

AFI-CH

Our association was founded after Rome 2003; we felt the need to have a common address for our many groups. The need was there to have one spokesman to represent us to the church authorities, they being catholic or protestant. We felt that the impact would be greater. Most of the countries represented in Rome already had founded an association, so we set about to found our own.

On the 8th November 2003 we put down the first stone. Our council is made up of seven persons, among them a catholic priest and a protestant pastor. It represents the different active groups, for the time being, in the French part of Switzerland, but we aim to cross the bridge over to the German part.

We want to help the existing groups by being a link between them. We also want to be a link between the churches, by being the talking partner with the authorities, the representative towards the national and international associations.

We want to remind the churches that we exist, that we are not a problem, but the living example that ecumenism can and does work. The churches prepare couples for ecumenical weddings, but rarely follow up on these couples. Most of them then choose one church over the other, or simply leave the church. Those of us who live that rich experience don't choose the easy way, but are an example that it can work.

Starting from scratch, we had to write our bylaws, to build a list of the known members of the groups, of the church authorities we wanted to contact to let them know of our existence, get in touch with the press and the radio. That means a lot of work. Therefore we meet every other month to see what we have done, and what still needs to be done. We are lucky in that we are all very dedicated to the success of that association, we start to see that it bears some fruits. Most of the members of the groups have joined us, and some churches too. We are aware that a lot of work is still to be done, but we believe that we are on the right track.

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