

Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship Minutes

Place: Loews Hotel, Anthony Room
Time: AAR Philadelphia, Friday, November 18th @ 3:45 pm

Executive Council Members Present: Elmer Colyer, Gary Deddo, Eric Flett, Paul Molnar
Excused, Peter Heltzel

Apologies: Iain Torrance sends his best wishes and apologizes for his absence at this year's meeting.

The meeting was called to order by President, Gary Deddo

Old Business

Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

The TFFTTF is now a recognized group by the AAR. Special thanks to Elmer Colyer and Paul Molnar for their work on this.

A title for the TFFTTF online journal has been chosen. It will be Participatio: The Journal for the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship. After circulation among membership for their feedback after our last annual meeting, the title was subsequently approved by the officers of the TFFTTF.

Discussions about a time slot for future AAR meetings took place. The 1:00-3:30 slot seemed to work well this year as we had about 30 in attendance for this meeting. This is a significant increase over last year's meeting at 7:30pm, which competed with a number of other longstanding meetings such as the IBR. It was suggested that when the AAR and SBL separate attendance may increase even further. It would seem best to have our next annual meeting at this same time and day, Friday, November, 17, 1-3:30pm.

Discussions about how to disseminate research that results from the gathering of the fellowship took place. It was generally agreed that the TFFTTF would not formally organize conferences, but could act as an agent or resource center to refer organizations interested in conference speakers, etc. to members of the Fellowship who might be appropriate/interested. The work of Gerrit Dawson, who has organized a conference on the theology of Thomas F. and James B. Torrance to be held at his church in Baton Rouge, LA this coming March, was held up as an example of how our members might be involved in sponsoring an independent conference where various members of the TFFTTF could speak or participate and thereby disseminate the vision of the Fellowship.

New Business

The webmaster for the TFFTTF website, Robert Leach, has moved to take up a pastorate. It was noted that the development of the website was not fully implemented this past year as outlined in last year's minutes. We hope that this year it can be further developed and consistently maintained. We would like to be able to post conference papers, minutes and bylaws on the site, among other things. Thanks to Robert for all his work in getting the site up and running and best wishes in his new ministry. The Exec will explore whether Robert will be able to keep up his work or if he will need additional support or a replacement.

The address for the website is: <<http://tftorrance.com>>. This is the best place for new members to sign up.

We discussed the benefits of having a larger more representative group involved in the business meetings and the decision-making that goes on there. It was suggested that the business meeting be started immediately following the formal meeting. The officers should meet to prepare either immediately before the formal meeting or perhaps on another day. Suggestions are invited as to how best to handle the business meetings.

The question of dues came up. Should dues be charged? If so, how much? Would the solicitation of contributions be a better way forward? If dues are charged then the TFTTF would have to incorporate as a non-profit organization and, from the witness of Elmer Colyer, this is a very demanding process. Soliciting contributions would circumvent this necessity, but would require us to establish a location the contributions could be sent to. Gary suggested that we talk with Peter H. about additional details for setting up an account.

Currently the Fellowship has had expenditures of \$350. One member has covered this cost out of pocket. Once an account is established we would like members to consider giving a gift to the Fellowship to cover its annual expenses. A notice will be sent out when we are ready to process funds.

We discussed the creation of a brochure we could use to inform others of the existence, activities and vision of the Fellowship. Would anyone be interested in taking on this project? It was suggested that Gerrit Dawson or his assistant, T. Gatewood, could be consulted on the practicalities of tackling this project.

Special thanks were extended to Paul Molnar for advertising the existence and activities of the Fellowship in the Karl Barth Society of North America's Newsletter.

We discussed the need for an editorial board for the electronic journal (Participatio), and particularly the need for an editor to spearhead the project and serve as a liason between authors who submit material for publication and the review board. We would like to get a board together by next year's meetings, and would like to have enough members so that no one member would have to review more than two submissions a year. Suggestions as to possible members would be welcome.

In addition, it was suggested that the editorial burden would be reduced even further if we publish papers presented each year at our annual meeting. The four papers presented thus far at our two annual meetings have already been accepted for publication in the online journal.

We discussed the election of officers and their terms of service in order to ensure that officers are not leaving service at the same time in order to provide continuity and stability for the Fellowship. Paul Molnar and Eric Flett are due to serve as President and Co-Vice President respectively after next year's meeting in DC. The current Exec members will complete one more year's term. Peter Heltzel, being absent, will be consulted on his continuance.

Finally, in the interest of establishing the quality and continuity of the Fellowship's activities, it was suggested that for the first 3-4 years of the Fellowship's existence we should try to bring on as annual speakers those with established reputations as Torrance scholars. This would draw a broader audience to our meetings, establish a high bar for the exploration of Torrance's thought

and set a good foundation upon which other scholars could be drawn into the Fellowship's activities and vision.

The business meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Eric Flett
January 3, 2006