andrew (Anglican) and Bishop Michael (Catholic) enjoying the Newcastle Conference.



International Conference participants at Newcastle Metropolitan Cathedral

unity “by receiving the Eucharist whenever they attend Mass together”. Delegates were moved to hear a Uniting Church minister, wife of a Catholic, speak of her welcome by the Roman Catholic parish priest and community to receive communion on a continuing basis. Interchurch couples at the conference much appreciated the pastoral sensitivity expressed in these guidelines.



Ruth Reardon lights the Conference Candle in Newcastle, NSW

Cardinal Cassidy (President of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity when the 1993 *Directory* was issued) now lives in retirement in Newcastle and attended much of the conference. He was quoted as saying he had learned much from the discussions.

Australian couples were greatly encouraged by attending the conference and agreed to organise a national gathering in 2006. The next English-speaking international conference will be at Swanwick in August 2008.

Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association

The NIMMA conference in May was joined by Paul & Beverley Hollins, with daughters Joanna and Kate.



While the children enjoyed crafts and games, the adults heard the Abbot of Bolton Abbey in Co. Kildare review what he had said to NIMMA 20 years previously concluding that, although the situation had improved for mixed marriages and more sharing was now possible, there was still a long way to go. Sectarianism was more culturally entrenched and ecumenism was not having much effect. He explored ways in which the community could be encouraged to move on.

In Northern Ireland the use of the term ‘interchurch family’ brings problems - even if the churches are coming to terms with it, the concept of being interchurch remains politically difficult.

NIMMA has a vital role in working to support mixed marriages, to change attitudes in the wider community, and to be a source of reconciliation.

Christian Unity

Since AIF's formation, its work on Christian Unity had been wisely and gently managed by Martin Reardon, one of the greatest ecumenists of the 20th century. His death in January 2005 meant the loss of a much loved friend and guide, and inevitably new ways of working have had to be found - sadly, more rapidly than Martin had intended, for he had already started the process of preparing AIF for his gradual withdrawal into semi-retirement. Later in 2005 Beverley Hollins generously offered to take on the role of Christian Unity Co-ordinator, although she has said that she does so "with trepidation, since it will never be possible to step into Martin's shoes, as my own shoes are a lot less worn and much smaller". AIF is grateful to have Bev as another committed ecumenist with a keen theological understanding of interchurch issues; she is a worthy successor.

Questions were raised during the year about how we express our common understanding of baptism. This has influenced the wording of the new general leaflet and will be a strand of our theological work in 2006.

AIF continued to be represented at ecumenical gatherings. Here are some of the activities in which members are involved - some organised by the Association, others by members themselves:

- **International links** - members attended conferences of sister organisations in Austria, Northern Ireland, and Australia.
- **At Your Word, Lord** - several members living in the Westminster Roman Catholic Diocese have been participating in this three-year diocesan renewal programme. Later sessions focused on Christian Unity and it is encouraging to note that involvement with AIF is cited as ninth in a list of '101 Ways to Foster Christian Unity'!



At Your Word, Lord



Pauline Johnson with John Bradley of CTE

- **Churches Together in England** - Pauline Johnson is the Deputy Convenor of CTE. Other AIF members are well represented in CT organisations around the country and provided stalls with AIF literature and material at many local events.
- **CYTUN (Churches Together in Wales)** - Mark Mesley represented AIF at meetings of the Bodies in Association of CYTUN. We have few members in Wales and Mark gives visibility to the Association there.
- **ACTS (Churches Together in Scotland)** - Avril and Gerald Dobson are similarly involved in Scotland.
- **Bi-lateral discussions** - one interchurch family is very much involved in talks between the churches: Gillian Walsh is a member of the national Roman Catholic / Methodist Committee, whereas husband Stephen is on the Anglican / Roman Catholic Commission.
- **Milton Keynes** - Bev Hollins has been involved with the six church leaders who together are the presidents of the Mission Partnership.

One Bread One Body

Discussions at national level with representatives of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference to assess how 'OBOB' is being received have ended for the time being. Following the meeting in September 2004, at which Martin and Ruth Reardon put a case for fuller recognition of the on-going need of some interchurch families for eucharistic sharing, the whole question was reviewed at the April meeting of the Bishops' Conference. The bishops

The Second World Gathering of Interchurch Families in Rome 2003 sent a message of hope "To the churches within which we belong; to all Christian believers, especially to interchurch families; to those who long for ways toward reconciliation". An excerpt from this message summarises what the Association and its members stand for -

We hope:

- ◆ to be recognised by our churches as committed partners in offering our experience as a modest but significant contribution to the ecumenical process;
- ◆ that as part of their advance in ecumenical understanding, the churches will work together on the pastoral issues of interchurch families, and for their pastoral care;
- ◆ that we can share the gifts we receive in our God-given diversity, and celebrate them together in the One Body of Christ, as a witness to reconciliation in the world;
- ◆ that a growing number of Christians will share and feel more and more deeply the pain and scandal of division in order to be energised to work for unity.

- **Churches Together for Families** - Rosy Baker attended meetings on the theme of Inter-Faith Marriage.
- **Committee for Marriage and Family Life of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales** was also attended by Rosy. (This committee has since been dis-established and re-structured to become more closely involved with the follow-on work for *Listening 2004* - see below.)
- **Christian Resources Exhibition** - AIF participated in the Promoting Marriage stand.

decided it was not right at that time to revise the 1998 norms, but committed themselves to ensuring that those norms are fully applied, especially when the conditions are fulfilled in the setting of an interchurch family. The bishops recognised the need for mutual listening and dialogue to continue. They are thus committed to journey together with the members of the Association, but there are no specific plans for further discussions nationally, at present.

Interchurch Families visit the Vatican

Following the visit to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) during the Second World Gathering of Interchurch Families in Rome in 2003, the Council was sent a report of the conference and a copy of the paper *Interchurch Families and Christian Unity* which had been formally adopted by the Gathering. The PCPCU subsequently agreed to further informal conversations, and in October a group of 20 people from nine of the countries represented at the 2003 Gathering met again in Rome.

A smaller delegation, led by Fr George Kilcourse from American AIF, visited the Council for talks. AIF was represented by Bev Hollins, Ruth Reardon and Melanie Finch.

The group were made very welcome in their discussions with three members of the PCPCU and a canon lawyer. Conversation covered a wide range of topics at different levels. Experiences of interchurch families in different countries were shared, covering the commitment felt by interchurch couples and their children to both their church communities and explaining how they live out this daily commitment. Much time was spent discussing the question of eucharistic sharing, (a topical issue as the visit coincided with the Bishops' Synod on the Eucharist) with reference to the 1993 *Directory* and its applications through various sets of guidelines from around the world, including the UK's *One Bread One Body*. Several members described the pain they experience in their situations, and in return felt that members of the Council were not unmoved and took away a real sense of understanding - although it was made clear that applications of the norms must be made at local Episcopal level.

Following the meeting the group were privileged to have tickets for seats on the steps of St Peter's during the Papal audience the following morning.



Interchurch family members at the Vatican meeting

World Council of Churches

The Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches is to be held in Brazil early in 2006, and for the first time, the interchurch families' movement has been invited to send a delegated representative who will attend plenary sessions with a right to speak.

Beverley Hollins of AIF is the approved representative for the entire IFIN; Melanie Finch will assist her in presenting a workshop and manning our exhibition stand throughout the nine days.

Interfaith Relations

Inter-faith dialogue is a matter of the utmost political importance and one which is often confused with interchurch dialogue. While the Association primarily focuses on relationships between people of different Christian traditions, the difficulties experienced by those in two-church relationships, and the opportunities they represent to their communities, can have a striking

similarity to inter-faith situations. We are pleased therefore that AIF has been represented (as an observer) by Claire Malone-Lee on the Churches Commission for Inter-Faith Relations, a forum for exchanging concerns and learning from each other. The website for anyone involved in interfaith marriage is: www.interfaithmarriage.org.uk.

Pilgrims' Progress?

In February Melanie Finch and Gill Walsh were among 300 delegates at the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland Assembly at Swanwick to review the journey of faith the Churches have made together since the historic Swanwick Declaration of 1987.

Melanie and Gill led a workshop on the Rome 2003 paper, focusing on 'The Contribution of Interchurch Families to Christian Unity'. The AIF display and the witness of their presence at the conference highlighted the work of the Association.



Melanie Finch and Beverley Hollins in Rome

Listening 2004

AIF's composite response to *Listening 2004*, initiated by the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales's Marriage and Family Life Project, was published in the final report. The project will be extended over the next three years, and the Association will seek to remain engaged, particularly in those aspects with a bearing on interchurch experience.

People



Revd David Coffey with interchurch family members Paul Hollins, Lucy Docherty, Josie and Malcolm Green, and Paul Docherty

Revd David Coffey, Free Churches Moderator, and one of our Presidents, has been installed as President of the Baptist World Alliance.

Fr Andrew Faley has been appointed as a personal chaplain to the Pope and has been made a Monsignor.

David Butler, Free Church Co-Chair of AIF in the 1990s, died on 4 June. He was a Methodist minister and one time secretary of the British Methodist / Roman Catholic Committee, and member of the Methodist / Roman Catholic International Commission. His work was characterised by concern for the unity of the Church, rigorous teaching and preaching, and a faithful pastoral ministry. He is remembered for his gentle manner and wisdom, and his participation in the Annual Conferences, where he so ably led discussions, workshops and worship. He withdrew from active participation in the Association when his first (interchurch) marriage ended, but he remained a member of the Panel of Reference until his death.

Revd Beverley Hollins has assumed the role of Co-ordinator for our work in Christian Unity.

Melanie Finch has assumed the role of Co-ordinator for International Networking.

Helen & Philip Mayles and **Lindsay & Lionel Pelloquin** took on responsibility for leading the work in Marriage & Family Life matters.

Paul & Beverley Hollins became sole trustees of the Bursary Fund in place of Ruth Reardon & Diana Simons.

Publications

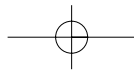
Issues, Reflections, News (IRN), the web-based newsletter which replaced *Interchurch Families*, the Journal, in 2004, continues to be edited by Ruth Reardon. Issue 3 appeared in April and included the homilies given by Mary Tanner and Fr Robert Murray at Martin Reardon's funeral on 21 January and at the memorial mass celebrated at Heythrop on 26 February. It recorded moving tributes to Fiona van Kroonenberg, given by husband Tim at her funeral in Torquay and the memorial mass celebrated at Luton in autumn 2004. (Tim and Fiona were secretaries of the Beds/Herts/Bucks group for many years.) It also gave the text of the Response from IFIN to the *Lineamenta* in preparation for the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist that took place in October 2005.

To subscribe to *IRN*, or *Issues & Reflections*, as it is now called, follow the link on the international website: www.interchurchfamilies.org. You can find all the back issues there.

AIF News, the bulletin for members and supporters, was issued in January, June and October.

The Interdependent, Issue 26, was circulated in October. It is edited by and for children and YAG members.

Interchurch Families and Christian Unity, the "Rome booklet", is the principal focus of our efforts for outreach. It has, so far, been distributed to all diocesan bishops in the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, all church leaders in Scotland, the Methodist District Chairs, leaders of the Baptist Union, members of Committees for Unity and denominational Ecumenical Officers. As an example of its success in reaching-out, on receipt of the booklet, Colin and Terry Garley, an Anglican-Methodist couple, asked AIF for help in compiling a service of thanksgiving for their Ruby Wedding (Terry is Ecumenical Development Officer for Churches Together in Lancashire).



Financial Support

Accounting Period

This *Review* records the financial position for the Accounting Year 1 January to 31 December 2005.

General Fund

The income in our General Fund for the 2005 Financial Year was £41,826 against an expenditure of £32,951. We therefore retained a surplus of £8,875. This surplus is significant; it arose from a number of factors. Donations were larger than anticipated and we underspent in certain areas of work. It is not anticipated that AIF will incur such large surpluses over the next couple of years.

Fund-raising

The Association is supported principally by its members, with support from churches, trusts and Friends of AIF. This latter category consists of family and friends of existing members and those who have ceased to be full members and have become Friends instead. We also benefited from donations from Helen and Philip Mayles who celebrated their Silver Wedding anniversary and asked people to send donations to AIF in lieu of presents.

Reserves

Our plan is always to have sufficient reserves to cover one year's normal expenditure. Excluding expenditure on conference accommodation (balanced by an equal sum of income and thus merely "passing through" our accounts) which is currently about £10,300, we have nearly £79,000 in general reserve and the trustees will be investigating the

best use of the excess to fund "one-off" initiatives.

During the year the Executive Officer's hours were increased from 10 hours to 17.5 hours per week.

Our accounts are presented in terms of our 'areas of work', with administrative costs (office rent, telephone, postage etc.) apportioned alongside our specific expenditure in each such area of charitable output. The 'natural' classifications of these costs are given in the notes to the accounts.

Restricted Funds

- The Bursary stood at £1,768 on 1 January; £548 was added to it and £500 was given to help those who would otherwise have been unable to attend conferences or meetings, leaving a balance of £1,816.

- The John Coventry Memorial Lecture fund stands at £575; this sum will be used for future lectures.

- The Collection taken during the annual conference is restricted for use in allaying the costs of future international interchurch families' conferences in which the Association may be involved.

- The Martin Reardon Memorial Fund was set up in memory of Canon Martin Reardon, one of the Presidents and founding members of the Association, who died in January 2005. This fund will be used to support members who undertake study of ecumenical

General Fund

January - December 2005 **£'000**

Direct Charitable Expenditure

Education & Spirituality	1.4
Local Networking	0.5
Supporting Marriage & Family Life	0.6
Promoting Christian Unity	1.1
International Links & Action	0.5
Interchurch Children & Young Adults	0.5
Net cost of Annual Conference & London Meeting	2.7

Other Expenditure

Publicity & Fund-raising	1.2
Management & Administration of the Charity	0.5
Cost of Executive Officer	13.7
Conference Accommodation	10.0

Income

Contributions from Members	15.7
Donations from Members	5.9
Donations from Supporters & Friends	1.1
Gift Aid Reclaimed	4.2
Donations from Local Churches	0.4
Donations from Trusts	1.5
Sale of Resources	0.3
Sale of Office Equipment	0.1
Fees from Work	0.0
Interest on Deposits	2.3
Conference Accommodation & Subsidies	10.3

education. Any requests for money from this fund will be considered by the trustees.

Trusts

Two small trusts have been supporting us regularly for the past few years. We would welcome hearing from any reader who can suggest other trusts which might be prepared to support our work.

A copy of the full audited accounts can be requested from the Association.



YAG members at the Swanwick Conference

RESPONSE FORM

Please send me more information about Interchurch Families, especially on *(name subject)* _____

Please accept £ _____ as a contribution to the work of the Association.

I am a taxpayer and wish my donation to be treated as Gift Aid. *(Delete if not applicable.)*

Please make cheques or CAF Vouchers payable to the Association of Interchurch Families; send to the address on the back page.

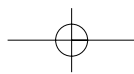
Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ E-mail _____



I am happy for my details to be recorded in order to receive subsequent mailings from AIF. *(Delete if not applicable.)*



Our Mission

In all its activities, the Association of Interchurch Families is working to strengthen marriage and family life and to promote Christian unity.

It offers a support network and information service for

- interchurch families (where the partners belong to different denominations – often a Roman Catholic and a Christian of another communion): for partners and parents, growing children and young adults;
- clergy and ministers, relatives and others concerned for the welfare of such families.

It gives interchurch families a voice in the churches by

- articulating the experience of these families in all their diversity;
- focusing attention on interchurch couples' need for pastoral care which takes seriously both their marriage commitment to one another and the fact that two churches are represented in their family;
- affirming at local, national and global level the gifts of interchurch families and their potential as a catalyst for wider church unity.

All its activities are founded on prayer and worship.

Association Matters

E-mail

We have canvassed our members to update the e-mail directory in order to be more effective in contacting all our correspondents. If we do not have your current address please e-mail the office (address below).

Revised Governance

The new governance structures with a smaller number of Trustees forming an Executive Committee, supported by an Advisory Council comprised of members with specific portfolios of activity, were fully implemented in 2005. The Executive Committee met frequently through telephone conferencing, whilst the Advisory Council met twice in person. The Advisory Council has the dual role to act as:

- A sounding board or “point of reference” for the Trustees in the execution of their day-to-day management of the Association (its “**Urgent**” business).
- A forum to discuss issues of policy on what the Association should be doing and how it should be doing it (the “**Important**” business).



AIF Officials

as at 31 December 2005

Presidents

The Archbishop of Canterbury,
the Most Revd Dr Rowan Williams
The Cardinal Archbishop
of Westminster,
HE Cormac Murphy O'Connor
The Free Churches Moderator,
Revd David Coffey
Revd Dr Kenneth Greet
Dr Ruth Reardon

Panel of Reference

Revd David Butler (until 4 June)
Bishop Christopher Hill
Bishop Crispian Hollis
Revd Ruth Matthews
Revd Robert Murray, SJ
Revd Baroness
Kathleen Richardson
Revd Geoffrey Roper
Dr Mary Tanner, OBE

Executive Officer

Keith Lander

Trustees

Paul Docherty
(Co-chair, Roman Catholic)
Chris Bard
(Co-chair, Anglican)
Derek Finch
(Co-chair, Free Church)
Pauline Johnson
(Hon. Treasurer)
Stephen Walsh

Advisory Council Members

The five Trustees, plus:
Liz Ballaster
Richard Connell
Melanie Finch
Julian Granger-Bevan (from Aug)
Beverley Hollins
Richard Jeffries
Helen Mayles
Ric Lander (til Aug)
Helena Mayles (til Aug)
Paddy Nugent (til Aug)
Lindsay Pelloquin (from Aug)
Katharine Powell (til Aug)
Ruth Reardon
Denis Rigg

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