

# Society for the Study of Theology

Promoting excellence in the study of Christian Theology by facilitating and shaping theological thought, conversation and community.

[www.theologysociety.org.uk](http://www.theologysociety.org.uk)

## **Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2021**

### **Annual Report**

#### **I. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Summary of Objectives**

‘The Society is established for the advancement of education, specifically to promote excellence in the study of Christian theology, in the UK and internationally. The Society aims to support all those engaged in theology, across the full range of approaches and church traditions; to facilitate and shape theological thought, conversation and community; to identify and discuss important themes, questions and dialogues which call for theological engagement; to explore the nature of, and to foster, theological integrity, responsibility and vocation; and to promote understanding of, and engagement with, theological work across a wide range of contexts including the academy and the churches.’

[www.theologysociety.org.uk/about-us/constitution/](http://www.theologysociety.org.uk/about-us/constitution/)

##### **Summary of Public Benefit**

The Executive Committee keeps the Society’s activities under review to ensure that they continue to reflect its aims. In carrying out this review, it makes reference to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit and in particular to its supplementary public guidance on the advancement of education for the public benefit. The Society is in the process of making technical amendments to the Constitution in order to ensure it meets the requirements of the Charity Commission as it moves to charity status.

##### **Additional Activities**

The Society has been engaged in development work around theology and race for the last six years. Ben Fulford, who was Assistant Secretary until last year’s AGM, led this work alongside the members of the Theology and Race Subcommittee. It has included internal development

work to increase participation of BAME and Majority World scholars in the life and structure of the Society as well as external work to develop connections and relationships with networks and institutions that represent BAME and Majority World scholars.

In the last twelve months, this work has included establishing permanent BAME representative positions on the Executive Committee and recruiting additional members of the Advisory Group to guide and support the work of the Executive Committee. The Society has also developed new seminar streams and workshop activities, both to promote conversations around theology and race as well as to provide space for a diverse range of theologians at the annual conference. The continued sourcing of funding for a bursary scheme to support BAME and Majority World scholars attendance at the annual conference works in partnership with BIAPT and The Susanna Wesley Foundation.

This work is ongoing, and over the period covered by this annual report has included formal statements on the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and, in February 2021, in support of The Rev'd Jarel Robinson-Brown after the racist and homophobic attacks he faced, as well as a concerted attempt to remove him from a previously offered curacy.

During the period of this report, The Society has also elected its first disability representative to the Committee. After seeking nominations through a bye election last Summer, Nina Kurlberg was elected to this post, initially for the remainder of the year but with the hope that this year's AGM will confirm that election for a further three years.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Members and Subscriptions**

The total membership of the Society increased from 447 to 505. Student membership was around 170 and there were around 92 international members.

To extend the financial support that the Society is able to make available to students and other conference participants on lower incomes, all members continue to be warmly encouraged to raise their subscription payment to £10 per £10,000 of income.

An additional £2274.00 was received this way, which was transferred directly to the Bursary Fund. The adjacent table indicates the distribution of subscriptions.

### **Postgraduate Conference**

The 2021 Postgraduate conference took place in September 2021 at the University of Cambridge on the theme of 'Reconciliation'. Due to Covid-19, this had been postponed from July 2020. The conference organisers received in 2020 a donation of **£1000.00** to support the conference, and held on to this money for the 2021 conference.

## **Colin Gunton Memorial Prize**

(jointly sponsored by the *International Journal of Systematic Theology* and *The Society for the Study of Theology*)

The 2020 Colin Gunton Memorial Essay Prize was on the theme of 'Vocation.' The winning essay was written by Fr James Dominic Rooney entitled "Vocation of Love: Supererogation in Aquinas". The essay will be published in a forthcoming issue of *IJST*. The Society sponsors free attendance to its annual conference. Due to the cancellation of the 2020 conference and the online format of the 2021 conference, the winners of both the 2019 and 2020 essay prizes were invited to take up their award for free attendance at the 2022 conference.

The 2021 Colin Gunton Memorial Essay Prize is on the theme of 'Eschatology.'

## **3. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The Society for the Study of Theology is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It is constituted by the Constitution adopted by the Annual General Meeting of the Society on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The Constitution can be found on the SST website.

As a CIO, the Society for the Study of Theology is eligible for VAT exemption on some goods and services it provides (e.g. conferences and advertising). Accounts are prepared in accordance with English and Welsh charity law.

Executive Committee members, who act as the Society's trustees, are elected by the AGM in accordance with section 7.6 of the Society's Constitution, available at <https://www.theologysociety.org.uk/about-us/constitution/>

The Committee meets at least twice annually, immediately before and immediately after the annual conference. In recent years, a third meeting in the summer has been added to the meeting schedule for the Committee. By tradition, the AGM is consulted on the conference theme two years in advance.

## **4. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **Correspondence**

Revd Andrew Taylor  
Secretary, Society for the Study of Theology  
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Cheltenham,  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 2AW  
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## 2021 Executive Committee and Trustees

Prof Mike Higton	President	2021-22
Revd Andrew Taylor	Secretary	2021-
Dr Jenny Leith	Treasurer	2020– 22
Dr Katie Cross	Elected member	2019–22
Dr Emily Kempson	Elected member	2019–22
Dr Dulcie McKenzie	BAME Representative	2020–23
Prof Anthony Reddie	BAME Representative	2020–23
Dr Joanna Leidenhag	Elected member	2020–23
Dr Calida Chu	Elected member	2021-24
Dr Gifford Rhamie	Elected member	2021-24

## 5. FINANCIAL REVIEW

### Bursary Fund

Awards were made to 28 eligible bursary applicants, waiving or reducing their conference costs by either £30 or £15. The total amount of bursaries awarded was £585, of which £360 were redeemed. Bursaries were funded by increased subscriptions and donations from Members and from Society reserves, including the rolled over bursary fund from the cancelled conference in 2020.

2020 was to have been the inaugural year of the BAME bursary fund, established to increase access to the conference for BAME scholars. As the 2020 conference was cancelled, the bursaries awarded in this scheme were not redeemed. A new call for BAME bursaries took place in advance of the 2021 conference and new awards were made. We made a decision, based on the low costs of the online conference in 2021 not to apply to involve top-up applications to partner institutions. We claimed back £495 from The Susanna Wesley Foundation through the SSST-BIAPT BAME bursary scheme, which allowed us to offer full bursaries of £30 to all 33 BAME bursary applicants. The total amount of bursaries awarded through this scheme was £990, of which £450 were redeemed.

### Statement on Reserves

In recent years, the Society has aimed to maintain unrestricted cash reserves of around £20000–£25000 in order to support its activities. This enables it to pay deposits to conference centres, cover the difference between conference income and cancellation charges at any point in the bookings cycle, subsidise the costs of the conference during periods of economic downturn, meet the cost of committee meetings that take place outside the annual conference, maintain its software and website operations, and mitigate the effects of exchange rate fluctuations for conferences overseas.

Following the cancellation of the 2020 conference, the Society's Independent Examiner advised increasing our reserves to the level necessary to be able to cover the full cost of a conference. It was therefore proposed and passed at the 2021 AGM that the Society should increase the target for reserves to between £35,000 - £40,000.

### Statement on cancellation policy

Following the cancellation of the 2020 conference, it was deemed prudent to formalise the Society's cancellation policy for conference delegates, and for this to be linked to that of the conference venue. The following was proposed and passed at the 2021 AGM:

Should you request a cancellation of your booking, we will endeavour to return to you as much of your payment as possible. Our ability to do so will depend upon the cancellation policy of the conference venue. This will normally allow us to offer a full refund for requests received before the conference numbers are finalised with the venue.

## 6. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### A. RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

	30-Jun-21		30-Jun-20	
	£	£	£	£
<b>General Fund – Unrestricted fund</b>				
<b>Receipts</b>				
<b><i>Membership receipts</i></b>				
Subscriptions and Donations	7832		6699.93	
Transfer to Bursary Fund	-3537		-2860	
Use of e-mail lists	748	<b>5043</b>	500	<b>4339.93</b>
<b><i>Conference receipts</i></b>				
Conference fees	6515		12315	
Accommodation and meals	--		25612.5	
Publisher stands	300		910	
Reception sponsorship	--		1000	
Conference centre deposit refunds	--	<b>6815</b>	24831.23	<b>64668.73</b>
<b>Bank interest</b>		<b>34.62</b>		<b>25.02</b>

<b>Theologizing Brexit sales</b>	--			<b>4215</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>11892.62</b>		<b>73248.68</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
<b>Administrative payments</b>				
Website	1499.19		1548.65	
Committee expenses	0		1281.44	
Theology and Race expenses	0		245.1	
Secretary honorarium	1250		1250	
Treasurer honorarium	0.00		1250	
Assistant Secretary honorarium	0.00	<b>2749.19</b>	625	<b>6200.19</b>
<b>Conference payments</b>				
Carbon offset	0		0	
Committee travel	0		14.7	
Conference centre	0		24831.23	
Conference centre cancellation fee	9798.75		--	
Event insurance	0		580	
Plenary speaker travel	0.00		0	
Clerical support	1235.88		2160	
Office costs	--		215.03	
Conference refunds	433		25922.94	
Transfer from bursary fund	-3537		-2860	
Transcription services for online conference	2352		--	
Zoom licenses for online conference	191.88	<b>10474.51</b>	--	<b>50863.9</b>
<b>Theologizing Brexit costs (200 copies + P&amp;P costs)</b>	--	--		<b>4253.98</b>
<b>Postgraduate conference</b>		0		<b>1000</b>
<b>TRS-UK donation</b>		0		<b>1500</b>
<b>Banking and payment facilities</b>		<b>955.91</b>		<b>1747.45</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>14179.61</b>		<b>65565.52</b>

<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>	<b>-2286.99</b>	<b>7683.16</b>
Bank accounts at start of period	29763.14	22079.98
Bank accounts at end of period	27476.15	29763.14

	year to 30-Jun-21		year to 30-Jun-20	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Bursary Fund — Restricted fund</b>				
<i>Receipts</i>				
Donations	1263		400	
Transfer from Subscriptions	2274	<b>3537</b>	2460	<b>2860</b>
<i>Payments</i>				
Transfer from bursary fund		<b>3537</b>		<b>2860</b>
<b>Excess of Payments over Receipts</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
Bank accounts at start of period		5000		5000
Bank accounts at end of period		5000		5000

## **B. STATEMENT OF ASSETS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD**

	£	£
Community Directplus Account	22381.23	24702.84
Select Instant Access Account	10094.92	10060.3
<b>Total bank accounts</b>	<b>32476.15</b>	<b>34763.14</b>

## Notes

- I. Honoraria for Treasurer and Assistant Secretary carried over to 2021 – '22 financial year due to a delay in processing payments. Treasurer's clerical support costs also carried over to 2021 – '22 financial year for same reason.
- II. Conference refunds were remaining refunds from cancelled 2020 conference.
- III. Postgraduate conference funds carried over from cancelled 2020 conference to 2021.

## DECLARATION

*The Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 under the Charities Act 2011. It was approved by the Executive Committee by e-mail consultation and was signed on its behalf by the President and the Treasurer.*



**Prof Mike Higon**  
**President**  
6 April 2022

**Dr Jenny Leith**  
**Treasurer**  
DATE



## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS**

This report is on the financial statements of the Society for the period ended 30th June 2021, which are set out on pages 5 to 8.

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility: to examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act; to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



**Mr Giles Dobson, MRICS**

16 March 2022

Almancil House, Church Road, Carlton, Newmarket, CB8 9JZ