

## **Chairman's introduction**

### **The World is my neighbour: Bossey and a New Ecumenism**

Lambeth Palace, London October 2014

**Rt.Revd.Dr.Brian Castle**

Welcome to all.

The Conference has been set up by a small, enthusiastic group from the UK Bossey Network whose lives have been profoundly affected by contact with Bossey. Today's conference, supported by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, has two aims. First, it will reflect upon and celebrate the unique and distinctive insights brought to the ecumenical debate through Bossey. Secondly, it will provide a forum to discuss whether these insights can in any way be used by Christians in Britain to refresh and renew a vision of Christian unity.

Participants have been drawn from Bossey alumni stretching from the 1950s, when a regular part of the Graduate School was meeting with Karl Barth, up until this year which include trips to Taizé and Rome. We have here today former staff members, admin staff, teachers at Bossey and at least one Blue Angel – if you don't know or understand the term 'Blue Angel' you will need to ask the one who is here or people who know Bossey to discover the key part played by Blue Angels in the running of the institution. We have church leaders, theologians and theological educators, including Principals from theological institutions. There is wide denominational representation including representatives from orthodox churches and newer Christian communities.

To get a flavour of Bossey, I would encourage everybody to read reflections submitted by staff and alumni in your pack which you will find in your conference pack. Now let me read something from a former lecturer who was at Bossey in the 1980s, Dr. Daniel Ciobotea. Daniel Cobotea is now Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

(Letter was read)

While on the subject of messages for the Conference, we have also received messages of goodwill from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches.

Bossey is place of welcome, hospitality and stories – it is lived ecumenism and I hope that is reflected today.