



The Society of Christian Philosophers



Robert Audi, President • Kelly James Clark, Secretary/Treasurer • Summer 2004

2003-2004 Regional Conferences

Eastern

In early December 2003, philosophers from far and wide descended upon (or, as the locals might prefer, ascended to) the town of Wilmore, Kentucky for the Fall Meeting of the Eastern Region of the SCP. The event was hosted by Asbury College, the school that, coincidentally, had hosted the first SCP conference almost twenty-five years earlier.

The theme for the conference was “Open Theism and Its Critics.” Keynote speakers were William Hasker from Huntington College, and Michael Rea and Thomas Flint, both from Notre Dame. Hasker gave an introductory talk about open theism on the first night of the conference; as you might have guessed, he also went on to defend the view. Later, Rea argued that presentists who believe that we have libertarian freedom ought to be open theists. (This was profoundly disturbing to at least some of the presentists in the audience, but the session chair, presentist libertarian non-openist Trenton Merricks, bravely assured everyone that the arguments would be answered.) Flint explored but didn’t solve some problems for open theists involving the risks God took with the Incarnation. The keynote speakers together with Kelly Clark and John Sanders also participated in a conference-closing panel discussion.

The conference certainly built on successful Eastern Region meetings from recent years. A record number of papers were submitted (at least region chair Caleb Miller thought it was a record). From those, about forty were selected and presented during concurrent sessions. Attendance was also high (likely another record), with 110 registered participants. Over thirty of these were undergraduates, including groups from Greenville, Houghton, and Huntington



Norman Wirzba at the Midwest Meeting

colleges. Undergrads were hosted by members of an Asbury College ethics class, one of whom expressed astonishment that college students would drive twelve hours for a philosophy conference. Not being a philosophy major, he just didn’t understand.

Finally, the conference was noteworthy for the spirit of its participants, who modeled Christian grace and charity during debate about an issue that has lately been the source of more than a little heat.

Midwest

The 2004 Conference of the Midwest Region Society of Christian Philosophers was held April 1-3 at Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The conference was held jointly with the annual Ethics Across the Disciplines Conference. The theme was “Stewardship: Caring for the Earth and Its Inhabitants.”

The conference featured thirty-nine presentations on a range of topics relating to ethics and the philosophy of reli-

gion. The keynote addresses were given by Terry Tempest Williams, author and environmentalist from Salt Lake City, and Calvin DeWitt, professor of environmental studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and director of the Au Sable Institute. DeWitt’s presentation included stories that ranged from his days as an adolescent herpetologist in Grand Rapids, Michigan to his recent disputes with neighbors over the definition of a “weed.” Summarizing his work as a pioneer in the field of Christian environmental scholarship, he remarked, “True scholars publish not only in books, but in lives and landscapes as well.”

A plenary session by Norman Wirzba of Georgetown College on the topic of “Sabbath Environmentalism” reminded participants that Sabbath practice gives a measure of “proportion and propriety” to life and prepares the spiritual foundation for a responsible environmentalism, adding “Our gratitude for creation is not reducible to our ability to take delight or

Winner Of \$200,000 Teaching Award

Baylor University has named a philosophy professor at Saint Louis University as the recipient of the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching, the single largest award given to an individual for great teaching. **Dr. Eleonore Stump**, the Robert J. Henle Professor of Philosophy, will receive \$200,000 plus \$25,000 for her home department and will teach in residence at Baylor during the 2005 spring semester.

"It is important to honor teaching," Stump said. "Fundamentally, everything worthwhile we do is teaching. We are privileged to be able to spend our working day doing things that belong to the life of the mind, and that is a great gift. And for that gift, we have to give back to the community that has given us this blessing. The way we give back is entirely by teaching. There is no other way. Research is teaching through the written word and classroom teaching is teaching through the spoken word, but whether through the written word or the spoken word, teaching has always got to give back. If we don't give back, it is unspeakable, because the gift given to us is very great."

Stump earned her bachelor's degree



from Grinnell College, her master's degrees from Harvard University and Cornell University and her doctorate from Cornell. She taught at Oberlin College, Virginia Tech and the University of Notre Dame before coming to Saint Louis University in 1992. She has published widely on the philosophy of religion, metaphysics and medieval philosophy and is the author or editor of 15 books and anthologies, including *Aquinas*, the *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, *Philosophy of Religion: The Big Questions* and *Reasoned Faith*. She is past president of both the Society of Christian Philosophers and the American Catholic Philosophical Association and presented the 2003 Gifford Lectures in Aberdeen, Scotland.

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enjoyment in it." Steven Bouma-Prediger concluded the conference with a presentation titled "Who Do We Need to Be? Ecological Virtues and Care of the Earth" in which he laid out a broad environmental perspective based on an Aristotelian ethical framework that features the theological virtues of faith and hope.

Selected essays from the conference will be published in the fall issue of the online publication *The Journal of Analytic Teaching*.

Pacific

The Pacific Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers was held on the campus of Biola University on February 26-28, 2004, cosponsored by both graduate and undergraduate philosophy programs. Fifty colleges and universities were represented, such as Westmont College, University of San Diego, Chapman University, Cal State-

Long Beach, University of Toronto, University of Toledo, Biola University, George Fox University and Monash University (Australia), as well as three apologetics organizations.

The conference's three plenary speakers were Professor Richard Swinburne (University of Oxford), who discussed "Which kinds of rational religious belief are worth having?"; Dr. Steve Wykstra (Calvin College), who spoke on "Reforming Reformed Epistemology: How Plantinga Really Knows Jesus (Without Knowing It)"; and Dr. Timothy McGrew (Western Michigan University), who answered the question "Has Plantinga Refuted the Historical Argument?" During concurrent sessions, topics such as "The Problem of Evil and the Alleged Incoherence of Theism" and "Moral Responsibility and Character Formation" were discussed.

Austin Farrer Centenary Conference

Oriel College, Oxford
6-9 September, 2004

The Human Person in God's World

Chairman: Professor Basil Mitchell

Speakers:

Professor Nancey Murphy
"The Human Person"
(Freedom of the Will)

Professor Edward Henderson
"How are persons related to God?"
(Finite and Infinite;
Faith and Speculation)

Canon Brian Hebblethwaite
"God and the World
as Known to Science"
(Love Almighty and Ills
Unlimited; A Science of God)

Professor David Brown
"How can we think about God?
Analogy and the use of Images"
(The Glass of Vision)

Dr. Douglas Hedley
"Imagination in Philosophy
and Theology"
(The Glass of Vision;
Interpretation and Belief)

Service of Celebration

Preacher - The Rt. Rev. Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford

Optional Excursion to Broughton Castle, Banbury; Conference Dinner

Further enquiries and/or
registration to Conference Director:
Dr. Margaret Yee, Nuffield College,
Oxford, OX1. 1NF UK
E-mail: margaret.yee@nuf.ox.ac.uk

and *Moral Relativism*. He is currently working a book entitled *Lying and Deception: Theory and Practice*.

John Davenport is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Associate Director of Environmental Studies at Fordham University in New York City. John works in moral philosophy, with emphases on existentialism and moral psychology. He is co-editor with Anthony Rudd of *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre* (Open Court, 2001), and he has published articles on Kierkegaard, free will and moral responsibility, and eschatology. His current work focuses on a new interpretation of *Fear and Trembling*, the place of agape ethics in moral theory, a book on the will as a source of motivational strength and character-development, and a subsequent book on autonomy. John completed his undergraduate work in Philosophy at Yale, and his Ph.D. at Notre Dame under the direction of Karl Ameriks. He went to high school in England, where he first joined the Anglican Church. He lives in Maplewood NJ with his wife Robin and two daughters, Claire and Rebecca.

Garry DeWeese has a BS from the United States Air Force Academy, a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary, and the MA and PhD in Philosophy from the University of Colorado, Boulder. He is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Philosophical Theology at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, where he has taught since 1999. He also taught at Denver Seminary, the University of Colorado, and the European Bible Institute, Lamorlaye, France. He has presented a number of papers at SCP meetings and served on the Executive Committee of the Mountains-Plains Region. He has published several articles and book chapters, and authored *God and the Nature of Time* (Ashgate).

Janine Marie Idziak received her Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Michigan and subsequently earned a M.A. in theology from the University of Notre Dame. She has held postdoctoral research appointments at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto and at Notre Dame's Medieval Institute. She is currently Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Bioethics Resource Center, Ethics and Values across the

Curriculum, and the Catholic Studies Program at Loras College. Prof. Idziak has published two books on the history of divine command ethics and three books in bioethics. She serves as health care consultant for the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa, and received the 2002 Trustee of the Year Award from the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging. Prof. Idziak was involved in the initial development of the SCP's Eastern and Midwestern regional meetings, and worked with the Executive Committee in formalizing procedures and administrative policies for the various regional meetings.

Pat Manfredi is associate professor of philosophy and director of undergraduate education at Southern Illinois University Carbondale where he has taught for 11 years. His areas of specialization are philosophy of mind and metaphysics. He has served as webmaster for the SCP website for several years.

Caleb Miller is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Messiah College. He has also served for five years as secretary /chair of the Eastern Regional Planning Committee of the SCP. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame. His publications include "Character-Dependent Duty: An Anabaptist Approach to Ethics," (*Faith and Philosophy*, July 2000) and "Realism, Antirealism and Common Sense" in *Realism and Antirealism*, edited by William Alston (Cornell University Press, 2002).

Thomas Sullivan is the Aquinas Chair in Philosophy and Theology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN. He has published in a variety of areas, including logic, ethics, metaphysics, Aquinas, and the epistemology of religious belief. Some of this work has appeared in *Faith and Philosophy*. Now finishing a book with Sandra Menssen (Ashgate, 2005): *The Agnostic Inquirer: Rethinking the Question of Revelation*. Served on the Executive Committee about 15 years ago.

Theodore R. Vitali, C.P. (Ph.D., Saint Louis, 1976) is associate professor of philosophy and chair of the department of philosophy at Saint Louis University. His interests are philosophical theology and environmental philosophy. His significant publications include: "Creativity, God, and Creation" *Modern Schoolman* 62.2 (1985); "The Importance of the A Priori in Whiteheadian Theodicy" *Modern Schoolman* 62.4 (1985); "The Ethics of Hunting: Killing as Life-Sustaining" *Reason Papers*, No. 12 (1987); "Norris Clarke and the Problem of Divine Relativity" *Faith and Creativity*, (ed.) Nordgulen and Shields (CBP Press, 1987); "Organicism, Evil, and Divine Redemption" *Archivio di Filosofia*, Anno 61 (1988); "Sport Hunting: Moral or Immoral?" *Environmental Ethics* 12 (1990); and "The Dialectical Foundation of the Land Ethic" *Governor's Symposium on North America's Hunting Heritage*. He is the ethicist for the Boone and Crockett Club.



Executive Committee Election

President (vote for one):

Merold Westphal

Linda Zagzebski

Executive Committee (vote for four):

Tom Carson

John Davenport

Garry DeWeese

Janine Marie Idziak

Pat Manfredi

Caleb Miller

Thomas Sullivan

Theodore R. Vitali

Send your completed ballot by August 15, 2004 to: Society of Christian Philosophers, Department of Philosophy, Calvin College, 1845 Knollcrest Circle SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4402

Presidential Election

Merold Westphal is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at

Fordham University. He is the author of two books on Hegel, two books on Kierkegaard, and four books in the

philosophy of religion: *God, Guilt, and Death: An Existential Phenomenology of Religion*; *Suspicion and Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism*; *Overcoming Ontotheology: Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith*; and *Transcendence and Self-Transcendence: On God and the Soul*. In addition to serving on the Executive Committee of the SCP, he has served as president of both the Hegel Society of America and the Soren Kierkegaard Society and as Executive Co-Director of SPEP, the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. He has served on the National Board of the APA as Chair of its Career Opportunities Committee and Ombudsperson for the hiring process. He has served the Central Division as Program Chair and the Eastern Division



on its Nominating Committee, Program Committee, and Program Advisory Committee. He has just been elected to the Executive Committee of the Eastern Division. He is editor of the Indian Series in the Philosophy of Religion, published by Indiana University Press.

Linda Zagzebski (BA Stanford, PhD UCLA) is Kingfisher College Chair of the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Oklahoma. Previously she taught for twenty years at Loyola Marymount University. She is the author of *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (Oxford Univ Press, 1991), *Virtues of the Mind* (Cambridge Univ Press, 1996), and *Divine Motivation Theory* (Cambridge Univ Press, 2004), editor of several books on virtue epistemology and religious epistemology, and author of many papers in philosophy of religion, epistemology,



and ethics. She has served three terms on the Executive Committee of the SCP and is past President of the American Catholic Philosophical Association. She is North American Editor of the Ashgate Philosophy of Religion series and co-editor in philosophy of religion for the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. She is currently working on an historical introduction to Philosophy of Religion for Blackwell.

Executive Committee Nominees

Tom Carson received his BA from St. Olaf College in 1972 and his PhD from Brown in 1977. He is Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University Chicago where he has taught since 1985. He also taught at Virginia Tech (1977-1985) and UCLA (1976). He received an NEH Fellowship in 1980-1981. He has published numerous papers on ethics and is the author of *Value and Good Life* and *The Status of Morality* and (with Paul Moser) he is co-editor of *Morality and the Good Life*

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