

Society for the Study of Christian Ethics

**Annual General Meeting,  
7<sup>th</sup> September 2013, 4:00 pm  
Cunningham Room, Westcott House, Cambridge**

MINUTES

**1. Welcome**

Guido de Graaff (Hon. Secretary) opened the meeting, asking if AGM agreed to allow Robert Song to chair the meeting in the absence of a President. There were no objections and Robert Song took the chair.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Jolyon Mitchell and Robert Heimburger.

**3. Minutes**

The minutes of the 2012 AGM were accepted as accurate.

**4. Annual Report**

Robert Song thanked Carys Moseley (Hon. Treasurer), Guido de Graaff (Hon. Secretary), Robert Card (Conference Secretary) and Jeremy Kidwell (Chair Postgraduate Forum; IT Support Officer) for their part in the organisation of the conference. He also noted that Guido and Jeremy were both standing down, thanking them for their outstanding contributions over the past few years. Robert's words of thanks were echoed by general applause from the floor.

**5. Financial Statement and Membership Report**

Carys Moseley presented a financial report for two calendar years, 2011 as well as 2012, the reason being that no report for 2011 had been produced. Carys explained some striking differences in conference expenditure on the basis of fluctuating numbers of conference delegates. There were no questions from the floor.

Robert Card had not prepared a membership report, but informed the meeting that membership was around 50-60. There were no questions from the floor.

**6. Presidency and Membership of Committee**

Robert Song briefly explained the need to elect a new President. He notified the meeting of the following:

- that Bernd Wannewetsch, elected President in September 2012, had recently resigned from his post following his conviction in court (August 2013);
- that he had been convicted for sexual assault (not with a minor);

- that he accepted moral guilt, yet continued to stand by his original plea of ‘not guilty’.
- that he was still suspended by his employer, the University of Aberdeen, pending a review currently being undertaken by the University.

Robert Song added that the Committee had accepted Bernd’s resignation, and that it recommended that the AGM appoint an Interim President for one year, thereby allowing more time for the process of nominating and electing a new President for the normal term of three years.

This prompted questions from the floor as to whether the appointee ought to be an ‘interim’ or ‘acting’ President, and whether the former option would require a change in the Society’s constitution. It was suggested that the AGM appoint a ‘Convenor’ of the Committee, which would not require such a constitutional change.

Thus Dave Leal submitted the following proposal: ‘to appoint someone to convene meetings of the Society and its executive committee for 12 months’. This proposal was seconded by Helen Dawes, and subsequently accepted unanimously.

Robert suggested the AGM proceed to decide whom to appoint as Convenor for one year. Margaret Adam nominated Susan Parsons, which was seconded by Beth Phillips. The AGM accepted the nomination unanimously, and thereby elected Susan Parsons as Convenor for one year.

This left a number of Committee vacancies to be filled. The Committee had received nominations (duly seconded) for the following people):

- Beth Phillips (for second term)
- Esther Reed (for second term)
- Jeremy Kidwell (to take up role of Hon. Secretary)
- John Perry
- Michael Mawson
- Victor Austin

All six nominations were accepted unanimously.

Beth Phillips reminded the Chair that it would be good to notify the AGM of the issues the Committee had highlighted as needing attention in the following year. Robert Song listed these issues as follows:

- drafting of a code of professional conduct for the Society
- revision of the Society’s constitution (as it appears outdated in several respects)
- review of procedures for nominations and elections of Presidents and Committee members (incl. review of the current balance between continuing, outgoing and incoming Committee members)

## **7. Feedback on 2013 Conference**

Robert Song expressed his view that this had been an excellent conference thus far. No further comments were made.

## 8. Discussion of Future Conferences

Robert Song notified the AGM that the keynote programme for the 2014 conference on 'Sin' was now almost completed, with four speakers confirmed.

Regarding the 2015 conference, Robert first listed two themes which had emerged during the previous AGM, alongside 'Sin':

- 'Psalms'
- 'Gifts, Beatitudes and Fruits'

Robert asked for further ideas from the floor. Victor Austin suggested 'Wisdom Literature' as an extension of, or alternative for, 'Psalms'. Another idea, suggested by Carys Moseley, was to honour the 2015 anniversary of the Magna Carta, perhaps with a conference devoted to political theology. To this was added that 2015 is also the year of the next General Election. 'Power and its Limits' was suggested as a potential (sub)title of a conference celebrating/remembering the Magna Carta. Margaret Adam suggested, as a general point, that conference themes ought to be broad enough to draw a good number of delegates, particularly postgraduate /research students.

In the end, 'Psalms/Wisdom Literature' received five votes, 'Gifts' one vote, and 'Magna Charta' all remaining votes. Thus 'Magna Charta: Power and its Limits' (provisional title) was chosen as the theme of the 2015 conference.

## 9. *Studies in Christian Ethics*

Robert Song invited Susan Parsons, Editor of the Society's journal, to present her annual report, after expressing his praise for her unstinting work for the journal. and for the Society in general.

Susan presented her report (available separately in written form). Among the items highlighted were the increasing number of unsolicited submissions to the journal (with currently an acceptance rate of 50%) and the greater length of recent papers. Susan thanked Nick Townsend for taking up his role as Reviews Editor, and Dave Leal for making the Society's archive accessible to Bishop Stephen Platten, thereby helping him in writing his history of the Society (published in *SCE* earlier in the year).

## 10. 'Sister' Societies (SCE and Societas Ethica)

Robert Song announced that unfortunately the President of the SCE, Allen Verhey, had not been able to attend the conference due to ill health. He forwarded Allen's apologies and greetings to the AGM.

There were no representatives from Societas Ethica, and nobody present had been to its recent annual conference.

## 11. Postgraduate Forum

Jeremy Kidwell, Chair of the Postgraduate Forum gave a brief report about the Forum's activities in the past year. While the September meeting (immediately to the SSCE

conference) had had to be cancelled due to lack of interest, the Spring meeting in Edinburgh had been very successful. During that meeting Oliver O'Donovan and Tom Wright had spoken about use of Scripture in Theology.

Jeremy announced he was stepping down as Chair, yet that he had found two postgraduate students willing to take over his responsibilities, David Robinson and Anna Westin, to be co-opted as members of the Committee.

Regarding the relation between the September Forum and the main SSCE conference, the question arose as to whether submission of papers for the main conference needed to be restricted to post-doctoral researchers. However, no decision was made on this issue.

## **12. Any Other Business**

David Clough passed on information about the work of TRS UK, in which he and Jolyon Mitchell had recently got involved, and that he would soon write to the Society on behalf of TRS UK, asking if the SSCE would agree to become an associate member of the network.

Guido de Graaff, Hon. Secretary  
10<sup>th</sup> September 2013