



The Society of Christian Philosophers



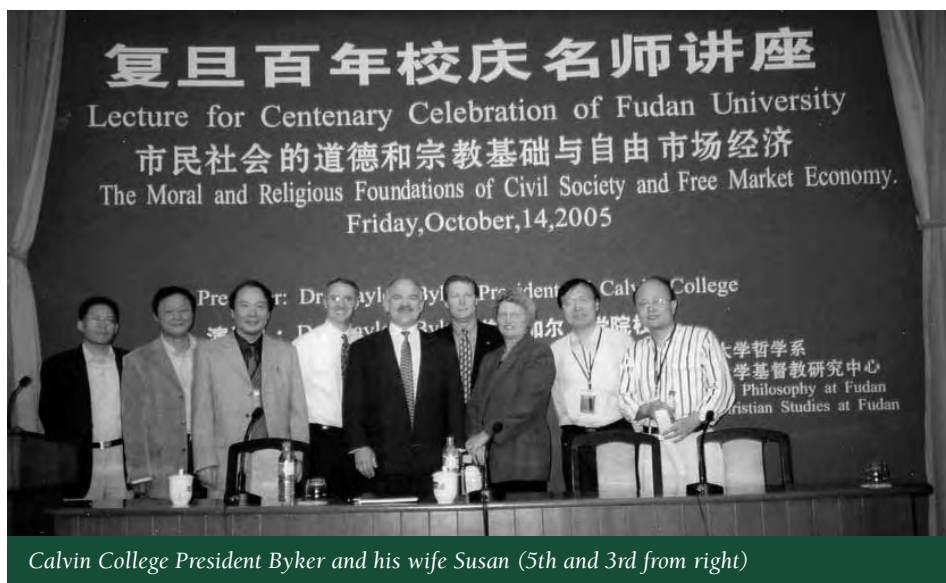
Linda Zagzebski, President • Kelly James Clark, Secretary/Treasurer • Fall 2005

Sino-American Conference

Friday, October 14, 2005, I left from the Waco Airport on the first leg of my first trip to China — ultimate destination, Shanghai and the University of Fudan. I would be joining Kelly Clark, William Craig, Stephen Davis, Gareth Matthews, Michael Murray, Glenn Ross, and Nick Wolterstorff, a delegation from the Society of Christian Philosophers participating in an important International Symposium on Religion and Morality in Higher Education at the University of Fudan. Other sponsoring institutions of the Symposium were the Department of Philosophy, the Center for Christian Studies, and the Center for Marxist Studies at the University of Fudan. In addition, Calvin College's President Byker attended the conference and gave a pre-conference lecture on the moral and religious foundations of civil society that was attended by over 200 mostly students.

The International Symposium was but one of numerous events over the course of the year held at the University of Fudan to celebrate its 100th year anniversary. Not only is it an honor for the SCP to have been asked to participate in the International Symposium, but also our involvement indicates the level of trust the SCP has gained over its decade of working with various Chinese universities to hold conferences on academic topics of importance. To Mel Stewart, Michael Murray, and Kelly Clark, we members of SCP owe our thanks for their visionary leadership in our efforts in China.

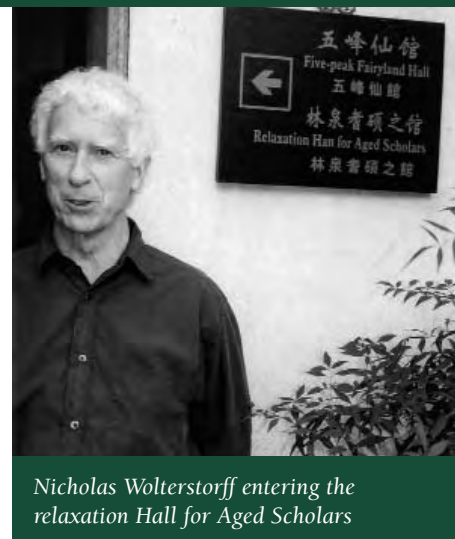
Kelly Clark had been encouraging me for sometime to get involved in the SCP efforts in China, but this was my first venture. As a member of the Executive Committee of the SCP, I had been fortunate to hear reports from Kelly and Michael Murray on SCP work in China



Calvin College President Byker and his wife Susan (5th and 3rd from right)

(and Russia). Intellectually, I was committed to our work there, to be sure, but going to China for a conference or working diligently to see how Baylor might support SCP efforts to see Western Philosophy and Christianity play a larger role in the intellectual conversations in Chinese universities were not very high priorities, I confess. However, after spending approximately a week in Fudan and several more days in Beijing, my perspective has changed. Indeed, my personal experience at the International Symposium at the University of Fudan deepened, enlivened, and widened my commitment to our work in China for a variety of reasons.

First, the academic quality of the conference was good and the interest among Chinese faculty and graduate students was impressive. Clearly, much has been accomplished over the last decade and we have achieved significant momentum. I remember looking around the Center for American Studies at Fudan as the first session was about to begin and being surprised to see such a



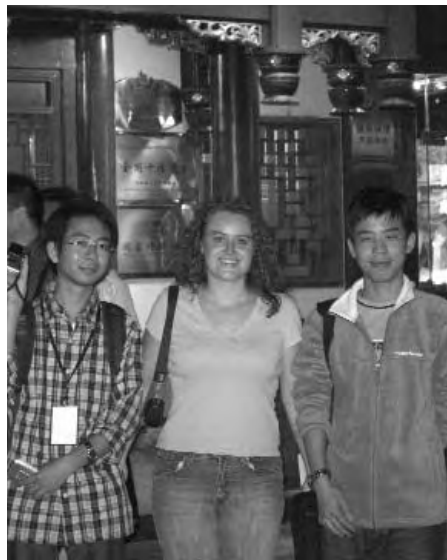
Nicholas Wolterstorff entering the relaxation Hall for Aged Scholars

large group of participants awaiting the introduction of the program. Most of them, of course, were Chinese, and the intensity in the expressions of the Chinese graduate students was evidence of their interest in the topics we would discuss over the course of the three days. The quality of their questions often stunned me, no doubt betraying my expectations. As we American

Sino-American Conference ~ continued from cover

philosophers interacted with our Chinese colleagues from a variety of Chinese universities in the academic sessions and at the many meals we shared with them, we established opportunities for academic collaborations that may lead not only to academic projects of special interest and importance, but to friendships that may transform old rigidities into new possibilities.

Second, I was simply unprepared for the level on interest, especially among the Chinese graduate students for Western Philosophy and topics of special interest to Christian philosophers. While the official conference meeting began on Monday, we were encouraged to fly into Shanghai in time to spend Sunday visiting Shanghai with some of our hosts and the many Chinese graduate students from Wuhan, Fudan, Tsinghua, and Beijing universities who had traveled, some of them for twelve to fourteen hours by train, to attend the conference. I made many new friends over the course of the week at Fudan, and two of them, Ma and Chen, Chinese graduate students from Tsinghua, were the first, as they sat next to me on the bus while we toured Shanghai. After I introduced myself, they began to pepper me with questions about a wide range of topics,



Student participants: Chen Yuhua, Dolores Griffon, and Ma Minghui (l. to r.)

from questions about Frege on sense and reference, about Godel's undecidability theorem, to questions about whether there is any reason to think that human beings are anything but clever animals, at best, and morality is nothing, and all is nature "red tooth and claw."

I spent many hours with my new friends, Ma and Chen, and others, talking about a wide range of topics. What was

especially clear to me was that many of the students I spoke with were looking to Western Philosophy and perhaps, Christianity, to see if, within them, might be found resources to answer the big questions: who am I? What is humankind? How ought we to live? Is there some overarching purpose and meaning to life? My conversations with these new friends led me to conjecture that many of them find neither Asian philosophies and religion (Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism) nor Marxism capable of providing satisfactory answers to their most pressing existential concerns. Such conversations with Ma and Chen, for example, often led naturally to discussions about God, and the complementary relation of faith and reason. I saw in my Chinese friends a passion for truth, a commitment to inquiry, and a hunger for something that might give their lives a ground and a transcendent trajectory that their lives are missing at present. I was moved by these conversations and experiences and see very clearly the importance of the work the Society of Christian Philosophers is doing in China. I look forward to participating in its work in China in the future.

~ Michael Beaty

SCP's 2005 Moscow conference on "The Problem of Evil"

The Russia Outreach Committee of the SCP co-sponsored a lively and spirited conference entitled "The Problem of Evil" at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow from June 6-8, 2005. The three day conference, co-sponsored with the Institute and the Synodal Theological Commission of the Russian Orthodox Church, brought together philosophers and theologians from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia to discuss various facets of the problem of evil from classical and contemporary perspectives. Nine SCP members were present at the conference with eight of those presenting papers and offering formal comments on Russian papers. The nine were Richard Swinburne, Robert Adams, Marilyn

Adams, Peter van Inwagen, Mel Stewart, Mark Wynn, Ric Otte, Timothy O'Connor, and Michael Murray. There were ten Russian presenters including His Eminence the Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk. The Metropolitan has been an avid supporter of the efforts of the SCP to foster dialogue on issues of common interest between philosophers and theologians in Russia and in the West.

The schedule of the conference kept participants engaged in conference activities throughout each day of the conference. Participants were, however, treated to an extensive tour of the Kremlin grounds on the day prior to the start of the conference.

The proceedings of the conference are currently in press and slated to be published in Russian by the Institute.

In addition, during the conference the SCP made arrangements with the Institute to publish, in Russian, key philosophy of religion articles and book reviews by Russian and Western figures. The first volume of this project is in progress and will be published in 2006. Aside from nominal translation costs, the project will be funded by the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Committee is currently exploring the possibility of producing one such volume each year.

Members of the SCP who are interested in participating in the work of the Russia Outreach Committee are invited to contact the Committee Chair, Michael Murray, at michael.murray@fandm.edu.

~ Michael Murray

Books to Wuhan University, China

Under the guidance of its able Deans and Directors and with the help of its committed professors and students, Wuhan University in China is mounting an amazing program in western philosophy. It has established two new Centers, one for Christianity and Western Religious Culture and one for the thought of Thomas Aquinas. Prof. Duan Deszhi, the Director of the Department of Religious Studies at Wuhan, is translating both of Aquinas's Summas into Chinese; he hopes to have that giant undertaking completed by the year after next. Prof. Changchi Hao is undertaking to implement and promote a program in contemporary western philosophy, especially western philosophy of religion, for undergraduates and graduate students. The energy of these Chinese administrators and professors is enviable, and it is matched by the dedication of their students.

In one week in May of this year, I gave six two-hour seminars in English on Aquinas's ethics, metaphysics, and philosophical theology to students at Wuhan. Somewhere between 40 and 60 students attended all of these seminars in five days. (Roughly half of them asked for — and got — an additional seventh two-hour session for mentoring questions about Chinese study of Western philosophy.) These students not only listened to complicated philosophical lectures in English, but they asked incredibly good questions afterwards — in English. They are as smart a group of students as anyone might

hope to teach anywhere, and they are very hungry to learn.

But they need our help if they are going to do so. As I write these words, the library for western philosophy at Wuhan consists of half a shelf of books in English, and Wuhan's resources for expanding that collection are severely limited. Among the many things that this admirable group of faculty and students needs is a LIBRARY for the study of the Christian heritage in philosophical and theological thought!

I am therefore writing to ask you as part of your own almsgiving to help me build a library for Wuhan. I myself have access to a cache of philosophy and theology books, which I am in the process of shipping to Wuhan. The first shipment, which is now in the mail, included about 1250 books, and there are about as many left to ship. This is a beginning, but ONLY a beginning. Please, will you help?

No doubt, many of you have extra copies of at least some books. If you contribute those, I will undertake to get them to China. But I am asking for more. If each of you will contribute TWO books, which you cherish and hate to give up, and if some of you will contribute FOUR of your beloved books, just in case some people who receive this message contribute no books, then your contribution will double what I am sending to Wuhan.

By this means, together as a community we will build something in Wuhan which will take on a life of its own, as

libraries always do, to influence many generations of students and faculty in China. Please help!

I will be happy to make sure that any books you contribute get to China. My address is:

Eleonore Stump
Department of Philosophy
Saint Louis University
St. Louis, MO 63103

Or if you want to do so, you can send the books directly to Wuhan yourself. The address in Wuhan is this:

Professor Hao Changchi
Center for Christianity and
Western Religious Culture
Philosophy College
of Wuhan University
Wuhan, Hubei Province 430072
CHINA

The cheapest way to mail books is by M-bag at the post office; it costs roughly a dollar a pound.

My thanks in advance to all of you who are willing to help to build a library in Wuhan! I will let you know the number of books which you contribute for me to ship, so you can rejoice with me at the building of this library; and if you ship books directly to Wuhan, I hope that you will let me know, so I can add the number of your books to our communal tally.

This will be Wuhan's library, and ours, too.

With much gratitude,
Eleonore Stump



Election results

Rebecca Konyndyk, C. Stephen Evans, John Greco and Ed Wierenga were elected to the Executive Committee. We thank outgoing members: Micahel Beaty, Kate Rogers, Charles Taliaferro and Dean Zimmerman.

SCP on the Internet

Listserve: subscribe by sending e-mail to: scp-request@calvin.edu, with the subject "subscribe" (no quotes).
WWW: <http://www.siu.edu/~scp>
SCP Canada WWW: <http://iago.stfx.ca/people/wsweet/scp.html> or <http://www.ncf.ca/~ax448/scp.html>

In Memoriam

Dewey Hoytenga (1931-2005)

Dewey Hoytenga, Jr. was born February 5, 1931 in Hancock, Minnesota. He was a graduate of Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and received his doctorate from Harvard University in 1959.



From 1959-1965 he taught at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. In 1965 he began teaching at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, and he remained on its faculty until his retirement in 2001. He held visiting appointments at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary during this period. Dewey was a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers since its inception in 1978. He passed away July 25, 2005, at the age of 74.

Professor Hoytenga was the author of two books and a booklet: *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga* (SUNY, 1991), *John Calvin and the Will* (Baker, 1997), and *Happiness: Goal or Gift?* (The Henry Stob Lectures, Calvin College, 1994). Noteworthy among his published articles are 'Logic and the Problem of Evil' (American Philosophical Quarterly, 1967), 'Christianity and the Professions' (Christian Scholar's Review, 1981), and 'Knowledge, Belief, and Revelation'

(Faith and Philosophy, 1991).

In the fall semester of 1971 Dewey Hoytenga was a visiting scholar at Cambridge University (Westminster College). From 1987-1988 he was an adjunct fellow at the Center for the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame. In 1992 he won a Distinguished Faculty Award from the Michigan Association of Governing Boards of State Universities.

~ Greg Mellema

Louis P. Pojman (1935-2005)

I report with great sadness the untimely death of Louis Pojman, who was diagnosed with liver cancer last spring and died at home on October 15. I



came to know Louis through an NEH Seminar I had the pleasure of directing in 1981. He had earned a D.Phil at Oxford in 1977 (and earlier a BD at Nyack College and then PhD at Union Theological Seminary). Even in 1981 he was a master teacher and superb at drawing philosophers out and helping them articulate their views. He was an expert on Kierkegaard early in his career, and, beginning early in the 1980s, he contributed significantly in philosophy of

religion, ethics, political philosophy, and epistemology. Over many years, he also generously commented on the writings of many, and he was especially supportive of students and junior colleagues.

Particularly in the past two decades, Louis gave papers and lectures worldwide and excited audiences of all sorts: from mature philosophers, to mixed public audiences, to students at all levels. I have taught some of his students and have seen his very beneficial effect on them.

Members of the SCP may know not only some of his textbooks and excellent anthologies-ranging from ethics, to epistemology, to philosophy of religion, to political philosophy-but also his *Religious Belief and the Will* (Routledge, 1986). His more than 100 papers have appeared in numerous journals and collections.

One of Louis's many topics has been cosmopolitanism, which is the subject of his last and forthcoming book. I know of no one who better embodies that ideal. At the University of Notre Dame, later at the Universities of Texas (Dallas) and Mississippi-where he led the Department as Chair-and most recently at West Point, Louis has embodied the highest ideals of understanding and culture. I have learned a great deal from him, and, like numerous others in and outside philosophy, I will miss his many contributions.

There will be an interdenominational memorial service for Louis at All Souls Unitarian church at 79th St and Lexington Ave, NYC, at 2 pm on Dec. 30.

~ Robert Audi

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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