

# Society for the Study of Christian Ethics

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2012 Westcott House, Cambridge**

### **1. Apologies**

No apologies were received.

### **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the 2011 AGM were accepted as accurate.

### **3. President's Report**

In his report, Robert Song expressed gratitude to Michael Black (Treasurer), Guido de Graaff (Secretary), Brad Littlejohn (Conference Secretary) and Jeremy Kidwell (PG Convenor, IT Support Officer) for their work in the past year, and for making this conference a successful event.

### **4. Financial Statement and Membership Report**

Robert Song explained that Michael Black (not present) had resigned from his post of Treasurer earlier in the year, and had relinquished his responsibilities shortly before the conference. Hence no financial report was available for the past financial year (2011). Robert proposed that the committee ask Michael to produce a report, as a final duty, to be approved by the executive committee, and made available to the Society. This proposal was accepted by the meeting.

In the absence of a detailed financial report, Brad Littlejohn and Guido de Graaff provided the meeting with some rough figures, so that the Society at least had some idea of its financial situation. Brad explained that due to lowered student rates, a higher number of student delegates, and an overall rise in the fees charged by Westcott House, this year's conference had operated at a slight loss. Guido, temporarily in charge of electronic payments (since Michael Black's relinquishing of his responsibilities), confirmed that the Society's current account held about £14,800, and that it was expected to hold around £8,000 after all the bills would be paid. He also said that the committee would consider other venues in Cambridge.

### **5. Membership of Committee**

Robert Song announced that he had completed his term as President, and that the Society should elect a successor. The committee had received one nomination, namely Bernd Wannewetsch. After his nomination was proposed and seconded, the Society elected him as its new President by way of unanimous acclamation.

This left the election and/or appointment of new committee members and officers. Outgoing were the following members:

Brian Brock	served for two terms
Guido de Graaff, Secretary	served for two terms; willing to be co-opted for one more year as Conference Secretary
Michael Black, Treasurer	resigned
Brad Littlejohn, Conference Secretary	co-opted; willing to continue/hand-over until next year's conference

The committee had one nomination for the post of Treasurer, namely Carys Moseley (already a committee member). Her nomination was proposed and seconded, after which the meeting elected Carys Moseley as Treasurer.

Robert Card, a member of the Society, had been nominated as the new Conference Secretary, and member of the committee. His nomination was proposed and seconded, after which the meeting elected Robert Card a member of the executive committee, and Conference Secretary.

The committee had one further nomination for the replacement of Brian Brock, namely Margaret Adam, who had recently joined the Society. Her nomination was proposed and seconded, after which the meeting elected Margaret Adam a member of the executive committee.

## **6. Feedback on 2012 Conference**

Robert Song expressed his satisfaction with the conference so far, commenting on the coherence between the first three plenary addresses, facilitating an ongoing conversation throughout the conference's proceedings.

Comments were received concerning the provision of vegetarian/vegan food; particularly that the kitchen staff was not very liberal towards those not wishing to eat meat.

## **7. Discussion of Future Conferences**

Robert Song reported progress in the preparations of the 2013 conference, on 'Security & Surveillance' (provisional title). So far, the relevant sub-committee had secured Eric Gregory, Eric Stoddard and Esther Reed as keynote speakers. The sub-committee would seek to finalise the skeleton programme in the coming few months.

Robert then invited the meeting to suggest themes for the 2014 conference, reminding them of 'Professional Ethics' as one of the themes floated last year. In the ensuing brainstorming session, however, the following themes emerged:

1. Psalms
2. Gifts, Beatitudes & Fruits
3. Sin

A first round of votes revealed that ‘Sin’ and ‘Psalms’ were favourites. In the run-off between these two, the former clearly received most votes. And thus it was decided that the theme of the 2014 SSCE conference would be ‘Sin’.

After the vote Oliver O’Donovan suggested that the committee revise the process of choosing future conference themes. He observed that the current practice barely allows for making an informed choice. Could the committee perhaps invite and elaborate on a few proposals, and distribute them to the membership beforehand, allowing a more informed vote? Robert Song said the committee would take up this suggestion and see how it could be put in practice.

## 8. *Studies in Christian Ethics*

Susan Parsons presented her annual report (which had also been made available to the meeting in hard copy). In her report she expressed her thanks to David Clough, the outgoing Book Reviews Editor, and welcomed Nick Townsend as his successor. She also expressed thanks to the outgoing Consultant Editors (Oliver O’Donovan, Jean Porter) and welcomed their replacements (Peter Sedgwick, William Werpehowski). She had invited Oliver O’Donovan to stay on as Honorary Consultant Editor (alongside Duncan Forrester). Susan also reported on changes in electronic access to Humanities journals, including *SCE* (articles will be freely available 12 months after publication).

Robert Song thanked Susan, on behalf of the Society, for her ongoing work for the journal.

## 9. ‘Sister’ Societies (SCE and Societas Ethica)

Robert Song reminded the meeting that the Society has a reciprocal arrangement with SCE, namely of inviting each other’s Presidents to their annual meetings; and he confessed that he had forgotten to do so this year. He suggested that next year the committee remember to invite Allen Verhey, the incoming SCE President.

Neil Messer announced that the next conference of the Societas Ethica (2013) would be devoted to ‘Sustainability’; and the 2014 conference on ‘War’ (with the centenary WWI in mind). Neil encouraged SSCE members to attend these meetings. Robert Song asked the meeting about their interest in a future joint conference with Societas Ethica. In response, David Clough emphasised that very clear financial arrangements should be in place for such a partnership, reminding the meeting of the financially disastrous joint conference in 2006 at Wadham College, Oxford. In response to comments about supposed (ideological) differences between the two societies, Bernd Wannewetsch commented that these should not be over-emphasised.

As he had the floor, Neil Messer used the opportunity to announce a new AHRC funding scheme, focussing on conversation between the Arts & Humanities, and the Sciences. He encouraged anyone working in this area to submit a grant proposal under this scheme.

## **10. Postgraduate Forum**

Jeremy Kidwell reported on the two Postgraduate Forums he organised in the past year, including the directly prior to this conference, which was attended by 16 PhD students. He reported that numbers of attendees was going up again, after a slump last year.

## **11. Any Other Business**

Brad Littlejohn asked if he could update the meeting on membership and subscriptions, as he had forgotten to do so under item 4. According to the policy accepted last year, he read out the names of those who had joined the Society in the last year. These were subsequently welcomed with applause. Brad briefly commented on the new membership database, which distinguishes between active and past members.

Brad also explained how his duties as Conference Secretary had prevented him from given any serious attention to the task he had accepted last year, namely of writing and/or editing Wikipedia articles relating to Christian Ethics. He announced he would pick up this task after relinquishing his duties as Conference Secretary.

Guido de Graaff, Hon. Secretary  
September 2012