

**Minutes of the Members' Meeting of
The Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality**
Saturday, November 18, 2017, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
Westin Copley Place, St. George C-D (Third Level)
Boston, Massachusetts

Please send corrections to Anita Houck at ahouck@saintmarys.edu.

Bernadette Flanagan called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

1. President Pieter G. R. de Villiers introduced the new President, Bernadette Flanagan.
2. Approval of minutes: Bernadette moved the approval of the minutes of 2016 Meeting. Anita Houck, Secretary/Treasurer, noted that Thom Parrott-Sheffer had already sent her two suggested revisions. Anita invited others to send additional revisions to her (George Faithful later noted an incorrect date on the Treasurer's Report). The minutes were approved pending any suggestions to be sent to Anita later.
3. Introduction of new and international members: Bernadette invited new and international members to introduce themselves and welcomed them on behalf of the Society.
4. Recognition of Society's 25th Anniversary and Third Biennial Conference: Pieter reported that the Society was privileged to meet in the beautiful retreat center in Kappel, where we were generously hosted by Rebecca Giselsbrecht and Ralph Kunz. They did a splendid job of presenting an extremely well-organized conference with exceptional cultural events, including a boat trip on Lake Zürich. Many excellent papers were presented, reflecting the growing internationalization of our Society. To commemorate the 25th anniversary, Past Presidents David Perrin, Sandra Schneiders, and Lisa Dahill shared reflections on the genesis and development of the Society; those reflections surfaced a need for a more formal history of the Society. Pieter thanked all those who helped to make the conference a success.
5. Report on Friday events, "Spirituality in the City" and "Christian Spirituality Inside and Out": Bernadette reported that the Friday events included three site visits (Old South Church, bike tour of the city, and Armenian Heritage Park), a dynamic panel, and dinner. Pieter added that the events continued the reflections of Claire Wolfteich's Presidential address on everyday spirituality. The panelists in particular showed the city to be a place where spirituality is experienced in many ways: Rev. Laura Everett, Executive Director of Massachusetts Council of Churches and author of *Holy Spokes: The Search for Urban Spirituality on Two Wheels* (Eerdmans, 2017); Bing Broderick, Director of Haley House ; Rev. Stephen Cushing, Executive Director and Senior Chaplain of the New England Seafarers Mission; and Pamela Shellberg, Ph.D., Scholar-in-Residence, The BTS Center. [Afternoon sessions were led by Donald J. Tellalian, Designer/Architect of the Armenian Heritage Park, with Doug Hardy; Rev. Everett; and Rev. Nancy Taylor of Old South Church, with Elizabeth Drescher.] Pieter thanked at-large Directors Douglas Hardy and Elizabeth Drescher, who organized everything so well and allowed us to experience new aspects of spirituality.
6. Report of the Editor of *Spiritus*. Bernadette noted the important role of *Spiritus* in the internationalization of the Society. Steven thanked everyone for (he assumed) reading *Spiritus*.
 - a. Steven summarized two points from the morning's Editorial Board meeting:
 - i) The journal released a successful supplemental issue, which grew out of the 2015 conference in Johannesburg that Pieter coordinated. The question is how to fund such issues in the future. Johns Hopkins provides an annual stipend to cover the costs of producing the journal (for instance, copy-editing and images), and usually some of this is saved and accumulates, allowing occasional supplements. Rebecca Giselsbrecht will release a set of papers from the 2017 Kappel conference, and more discussion will follow in the future about the supplemental-issue issue.
 - ii) Steven commended the excellent work of the journal's new editorial assistant, Melody Escobar, at the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Spirituality at Oblate School of Theology.

- b. Steven asked members to listen for good papers during the AAR/SBL meeting and to either approach speakers about submitting their work or to send him information on the papers and presenters.
 - c. Steven observed that our images and poetry make us distinctive among academic journals; Mark Burrows continues as poetry editor.
 - d. The journal is now available online and is provided in that form to subscribers in non-OECD countries. Elsewhere, the default subscription remains print, but online subscriptions are available on request.
7. Report of the Nominations Committee: Bernadette Flanagan, Chair, acknowledged the other members of the Committee: Colleen Carpenter *in absentia*, and Thom Parrott-Sheffer. The Committee solicits nominations every year, and it's helpful to have a long list of nominees. While everyone has many demands on their time, she encouraged members to take time to submit nominations and to consider serving. Thom noted the importance of seeking diversity on the Board and commended Bernadette's leadership in this year's process.
- a. Election of new officers. On behalf of the Committee, Bernadette proposed the following candidates:
 - i) Vice President/President-elect: Glen Scorgie (2017-2018). Glen was elected by acclamation.
 - ii) Two members to serve three-year terms as At-large Directors. Both were elected by acclamation.
 - (1) Diana Villegas (2017-2020)
 - (2) Diana Ventura (2017-2020)
 - b. Bernadette thanked members completing their terms on the Board:
 - i) Pieter G.R. de Villiers, who completes his term as President and assumes the position of Past President.
 - ii) Claire Wolfeich, who completes her term as Past President. Bernadette recognized Claire's graciously hosting the Society at Boston University last night and all her work to organize the conference in Kappel.
 - iii) Elizabeth Drescher and Francis McAloon, who complete their terms as At-large Directors.
 - iv) Glenn Young and Margaret Benefiel, Co-Chairs of the AAR Christian Spirituality Group.
 - c. Continuing members of the Board include At-large Directors Lauren Winner and Gilberto Cavazos-González (2015-2018), both *in absentia*; Douglas Hardy and C. Vanessa White (2016-2019); Steven Chase, Editor of *Spiritus* (2015-2020); Liaison member Francis McAloon (2015-2019); and Secretary/Treasurer Anita Houck (2015-2018). Thom Parrott-Sheffer (2016-2018) and Colleen Carpenter (2016-2019) continue on the Nominations Committee.
8. Report of the Secretary/Treasurer: Anita thanked the membership for the increase in dues that has made the Society financially secure and allowed lively programming at the AAR/SBL. She also thanked those who made tax-deductible contributions to the Society, which accounted for 10% of our income and covered the high cost of technology for today's meeting and contribute to the cost of the Emerging Scholars lunch. Also, the generous grant from the BTS Center, arranged by Elizabeth Drescher, not only funded Friday's events but will provide some continued support. As the Financial Report [attached; see p. 6] shows, the Society is now much stronger financially; however, membership continues to be lower in the past. While the Society is growing in some parts of the world, membership is decreasing in demographic areas that were strong in the past, especially North American and student members. Anita commended the spirit of the Society, including supporting emerging scholars (with the excellent leadership of Shannon McAlister and George Faithful), and she suggested that members consider giving gift memberships especially to students; anyone interested in doing so should contact her, and a staff member at Johns Hopkins will arrange the memberships.
9. Report of the Christian Spirituality Group: Glenn Young reported that he is in his fourth year of chairing the Group, and Margaret Benefiel is in her second. Glenn explained that the Group and Society have always existed side by side and they will continue to do so, though with a change in their relationship. Every five years, units of the AAR, like the Christian Spirituality Group, submit a review. Glenn and Margaret submitted the most recent review just over a year ago, and the AAR responded that the unit was doing well and had a

good future ahead of it, but it was not acceptable for an outside organization, such as the SSCS, to appoint the leadership of an AAR unit. The AAR asked for a new leadership plan, which Glenn submitted and the AAR accepted without question; it is now in effect. According to that plan, from now on, those attending the sessions of the Group will choose the Group's leadership. Glenn noted that, since attendance at Group sessions overlaps a good deal with membership in the SSCS, in practice, there will likely not be a significant change; though the SSCS Board will no longer appoint Group co-chairs, SSCS members are likely still to be very active in the Group and thus are likely to be chosen to lead the Group. However, the Group Co-Chairs will no longer serve on the SSCS Board. In addition, there will no longer be a request for session ideas at the Saturday SSCS members' meeting; instead, topics will be solicited only during the Group's business meeting, which, as with all AAR units, will occur during one of the Group's sessions. The Group will continue to have two sessions each year; if they collaborate, as usual, with another unit, they will have three. When a new position opens up on the Steering Committee or for a Co-Chair, the Co-Chairs will accept nominations from those who attend the sessions and are part of the Unit's contact list. According to AAR policy, those who attend the sessions and sign in are the constituency of the unit. In the new leadership plan, the current Steering Committee (composed for the present of SSCS members) will decide the leadership of the unit. SSCS members who can't attend the Group's business meeting (this year, scheduled during the session on Spiritualities of the Reformation, 4:00-6:30 p.m. Saturday) but who want to be involved may contact Margaret and Glenn to be included in the Group's database. The timing of the Group's business meeting, like all information on the Group's sessions, is part of the AAR online schedule, which is available starting in the summer. In addition, the Group Co-Chairs will send information on the Group's sessions to anyone who indicates, when they register for the AAR meeting, that they're interested in the Group. Janet Ruffing suggested that the leadership of the Unit send out invitations to everyone on the contact list and that the Society advertise at the Unit's sessions to enhance membership. Glenn doesn't see any reason why the Co-Chairs can't continue to notify the SSCS of their sessions, as well. Vanessa asked that the Business Meeting not be scheduled late in the convention, and Glenn noted that the Unit has always requested this and will continue to do so; they've always gotten the schedule they requested. In response to other queries and discussion, Glenn clarified that, from the AAR's perspective, there is no room for negotiation regarding the Society's appointing leadership. Bernadette noted that the Board will continue to reflect on the consequences of the change.

10. Report of the International Relations Committee (IRC): Diana Villegas, Chair, said that she is new to the Committee, having joined it at the Kappel conference this summer. The IRC had a brief meeting there to select a chair, and with more-likely candidates unavailable to serve, Diana agreed to take on the role. She has been involved with the Society for several years, most actively when she lived in Massachusetts; she now lives in her home country of Colombia. She invited members to contact her with ideas on any of the topics the IRC will be discussing: increasing involvement of non-European members on the Committee; giving space to scholarship from scholars outside North America and Europe, for instance in a panel during SSCS Friday events; setting up networks to coordinate sharing of information, for instance, on conferences; networking more consciously with other scholarly organizations; *Spiritus* supplements deriving from our international conferences; the Facebook page; and locating the next biennial meeting (2019). She invited members interested in hosting a conference to contact her. Michael O'Sullivan noted that international conferences can broaden awareness of the Society and attract others to be part of our work, even if many Society members cannot attend. Bernadette thanked Diana and all members of the Committee.
11. Report of the Emerging Scholars Group: George Faithful, Co-coordinator, noted that anyone between the start of graduate school and tenure is welcome to be part of the Group; those who have already emerged are invited to support the work of the ES, including being part of the closed Facebook group. Shannon McAllister, Co-coordinator, invited all emerging scholars to lunch after the meeting and encouraged them to send them contact information if they're not currently receiving notifications from the Group. Bernadette thanked them for their work.

12. Report of items under consideration by the Board of Directors: Bernadette identified several topics on the Board agenda:
 - a. The new relationship between the SSCS and the Christian Spirituality Group
 - b. Future SSCS biennial meetings: A handbook to guide planning of future conferences is being considered. Rebecca and Ralph made a huge contribution to the conference in Kappel.
 - c. Founders' Circle Prize: The Prize was not awarded this year, as originally planned, because it was too difficult to simultaneously plan the biennial conference and coordinate the contest. The contest was delayed a year and will now happen in alternate years to our international conferences. Bernadette thanked those who have agreed to be evaluators for this year's Prize.
 - d. History of the Society: As Pieter mentioned, the Board will consider how to consolidate the research done for the 25th anniversary recognition in Kappel and create a brief history of the Society.
13. Suggestions of items for further discussion by the Board of Directors: Thom noted that the Society Facebook page could more effectively serve the Society. SSCS members should join the page, point toward what's being posted in the Christian Spirituality Studies blog, and use it as a tool for the academic study rather than (as sometimes happens now) for the equivalent of Argus posters about spirituality.
14. Suggestions of possible experiential sessions for 2018 in Denver: Since the meeting was over time, Bernadette asked that those with ideas for experiential sessions send them to the Board via email or paper before tomorrow's Board meeting.
15. August Higgins invited everyone to attend the Oblate School of Theology reception Saturday evening and offered further information.

The meeting adjourned at 11:48.

Attendance: Presidential address; 73; Meeting, 63 (Thanks to Thom Parrott-Sheffer for counting.)

SSCS Financial Report
Fiscal Year 2017 (6/01/16-5/31/17)

	2016-2017	2013-2014
Opening balance: 6/01/15	\$13,427.00	\$7,911.48
<u>Income:</u>		
Dues	\$6,292.03	\$6,473.26
Contributions (tax deductible)	715.00	294.00
Credit Union dividends	2.87	0.68
Total income:	\$7,009.90	\$6,998.94
<u>Society expenses:</u>		
Emerging Scholars	340.00	157.00
Annual Meeting 2016	\$1,075.00	1,088.00
Annual Meeting 2017	0	170.00
Stipend (Web Editor)	500.00	500.00
Stipend (Secretary/Treasurer)	600.00	0
Founders' Circle Award	0	0
Illinois corporate filing	13.00	10.00
International Relations Committee	80.00	
Promotions Committee (no longer active)	0.00	51.97
Subtotal Society expenses:	\$2,608.00	\$3,312.11
<u>Spiritus expenses:</u>		
Stipend (Editor)	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
Stipend (Book Editor)	500.00	\$500.00
Subtotal <i>Spiritus</i> expenses:	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00
Total expenses	\$4,108.00	\$4,812.11
Net gain	\$2,901.90	\$2,186.83
Closing balance: 5/31/17	\$16,294.88	\$10,088.31

Membership (student members incl. in totals) [gratis subscriptions not incl. in totals] *US-Canada-Europe-other*

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2006
Individual								
US	303 (44) [7]	302 (48) [5]	318 (50) [5]	380 (63) [6]	434 (83) [5]	381 (59) [5]	401 [13]	561 (59)
Canada	14 (3)	18 (4)	23 (9)	22 (6)	20 (2)	20 (5)	22	21 (3)
Europe	32 (1) [1]	28 (2) [1]	24 (3) [1]	30 (6) [1]	35 (8) [1]	34 (6) [1]	31 [7]	33 (5)
Non-OECD	6	2						
Other	35 (4)	29 (3)	25 (3)	27 (3)	26 (2)	23 (4)	27	16 (1)
Total	398 (52) [8]	384 (57) [6]	394 (65) [6]	462 (78) [7]	521 (95) [6]	458 (74) [6]	481 [20]	630 (68)
Institutional	84 <i>64-5-6-7</i>	88 <i>67-5-7-11</i>	106 <i>77-7-7-15</i>	106 <i>77-7-7-15</i>	111 <i>80-7-7-17</i>	114 <i>84 -7-8-15</i>	120	126

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**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of
The Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality**
Sunday, November 19, 2017, 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 pm.
Jefferson Room, Sheraton Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

Present: Steven Chase, Elizabeth Drescher, George Faithful, Doug Hardy, Anita Houck, Shannon McAlister, Francis McAloon, Glen Scorgie, Diana Ventura, Diana Villegas, Vanessa White, Lauren Winner, Claire Wolfeich, Pieter G. R. de Villiers, Glenn Young

Excused: Margaret Benefiel, Bernadette Flanagan, Gilberto Cavazos-González

1. Pieter G. R. de Villiers, in Bernadette's place, welcomed new at-large Directors Diana Villegas and Diana Ventura and new Vice President/President-elect Glen Scorgie.
2. Pieter thanked members rotating off: At-large Directors Elizabeth Drescher and Francis McAloon (Frank continues as Liaison Member) and Past-President Claire Wolfeich. Pieter has now become Past-President.
3. Reports
 - a. Emerging Scholars
 - i) Membership: George Faithful said 21 members were on the roster last year, and 31 this year. Most are Ph.D. students; membership also includes some recent graduates and some Master's students discerning Ph.D. programs. The membership represents good geographical diversity. Shannon McAlister noted that many members this year were attending their first Members' Meeting and ES lunch. Offering the free lunch after the Members' Meeting boosts ES membership; notifying ES members of the lunch early, then announcing it during the Members' Meeting, has increased membership 25% in the past three weeks.
 - ii) Lunch: The lunch discussion is casual and friendly but also includes mentorship; Glenn Young was the tenured faculty member who joined them this weekend, and members asked about the job market, balancing work and other parts of life, and literature in the field. Shannon and George have compiled a bibliography of important texts and have a Facebook page that recommends readings, publicizes conference opportunities, and posts job notices. George noted that many who joined last year returned this year.
 - iii) Leadership: George observed that at some point he and Shannon will have emerged, so we will need to discern how their roles will evolve. George has been nominated to the Board of the College Theology Society, and, though he may stay on as an ES mentor and Facebook member, he sees that new position as an opportunity to discern other leadership for the ES Group. Shannon and George are discerning a candidate.
 - iv) The Founders' Circle Prize: The competition will be held this year; while judges have already been invited by Bernadette, Anita said it would be important for Shannon and George to be involved.
Action: George and Shannon will be kept apprised of the Founders' Circle Prize process, as their insights will be valuable in developing practices and forwarding publicity.
 - v) Thanks: The Board enthusiastically thanked George and Shannon for their leadership.
 - vi) Society membership: Anita asked how many lunch attendees were members of the Society; George and Shannon agreed it would be good to find out.
Action: Shannon will provide a roster that can be checked against SSCS membership lists.
 - vii) Eligibility: Anita brought up last year's Board discussion of how best to define eligibility for the Group; for instance, should membership be limited to graduate students and those having graduated within the past six years? Elizabeth Drescher noted the complexity of the issue—for instance, being tenured isn't equivalent to emergence, and many Ph.D.'s don't become tenured—so a marker other than tenure, perhaps years, is needed. Lauren Winner suggested that the number of

years affiliated with Society might provide a definition. Pieter added that there may be a category of emerging institutions, that is, institutions interested in teaching spirituality that don't yet have the resources to do so; this is a longer discussion, but ES may have some insights they could share.

Action: Anita will check the Policy Manual and follow up with Shannon and George on refining the definition of eligibility.

- b. *Spiritus*. Steven Chase said the changed relationship between the Society and the AAR has inspired some thinking about the journal. Christianity provides the deep roots of the Society, which has grown in interdisciplinary directions. Since *Spiritus* is the journal of the Society, it would be helpful for the Society to reflect on what the journal is right now and where the Society would like it to go; how the Society sees the journal's constituency; and how the journal can be presented, including to potential authors. Diana Villegas and others perceive the change in AAR relationship is significant, though it's good that many who present in the Group have not been SSCS members. The change could refocus our energy. Pieter thanked Steven for the hard work of editing the journal, one of only two in the field.
- c. International Relations Committee (IRC): Diana Villegas summarized the highlights of the IRC's Saturday meeting:
 - i) Biennial meeting: Noel Burke, an Anglican priest from Barbados, reported that his seminary is interested in developing spirituality programs; hosting a meeting would be helpful to them in providing mentorship and helping them develop a program. Diana will meet with him about the possibilities for a meeting and future exchange. Michael O'Sullivan reported to the IRC that Bernadette had discussed with more than one person the possibility of hosting a conference in Australia, as well as at Durham in the UK.
 - ii) Friday program: The IRC recommended inviting international scholars to present on Friday evening. Claire noted that the IRC discussed the separation between the Christian Spirituality Group (CSG) of the AAR and the SSCS because it gives the Society fewer opportunities to highlight international members; our Friday events will now be more important in highlighting international scholarship. Doug Hardy noted that a careful reexamination of Friday would be in order. Glenn responded that the SSCS has never planned the CSG Unit sessions; the SSCS membership did provide suggestions for topics, which the Co-Chairs then made use of, but that was the limit of the SSCS's involvement. So the only change is the process for appointing leadership of the Group; as in the past, international scholars can submit panel proposals just as North American scholars can, though, as also in the past, only AAR members can present. Glenn believes that it's not appropriate for the SSCS to submit topics for the CSG's sessions. The Steering Committee remains in place till their terms expire; the earliest to rotate off is Glenn in 2019. At that point there may be Co-Chairs who aren't SSCS members. Anita suggested that it is helpful to remember that the Board had a voice in the leadership transition plan, which was circulated to the Board before it was submitted to the AAR. Glenn suggested three ways to continue a connection between the CSG and the SSCS: for SSCS members to come to the business meeting, which many did; to volunteer to serve on the Steering Committee (there's an open slot now and there wasn't huge interest); and to propose papers.
 - iii) Publicity: Printed material could be helpful to distribute at international conferences.
 - iv) Term: A term of four years has been proposed for membership on the IRC, with a term of three years for the chair.
 - v) Liaison: Diana Villegas will serve as liaison between the IRC and Board of Directors through her term on the Board.
 - vi) Pieter thanked Diana for her leadership of the Committee.
4. Portfolios for Board members: Pieter suggested that the following tasks would be important for Directors to commit to: Founders' Circle (two members), Friday events in Denver (two members), Biennial meeting (one), liaison to IRC (one; to be filled by Diana Villegas; see 3.c.v). Portfolios will be discussed as the meeting proceeds, so Directors can decide what leadership role they'd like to take this year.

Action: Frank will help out with the Founders' Circle Prize. The Board thanked him.

5. Christian Spirituality Group sessions: Report on 2017 (Margaret Benefiel and Glenn Young). The turnout at the Saturday session was good, and two other sessions [listed on p. 4, above] will happen later in the Meeting. One is co-sponsored with the SBL, a practice they'd like to continue. Pieter thanked Glenn for his leadership in a difficult year.
6. Planning of SSCS Friday events for 2018 in Denver: It would be appropriate to consider how Friday events have grown and what we think is wanted; for instance, do we want to continue to offer programs early on Friday afternoon? Are we trying to do too much?
 - a. Review: 20 attended the afternoon sessions; 50 attended the evening session. About 50-60 regularly attend the business meeting [63 this year; see p. 2.]. We don't know how many SSCS members attend the AAR/SBL; it might be helpful to get the data. Travel makes attending Friday events difficult; east-coast events tend to be hardest for North American members to attend. The events this Friday were amazing and creative, but they entailed a tremendous amount of work by the planners. Staying onsite can draw members (as with the large turnout for the pedagogical session on John of the Cross, held onsite in Philadelphia). We hold events offsite not only out of a commitment to the area where we are, as Claire inspired us to do this year, but also for financial reasons: it has been difficult for us to afford convention space, and though we can now afford meeting rooms, we can't afford an onsite reception.
 - b. Purpose: How can we best help each other advance our work? Elizabeth suggested that frontloading time with Society members can be valuable in helping people connect with each other. Anita recalled that part of the original motivation for the Friday events was to allow members to share their work with each other, as well as to offer an experiential complement to standard academic papers offered during the AAR/SBL. Glen observed, however, that it's notable that we're an academic society that doesn't provide a venue for presenting academic papers. Diana Villegas pointed out that the College Theology Society meets annually in a low-budget conference, and that model would allow us to present our work and have experiential sessions; perhaps we could offer something like that every other year and have an international meeting every three years, since the vastness of the AAR/SBL makes it difficult to connect. Pieter noted that the international conferences have taken this approach. Steven suggested that those conferences fulfill the purpose of connecting members with each other, while meeting at the AAR allows us to connect with people of varied disciplines, including members of the SBL. Elizabeth suggested limiting our Friday events to the evening and rotating the focus, from pedagogical to experiential to academic. Doug suggested a function of this Board is to evaluate conference events and to adapt what's offered to who's on the Board and what resources are available. Thus, that rotation could be a guideline that we adapt depending on the venue and our resources; for instance, the Board member who's willing to take a leadership role in planning Friday events has the opportunity to shape the programming according to her interests.

Action: Diana Ventura and Vanessa White will organize Friday events. The Board thanked them for their leadership.

7. SSCS social media review: Last year the Board discussed updating the website and making the Facebook page more engaging. A student assistant in Elizabeth's Media and Religion class led a focus group evaluating our use of media for visual impact, navigation, and content.
 - a. Reactions to the webpage
 - i) Visual impact: subdued, pretty, stuffy, lots of words, dull images, what are pages about?, cold and uninviting image, soft, elegant, sleepy, old lady
 - ii) Navigation: limited hyperlinks but good navigation
 - iii) Content: old copyright dates, What's New typo, font hard to read, wanted more photos, profiles of Board members to see diversity of membership, so many words, show Emerging Scholars. "Getting involved" had only two options and the layout suggests there should be more. It would be good to

include sample articles on *Spiritus* page. The blog looks brighter and more engaging but should open in new window; also, it's from 2013. What do meetings look like; could we look happy?

- iv) The students had real questions about whether we want to appeal to younger people. Is the tone doing what it's meant to do? Reiterating the importance of appealing to younger scholars, Vanessa said it would be helpful to have someone from the Society reach out to her students to talk about the value of scholarly organizations, since they may not see themselves in our media presence. Elizabeth noted that of the three models of websites—archives, conduits, and cultures—the website seems mostly an archive. If that's our intention, the website could be tighter to fulfill that function more effectively. On the other hand, we might want more engagement. For instance, undergrads wanted easy access to articles.
- b. Reactions to the Facebook page: cover image inviting, seemed friendly, more conduit than culture: is the goal sharing information, or perhaps building relationships? There's not a lot of interaction; most posts from the same people, especially the administrators. There's a lot of self-promotion, which isn't bad in itself. A particular Jesus picture came up about every week. The page is more bulletin board than conversation. Could administrators host a regular conversation around a question or something else? *Spiritus*. Reactions were positive; students hadn't known that academics had any kind of aesthetic sensibility. Could student members be more involved, not just on the Emerging Scholars page? There are 2,500 followers, and they wondered if we're reaching out to SSCS members. No AAR/SBL events were posted on the events tab, just events Margaret is involved in and thus keeps up to date. Reactions to photos were positive, but there was nothing connected to related groups.
- c. Discussion
 - i) Doug raised the question of the purpose of the Facebook page. To be more engaging to the membership, it needs to be closed; Vanessa asked whether it could be a page and a closed group.
 - ii) Elizabeth noted there's no Twitter or Instagram feed; those can be linked to facilitate administration.
 - iii) Pieter asked if someone would be willing to look at Elizabeth's recommendations and move this forward. Doug asked if we could pass it on the ES group. Diana Villegas said the Board could decide on its purpose.

Action: We'll ask our ES coordinators, Shannon and George, for their views. What kind of social media presence would we want and why?

- 8. Board structure: Anita announced several updates.
 - a. New AAR relationship: Our documents will need to be updated to reflect AAR policies about the Christian Spirituality Group, in particular by removing the Co-Chairs of the Group from the list of Board members.
 - b. Stipends: This year Anita learned that the IRS did not receive an annual report she submitted. As a result, our 501(c)3 tax-exempt status was revoked until we submitted a form and fee. Anita apologized to the Board for not providing better oversight and assured the Board that she paid the fee out of her annual stipend. The Society is now completely reinstated, and all donations made in 2017 can be deducted on 2017 taxes. Anita expressed her great appreciation to Elizabeth van Eeden, Pieter's daughter and an accountant, who was extremely helpful in the process of reinstatement. In the process, Anita learned that our practice of providing \$1,000 stipends to the Editor and Secretary/Treasurer (a practice our attorney approved when we first applied for tax-exempt status) is not in line with current IRS regulations. Corporations must report stipends over \$599 directly to the IRS, and arranging this reporting entails work that would be too complex for our small society. Thus, the Society will now compensate the Editor and Secretary/Treasurer no more than \$599 in cash per year; the remaining \$401 will need to be provided through reimbursements for Society-related costs, such as attendance at the AAR/SBL. Anita thanked Steven for being willing to work with this new system. On Claire's suggestion, the Board agreed that the Society would reimburse Anita for the costs of reinstatement.

- c. Separation of Treasurer and Secretary: One requirement of reinstatement was that the Society review its reporting practices and make any needed changes to avoid future problems. Anita suggested we consider separating the positions of Secretary and Treasurer, for two reasons: first, it has been difficult to find anyone willing to take on the Secretary/Treasurer position (no one but Anita has been nominated since she took on the role 2000); second, the two positions require different skill sets, and Anita has long identified herself as the worst treasurer in the world. The Board enthusiastically supported this idea.
- d. Possibility of creating a new position: Anita reflected that our current practice has been for the Executive Committee—the President, Vice-President/President-elect, and Secretary/Treasurer—to oversee the biennial international conferences, and there is no clear process yet for the Founders’ Circle Prize. Anita identified three problems with this approach. First, it’s quite burdensome for the Executive, whose members are now taking on more work than their positions originally entailed; Claire and Pieter put a great deal of work into organizing the recent excellent conference in Kappel. Second, the arrangement isn’t effective; for instance, the Prize was not awarded this year because it wasn’t clear who should take on responsibility to move the process forward. Third, our Vice-President and President have short terms, serving on the Executive Committee for only two years; thus, the Secretary/Treasurer is the only member of the Executive who has institutional memory of our previous biennial conferences and Prize processes. To solve these problems, Anita suggested that, adapting a model of the College Theology Society, we consider creating a position of Director of Society Events (or something similar) to oversee conferences, Friday events at the AAR/SBL, and the Founders’ Circle Prize—a role that has fallen by default, to some extent, to the Secretary/Treasurer, who should not have such authority. The Board suggested such a position should have a term of six years, allowing the person to gain experience in each area. The Society could afford to stipend this position; it could also be a position on the Board and therefore be understood to be a significant service to the Society. The person taking on this role would be, in many ways, the face of the Society.

Action: Anita will draw up job descriptions for the new Events position and the divided Secretary/Treasurer roles and will follow up with the Board. It would be helpful to have someone in place to help plan the next conference.

- 9. Founders’ Circle Prize: Pieter reported that the Prize was now due to be awarded in 2018. We still need a clear structure for publicizing, reviewing, and awarding the prize. [Last year, Anita worked with Ralph Keen, previous Chair of the Prize Committee, and generated a provisional document.] The current plan for overseeing the contest is to form a committee of past Presidents and one nominated person; the group will work with support from the Secretary/Treasurer (our policy manual reads, “the committee or its chair, in collaboration with the Secretary/Treasurer, will prepare announcements with deadlines”).

Action: Lauren Winner will organize the Prize this year, along with Frank McAloon. The Board thanked them for her leadership. Anita will send them the Society documents that discuss the Prize.

- 10. Biennial meetings: Diana Villegas will follow up with Bernadette on discussions she’s missed.
 - a. Planning: We should create a committee to guide planning of conferences. This could be comprised of the SSCS President as chair and the main liaison to the local host, the incoming Vice-President/President-elect, and the new Director of Events.
 - b. Venues: Diana noted that some have suggested we should alternate between conferences in and outside the U.S.; conferences in the U.S. would be more accessible to members in the U.S. and shaped more by interests of North American members. Claire asked about the goal of international conferences: are we trying to develop the study of spirituality in new places, to learn from new contexts, or to share collegially and build community? Past venues have been chosen informally: Pieter offered to host in Johannesburg; Pieter approached Rebecca Giselbrecht about hosting; Ann Astell simply organized the first conference at Notre Dame on her own initiative, as a contribution to the Society. Thus, the model we’ve followed so far is to have a meeting where we have a willing host. In the future,

we may need a process to accept and weigh invitations from prospective hosts. Claire suggested inviting proposals by a certain date. We also need to decide whether we're having conferences on an *ad hoc* basis or co-sponsoring conferences when we have a willing host, and whether conferences are a major initiative of the Board. Gaining clarity on that point would help future meetings work well.

Action: We will define a process for determining future venues. The process could include inviting proposals from those interested in hosting a conference; these could be requested starting 1 September following the most recent conference (thus giving us almost two years to plan). Another component could be creating and filling the position of Director of Society Events.

Action: Diana Villegas will follow up with Bernadette and Noel Burke, an IRC member, who has expressed interest in hosting a conference in Barbados.

11. SSCS history project: Anita reported that Pieter organized a retrospective on the Society's history at the Kappel conference; Past Presidents David Perrin, Sandra Schneiders, and Lisa Dahill offered reflections. In the process of preparing the retrospective, it became clear that there is no one repository of Society history, and it would be desirable to create a brief history of the Society. Anita contacted Dave Perrin, who did significant research for his Kappel presentation; his observations were circulated (see below). We might want to find members to interview founding members; it would also be helpful to identify one person to edit the materials. Diana Ventura noted there is some urgency in the project, as our founders are aging. It might be most efficient to follow up with past Presidents to gather their recollections. Diana Villegas suggested asking past members to write a couple paragraphs of recollections; this could produce a narrative.

Action: Anita will write to past Presidents, asking them to write a couple paragraphs each.

12. Future meetings (for noting):

- a. 2018: Denver, Colorado, USA, November 17-20
- b. 2019: San Diego, California, USA, November 23-26. Anita mentioned her enthusiasm for hosting Friday events on spirituality of food at Eclipse Chocolate.
- c. 2020: Boston, Massachusetts, USA, November 21-24

13. Additional topics for future discussion

- a. Does the Board need a longer meeting/retreat? It's difficult to manage the business of the Society in a single ninety-minute or two-hour meeting each year.
- b. Do we need a two-year presidency? This would enhance continuity in Society leadership.
- c. Do we really want to be committed to a biennial meeting?
- d. Should we combine the position of Secretary with a position of Director of Operations? Such a person would have academic standing and organize our meetings, while the President would take on the role of being our professional face. It's helpful to the Society to have a variety of people conducting its work.
- e. The change in the relationship to the Christian Spirituality Group provides an opportunity to review our efforts on many levels.

14. Members were encouraged to send Steven notes on promising papers at the conference, or to approach speakers directly about submitting to *Spiritus*.

15. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:20 p.m.

Preliminary thoughts from Dave Perrin on compiling an SSCS history:

Evidently my own knowledge, as I suspect each past-president, concerns the issues related to the time immediately before -- and then during -- their presidency. I think it would be a worthwhile project indeed to attempt to characterize the "issues at stake" or "the dynamics at play" for each of the years the SSCS has been in existence. Even to frame "periods" in five-year intervals would be helpful. I hate to suggest this -- since nobody wants yet again another committee -- but I suspect it would be very useful to have a committee of about 5 or 6 individuals whose period on either the Board and/or Presidency represents part of the 5-year

chunks of time. That individual would be responsible to reach out to the other key players for that 5-year period to compile the relevant info.

The committee could come up with a series of points of references that each of the individuals would use concerning the five-year period he/she is responsible for. The work need not be long, let's say about 1500 words for each 5-year period. Each would then go forward from there. "Stories" collected (inevitably there will be stories) would form a kind of "appendix" for each of the 5-year periods. Your records would be invaluable - the minutes, board discussions, and so on (but I suspect it would be important that such a project NOT engage you in a vortex of new activity! given your other responsibilities with the Society).