

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR SCIENCE AND RELIGION
Held on Monday 22nd July August 2019 at 8.30 p.m. (BST)
Harcourt Suite, Eynsham Hall, Oxfordshire, UK**

Present: Michael J Reiss (President), Fraser Watts (Executive Secretary), Joanna Colicutt, Oliver Davies, Celia Deane-Drummond, Miguel Farias, James W Jones, Christopher Knight, Fabien Revol, Lluís Oviedo, Bethany Sollereder, Neil Spurway, Richard Sosis, William Struthers, Léon Turner, Harris Wiseman (Total Present: 16).

In attendance: Anthony Nairn (administrator)

1. Apologies for absence

Andrew Briggs, Robin Dunbar.

2. Minutes of 2018 AGM

The minutes were accepted as a correct record.

3. Matters arising

None

4. Annual Report

An annual report had been circulated in advance; a copy is appended. A revised version of the report, with minor changes, will be circulated to the full membership shortly.

5. Accounts for 2018

The accounts had been circulated in advance. Fraser Watts noted that the problems that had led to the need to prepare revised accounts last year had been resolved. Michael Reiss noted that there had been a significant increase in unrestricted resources in 2018; that arose from the Society's recent success in attracting research grants, though we should not assume that will continue indefinitely. Neil Spurway proposed approval of the accounts and Bethany Sollereder seconded. The meeting approved them unanimously.

6. Appointment of auditors/examiners of the 2018 accounts

Fraser Watts proposed that we continue to use the independent examiner provided by our accountants, PEM Cambridge. That was approved unanimously.

7. Elections to the Executive Committee

Fraser Watts reported that Ed Larson had completed his permitted term of office on the Executive and would be stepping down, and that the one person nominated by the required date was Philip Clayton (nominated by Fraser Watts, seconded by Harris Wiseman). His election was approved unanimously.

8. Any other business

Lluís Oviedo suggested that ISSR might collaborate with the ESSSAT conference in Madrid in 2020. Harris Wiseman paid tribute to all that Fraser Watts did for ISSR.

9. Date of next AGM

To be decided at a later date.

APPENDIX

Annual Report for the 2019 Annual General Meeting

New Fellows

Marcelo Gleiser accepted an invitation to become an Honorary Fellow of the Society, following his receipt of the Templeton Prize. The following have accepted invitations to be Fellows of the Society: Wessel Bentley, Connie Bertka, Stephen Bullivant, Guy Consolmagno, Oliver Davies, Don E Davis, Fiona Ellis, Sarah E. Fredericks, Peter C Hill, Ralph W Hood, Joshua Hook, Jeff Levin, Lluís Oviedo, Raymond Paloutzian, Arthur Petersen, Sarah Lane Ritchie, Stan Rosenberg, Rupert Sheldrake, Lisa Sideris, Richard Sosis, Janet Soskice, Gillian Straine, William Struthers, Stan Tanev, Ann Taves, Daryl van Tongeren, Jonathan Topham, Loren Toussaint, Harvey Whitehouse, Yorick Wilks, Rowan Williams. There are a few others who have accepted invitations to Fellowship in principle, but for whom the process of becoming Fellows is not yet complete.

Grants

The Society has continued a major research project on 'Religion and the Social Brain', funded by a grant of £759,320 (April 2017 – January 2020), from the Templeton Religion Trust. It is developing an approach to the evolution of religion from the standpoint of Professor Robin Dunbar's Social Brain theory. We have undertaken phylogenetic analyses of religion in Hunter-Gatherer societies, and carried out empirical studies of the role of synchronised movement and social bonding in churches, both in the UK and in Brazil. We are also exploring the philosophical assumptions of the Social Brain approach to religion, claiming that they are less individualist than those of Evolutionary Cognitive Science of Religion. Professor Robin Dunbar is preparing a Pelican book on the evolution of religion.

Towards the end of 2018 ISSR was invited by TWCF to submit a White Paper as part of its Diverse Intelligences programme, and ISSR submitted a White Paper on 'A Computational Approach to Religion and Spirituality'. Members of the team that prepared the White Paper attended the Diverse Intelligences summit in St Andrews in July 2019, and have now been invited to submit the full application for a 1m USD grant.

Conferences and Events

In September 2018 ISSR joined with the South Africa Science and Religion Forum to organise a conference in Pretoria on "Do you know who I am?": Being Human in a Technological Age. ISSR sponsored Professor Ron Cole-Turner and Professor Noreen Herzfeld as plenary speakers.

In November 2018, ISSR collaborated with the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS) to ensure a strong science and religion presence at the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions, held in Toronto, on the theme, 'Pursuing Global Understanding, Reconciliation and Change'. Professor Fraser Watts attended on behalf of ISSR and gave one of the presentations.

Also in November 2018, ISSR organised a session at the Annual Meeting of the AAR in Boston on the theme, Exoplanets, Aliens, and Multiple Incarnations? Christian Theology and the Search for Extraterrestrial Life (SETI). Michael J. Reiss presided, and the speakers were David Wilkinson, Keith Ward, Ted Peters, and Robert John Russell.

ISSR has agreed to sponsor the annual Boyle Lecture given in London. The first Boyle Lecture sponsored by ISSR, given by Professor Michael J Reiss on 'Science, Religions and Ethics', took place in February 2019. Professor Christopher Cook has accepted an invitation to give the 2020 lecture.

ISSR has also organised a conference on Evolution, Religion and Social Bonding, linked to its project on Religion and the Social Brain and to be held at Eynsham Hall, Oxfordshire, UK, on 21st – 24th July.

Other Activities

The Executive of ISSR organised a working group on 'Rebooting Science and Religion' to guide its future activities. It took the view that, in addition to 'dialogue' between science and religion, the future should include collaboration between science and religion to tackle real-world problems and issues.

ISSR has continued to post regular blogs on science and religion on its website and is always pleased to hear from for those who might like to contribute a blog to the series.

Harris Wiseman resigned as ISSR administrator on his return to full-time academic employment in January 2019, but has continued to provide invaluable assistance during a transitional period. Anthony Nairn, based in Toronto, has replaced Harris as ISSR administrator.

Fraser Watts
Executive Secretary

19 July 2019