

SOCIETY NOTES

MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CHURCH HISTORY

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

January 4, 2014

Columbia Hall 5, Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.

Attending: 69 persons

Meeting Convened: 5:38 PM

1. Minutes of Meeting, January 5, 2013. Charles Lippy moved, Peter Williams seconded the approval of the distributed minutes of the Business Meeting held in New Orleans. Approved by acclamation.

2. President's Remarks. The President, Bruce Hindmarsh, commented that his year as president had provided him the opportunity to see the Society “from the inside.” The excellent level of scholarship in the conference papers, the publication of an outstanding journal, the fostering of excellent scholarship by giving awards, and the impressive amount of work done by the ASCH staff and those on standing committee were just a few of the characteristics that he had been able to observe.

Hindmarsh outlined some of the priorities of his year as president. The three most important ones were: working on how to foster international initiatives such as joint conferences with other societies; initiating the process of converting the Society's paper records to electronic records so that an audit of those records could be done in 2014; encouraging an environmentally friendly approach to the dissemination of Society's reports by ensuring that they are available electronically.

Hindmarsh called on the past presidents present at the meeting to stand: Elizabeth Clark, Richard Heitzenrater, Charles Lippy, Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Mark Noll, Amanda Porterfield, Peter Williams, and Barbara Brown Zikmund.

3. Executive Secretary's Report. The Executive Secretary commented on the five major points in his report: membership, finances, the website, his professional development, and new initiatives. He emphasized the fact that membership and the financial health of the Society were intimately connected. He noted that he had not “badgered” members with frequent reminders to pay their dues in 2013 and 2012 and that this experiment had been a failure: a large majority of members, about three-fifths, had not paid their dues. In order to keep members connected to the Society and to ensure

that the Society's finances remained stable the Executive Secretary stated that he would return to the approach used in 2011 and 2010: regular mailed reminders to members to pay their dues.

The report was received without comment or questions from members.

4. Church History Editors' Report

Amanda Porterfield thanked all the authors, the reviewers, and the associate editors—Elizabeth Clark, Dana Robert, Thomas Noble, Hugh McLeod, Carlos Eire—for their contribution to the success of the journal in the last year. She also drew attention to the work of Emily Clark, the office manager.

Shaun Horton, the Social Media Coordinator, made some comments about the Society's blog "History of Christianity." The blog now has more than 500 followers on Facebook and more than 600 on LinkedIn. Horton noted that the blog needs more content; he asked members to consider writing articles for the blog and he emphasized that there is an urgent need for the blog to have regular authors.

John Corrigan asked members for help with finding scholars who work on Latin American Christianity and would be willing to submit articles to *Church History*. Corrigan noted that the soon-to-occur appointing of a new associate editor whose area of expertise is Latin America Christianity should help with the aforementioned effort. Corrigan concluded by noting that *Church History* is in "good shape."

The report was received without comment or questions from members.

5. Committee Reports.

A. Membership: Peggy Bendroth, the chair of the committee, drew attention to the fact that a new version of the Society's website will be launched in 2014 (which the Membership Committee had suggested was necessary two years previously). Bendroth also noted the major statistics associated with the membership of the Society: there are approximately 1,500 members, two-thirds of whom are male; the larger concentrations of members are around the Boston area, the Chicago area, the Dallas-to-Austin corridor, and southern California; nearly one-third of the membership is composed of graduate students.

The report was received without comment or questions from members.

B. Nominations and Personnel: Laurie Maffly-Kipp, the chair of the committee, thanked the members of the committee for their work on the nominations. She asked the proposed President-Elect, Margaret Bendroth, and the proposed Class of 2016 Council members present—Peter Choi (Graduate Student member), David Holland, Peter Lim, and Heather Vacek—to stand. Maffly-Kipp moved the acceptance of the slate of names nominated for the various committees. Approved by acclamation.

Bruce Hindmarsh introduced the motion from the Council to reappoint Keith A. Francis as Executive Secretary for a new five-year term. Approved by acclamation.

C. Research and Prizes: Randall Stephens, the chair of the committee, thanked the members of the committee for their diligence. Stephens and the president, Bruce Hindmarsh, marshaled the presentation of the 2013 prizes: **Mead Prize:** Robert McEachnie (University of North Carolina at Charlotte), "A History of Heresy Past: The Sermons of Chromatius of Aquileia, 388–407"; **Brewer Prize:** Matthew S. Hedstrom (University of Virginia), *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); **Graduate Student Travel Awards:** Anna Lankina (University of Florida), Sarah Koenig (Yale University), Sara Georgini (Boston University), Eleanor Pettus (University of Notre Dame), Blaine Hamilton (Rice University); **Independent Scholar Travel Award:** Daniel Watkins.

Stephens mentioned that the Schaff Prize had been awarded to Peter Brown for his book *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014). (Brown was unable to be present.)

D. Finance and Investments: Richard Heitzenrater, the chair of the committee, thanked the members of the committee for their continual interest in the financial affairs of the Society (which they demonstrated by communicating regularly among themselves about financial matters). Heitzenrater drew attention to the fact that the endowed funds for the book prizes are now in separate accounts and thus each fund can be added to individually. Heitzenrater also wondered whether the time had come for the Society to consider establishing another Outler award because that fund was generating over \$1,000 more than the \$2,000 prize awarded every two years.

The Executive Secretary explained some of the figures in the new budget. A member, Daniel Sack, asked whether the Executive Secretary was optimistic about receiving the budgeted amount of \$65,000 in membership dues as this target had not been achieved in the last two years. The Executive Secretary explained that he would use several targeted mailings, e-mail reminders, and the sending of an invoice to each member in order to ensure that the majority of members paid their dues. The 2014 budget was approved by acclamation.

E. 2013 Winter Meeting Program: Thomas Noble, the program chair, thanked the members of the committee for their work on the program. He also thanked his graduate student, Eleanor Pettus, for her invaluable organization of the proposals and coordinating of the committee's work. Noble noted that a sizeable number of good proposals had to be declined as there was not enough space in the conference program. Noble added that there had not been many proposals on Modern Europe; he asked whether the

Society ought to be proactive in obtaining proposals from this subject area. One member asked that Thomas Noble be acknowledged for his work which the rest of the members present immediately did by applauding.

The report was received.

F. ASCH Representatives to the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS): Charles Lippy, the ASCH delegate to the ACLS, commented on the discussions in the ACLS annual meeting about open access. He noted that the ASCH needed to pay attention to the ongoing discussions about making access to journals free: this had implications for the future sale of issues of *Church History*, for example. Lippy also mentioned by name the four members who had received awards from the ACLS and what these awards were: Catherine M. Chin (University of California, Davis), Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship; Bronwen Catherine McShea (Columbia University), ACLS New Faculty Fellows Program; Ellen Muehlberger (University of Michigan), Charles A. Ryskamp Research Fellowship; Leigh Eric Schmidt (Washington University in St. Louis), ACLS Fellowship.

The report was received without comment or questions from members.

G. Program Policy Committee: The committee had not met during the last year and so no report was given.

6. Other Business

A. Committee on Graduate Student and Independent Scholar Awards: Bruce Hindmarsh read the motion approved by the Council and explained why a new standing committee was necessary. He noted that the giving of travel awards on a regular basis to graduate students and independent scholars as well as the future awarding of research grants to graduate students from the new endowment fund necessitated a formal committee to review and rank applications. Approved by acclamation.

B. Endowment Committee/Fund: Charles Lippy, the chair of the Endowment Committee, explained that the endowment campaign was started in 2013 to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Society. The money raised was to help with the research expenses of graduate student members of the Society. The objective had been to raise \$50,000 in five years: pledges now amounted to more than \$50,000 and nearly \$25,000 had already been contributed—these figures had been achieved with only ten-percent of members participating in the campaign. Lippy thanked the members of the Endowment Committee for their efforts in making the campaign the success it had been thus far. Lippy noted that the next stage of fundraising would be by contacting those authors who had had articles published in *Church History* as well as contacting people who had given papers at ASCH conferences in the last five years.

C. Ad Hoc Committee on International Initiatives: Bruce Hindmarsh drew attention to the joint American Society of Church History-

Ecclesiastical History Society (EHS) conference in Oxford in April. As of October the program committee had received ninety-nine proposals and had accepted sixty-three; the committee anticipated accepting fifteen to twenty more proposals after the second deadline of January 20.

Hindmarsh introduced the motion from the Council for the creation of a Line Editor position at the *Church History* Office. The proposed Line Editor would work with authors whose first language was not English or who were not accustomed to writing articles for a history journal in order to make it possible to expand the number and type of articles that would be submitted to *Church History*. The position would be a three-year one and the money taken from the reserve fund (which has approximately \$30,000 in it). The motion was approved by acclamation.

D. Site of the 2015 Spring Meeting: The Executive Secretary informed the meeting that the Council had approved Minneapolis as the site of the 2015 meeting. The Council's recommendation was approved by acclamation.

7. In Memoriam. There was no record of the death of any members during 2013.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:33 PM