

STUDIORUM NOVI TESTAMENTI SOCIETAS

THE ORGANIZATION OF SNTS GENERAL MEETINGS

(March 2009)

1. Conference Facilities

The Society normally meets in universities or colleges, but this is not always the case. It is important therefore to ensure that facilities exist and are available to cover an attendance of some 400 or so persons. This means:

- (i) one large lecture theatre in which Main Paper sessions and Business Meetings take place (this should be suitably equipped with microphones and lecterns; preferably two or more microphones should be sited in the body of the main hall so that participants in the discussion can be heard readily);
- (ii) five smaller lecture rooms in which simultaneous Short Papers may be delivered;
- (iii) a maximum of eighteen rooms for seminars, most of which should accommodate up to 25 persons approximately;
- (iv) a room which can be set aside for use by the Committee and the Editorial Board for meetings which normally occur morning and afternoon on the Tuesday (the day of registration), and on the afternoons of the Thursday and Friday of the meeting;
- (v) restaurant/dining facilities which can be enjoyed without undue time spent queuing in advance of meals; provision of mid-morning coffee and on occasion mid-afternoon refreshments, plus if possible a bar open during evenings;
- (vi) a conference office which is readily accessible to members wishing to pay fees, to enquire about travel arrangements and to seek advice on arrangements from members of the local organizing Committee;
- (vii) an office for the SNTS secretariat (Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer) which is conveniently close to the academic facilities, where a laptop computer (brought by the Secretary) and a printer can be set up, and which will permit access to e-mail facilities, as well as a photocopier;
- (viii) a place where those who wish to participate in morning prayers may meet, preferably with an organ or a piano available for singing;
- (ix) a place where members may relax, rest, write postcards, etc. between sessions, and a special retiring room, if possible, for the President;
- (x) a place where members may access e-mail facilities (with preferably more than one computer to prevent congestion).

2. Accommodation

Accommodation will vary from place to place. Most members prefer single bedrooms, though married couples will appreciate double bedrooms if these are available. Sometimes the use of nearby hotels is necessary, and if so it is important that these should be within walking distance

of the conference centre or easily in range of available transport. Accurate walking times between hotels and conference centre should be given in the conference particulars. A few members usually prefer to stay in hotels anyway. Sometimes also there are members who for health reasons need to occupy rooms on the ground floor; they will indicate this when they make their bookings. Some members additionally like to be able to stay for extra nights before or after the conference, but clearly the possibility of doing so will depend on each local situation. The Society fully understands that it is not always possible to have exclusive use of facilities, but this remains very much preferable in the interests of achieving communal contentment during the conference. Other groups do not always understand our love of peace and quiet! If it turns out to be necessary to share facilities, particular care should be taken to ensure that meals are accessible readily and without delay.

3. The Local Organizing Team

The task of organizing such a conference is, in a word, onerous. It is therefore vital that the local organizing secretary can count on the support of a number of colleagues and helpers who will shoulder specific responsibilities and relieve him/her of some of the pressure.

4. Preliminary Arrangements

The spring mailing to every member of the Society with detailed information about the upcoming General Meeting takes place in February/March each year. For this purpose the Secretary needs to receive during the early part of February full details of the arrangements made by the local organizing committee. These include:

- (i) The exact location of the Meeting, together with full postal address, telephone number and e-mail address.
- (ii) The range of accommodation available, e.g. university/hotel residences, single/double rooms, bathroom/shower facilities, arrangements for accompanying persons.
- (iii) The cost of the conference itself (including the registration fee for members, accompanying persons and guests) and additionally of excursions for accompanying persons during the conference and for members etc. on the Saturday following.
- (iv) Any preliminary information about travel arrangements, the locality of the conference, etc., which might affect members' decisions about attending the Meeting.

The booking form has normally to be returned by April 30 if the Meeting is timed for the end of July/first part of August, and correspondingly later if the Meeting is in the latter part of August. It is returned, not to the Secretary of the Society but to the local organizing secretary. On it the member gives full information about his/her planned days of arrival and departure, any relatives who may also come to the Meeting, the seminar group he/she would like to attend, the address to which correspondence should be sent, and any special requirements.

After the booking forms have been received, i.e. normally during May and June, the local organizers should send to each member and guest:

- (i) confirmation of his/her booking;
- (ii) any additional travel information which may be helpful, including a local map or

- some indication of how to reach the conference centre;
- (iii) confirmation of the seminar group to which he/she has been allotted (if the local organisers decree that the room space precludes groups getting above a certain size, then this might make some reassignment necessary);
- (iv) information about electricity supply (for razors), whether it is necessary to bring towels, soap, etc.

When most booking forms have been received, each seminar group chairperson will need to receive a list of those who have been assigned to his/her group. Please note that mailing addresses should also be included in these lists since seminar leaders often like to send out in advance seminar papers which will be read during the Meeting. To facilitate this, lists should be sent out as early as possible and preferably by the end of May, even though it is recognized that late booking forms may arrive subsequently.

5. Morning Prayers.

It is the task of the local organizers to make arrangements for the Morning Prayers held on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of the Meeting. This means that the local organizers must arrange a venue, as indicated above, and three leaders, one English-speaking, one French-speaking, and one German-speaking. The leaders of the Morning Prayers have normally been members of the Society, but non-members or local clergy may also be asked. Members may be approached once they have registered for the Meeting.

6. Co-ordination with the Secretary

This is vitally important both before and during the Meeting. Some months before the Meeting, usually just before the spring mailing is sent out, it has been found desirable for the Secretary to visit the local organizers (at the Society's expense) to review the arrangements and to consult with the local organizers about any possible problems which may arise. This also enables the experience learnt from past conferences to be handed on from year to year. It has also often been found necessary to check some details by telephone, fax or e-mail as all the preparations are being made. During the meeting itself the Secretary tries to be on hand at all times to help in any way possible. A few particular points may be worth mentioning:

- (i) Persons offering short papers are normally asked to contact the Secretary by 1 March. Allowing time for consultation, the provisional list of those whose offers are being accepted is likely to be sent to the local organizer around 1 June.
- (ii) Persons reading Main Papers (including the Presidential Address) are normally asked to send the titles of the papers to the Secretary by 28 February and the full text as an e-mail attachment to the Secretary one month before the start of the General Meeting. The full text will then be forwarded electronically by the Secretary to the local organizers for duplication and distribution to members participating in the General Meeting. (The photocopies can be included in the conference pack or distributed at beginning of the sessions).
- (iii) A draft timetable for the conference as a whole is devised by the local committee but is always referred to the Secretary for approval.
- (iv) It is helpful if the Secretary is provided in advance with a list of those planning to

attend the Conference.

(v) Thank-you letters are sometimes more appropriately sent to helpers by the local organizer, but a substantial number of such letters are written by the Secretary, to representatives of the University or College concerned, to those who have welcomed members to the Reception, those who have provided entertainment, any Church representatives who have received the members of the Society, any persons who have shouldered specially heavy loads in the administration of the Conference. It is very helpful if the local organizing secretary can, before the Meeting ends, provide the Secretary with a list of the names and addresses of persons to whom such letters can be sent promptly.

(vi) Close to the time of the Meeting the Secretary will send a master copy of the Agenda for the Business Meetings and the Editor's Report, so that copies of each may be available to all members (in the latter case after approval by the Editorial Board).

(vii) Each year the Secretary makes a report to the Committee on the status of the seminars, and this includes data on the numbers of members who have enlisted for each seminar (first choice preferences). This information should be sent to the Secretary before the meeting.

7. Finance

All conference expenses are normally the responsibility of the local organizing committee, and the conference should pay for itself. Please note the following:

(i) Local organisers have the option of retaining a surplus on the General Meeting or donating it to the Society. If, despite all proper precautions, there is a loss on any Meeting, the Society will bear this loss.

(ii) The overheads of such a Meeting can be substantial, and it is fully understood that some paid secretarial help may well be needed before and during the conference. Transport to and from airport/railway station to the conference centre, or between different locations during the week, is often necessary, always appreciated, and never cheap.

(iii) The Treasurer will, if necessary, lend the local committee a small amount of money to cover initial expenses.

(iv) It is assumed that a registration fee will be necessary, but such a fee should be kept to the minimum required to ensure that the Conference does not generate a loss. This fee should normally be non-returnable in the event of late cancellation.

(v) Guests (other than wives, husbands or children of members) are asked to pay a special registration fee of 10 British pounds (or the nearest round figure in local currency) in addition to the normal registration fee. This should be reckoned as part of conference income and should be included in the booking form. It is waived when guests have come at the invitation of the Committee or of seminar leaders to present papers. The reason for this extra payment is that members have contributed by means of their subscriptions to the Society's overheads, the expenses of pre-conference preparation, and so on.

(vi) The Committee normally assembles on the Monday afternoon/evening before the Meeting begins on the Tuesday, and holds its first meeting on the Tuesday morning, the day of registration. The Conference organisers are therefore asked to arrange

accommodation and meals for approximately 15 Committee members (who may be accompanied by their spouses) during that period of 24 hours. It has been customary for the principal members of the local committee to act as hosts for the Monday evening meal. Since the first Committee meeting frequently runs into the Tuesday afternoon, lunch as well as mid-morning and mid- afternoon refreshments should be provided (as well as refreshments for the later Committee and Editorial Board meetings). The Society, however, will cover the Committee's costs for this initial period (both accommodation and meals). Normally the local treasurer includes these costs within the Conference accounts and final settlement between the local treasurer and the SNTS Treasurer can be left until the final overall settlement after the Conference. Should it be necessary for the SNTS Treasurer to pay any bills during the Conference itself, he should be given advance warning before he leaves home in order to have the necessary funds available. To facilitate the reclamation of legitimate sums for the Society from the local organizers, and vice versa, it would be appreciated if the local organizers would give the Treasurer a final balance sheet after the conference, with a copy to the Secretary for the record.

(vii) The local committee is asked to include in its budget an amount sufficient to cover the conference fees, accommodation and meals, and the Saturday excursion, of **four officers of the Society (Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Secretary for International Initiatives, and Treasurer)** and of six members from Eastern European or Third World countries who cannot cover their own expenses. Every time such an offer is made, a copy of the Treasurer's letter to the person concerned will be sent to the local organizer, and then the Treasurer will confirm the list immediately prior to the Conference. Should the number of such letters exceed six, the costs will be borne by the International Fund, via the Treasurer.

8. Miscellaneous

(i) On registration day, it is wise to provide more than one check-in point so that long queues are avoided. Name tags should be clearly legible and in large lettering for ease of identification. Organizers might also consider supplying conference packs with transport maps (bus, metro, train, etc.) for those wishing to engage in independent excursions.

(ii) Banking facilities will need to be available so that money can be changed, etc., during the Meeting. The local organizing committee might also consider making stamps available for purchase to members during the meeting.

(iii) Book displays by various publishers, and sometimes by nearby bookshops, have become a feature of recent Meetings. The Secretary sends publishers the particulars and booking form for the Meeting each year in the spring mailing and encourages those who plan to attend to contact the local organizer. Publishers normally prefer to mount their own display; in which case, they need a delivery name and address, a date for delivery, and display space and tables. If they are to work with a local bookshop, they need a name and address (and contact name) and a date for delivery. Preferably there should be sufficient space available for separate displays by each publisher, allowance for additional leaflets and catalogues, and similar terms for all publishers. It is important for the publishers to justify their attendance in economic terms, and in the interests of enhancing the visibility of their displays the space allocated to them should if possible be

in the 'mainstream' of the conference, i.e. very near to the tea and coffee breaks, seminar and lecture rooms etc. There is evidence that publishers' sales are markedly reduced if they are placed in isolation from the main events - and this may discourage them from attending in future years. Security is also of concern to the publishers, and it would be helpful if the book display room(s) were able to be locked at the end of each day to secure stock and other valuable items. For the sake of travel arrangements, and the setting up and taking down of displays, it would be helpful if local organizers were to give publishers an advance copy of the programme, as well as indicating on the programme (for the benefit of participants and publishers alike) the location and opening and closing times of the book display. It would be appreciated if local organizers, for the record, were afterwards to give the Secretary a list of those publishers who actually attended the Meeting.

(iv) A regular number of accompanying persons attend the conference. Arrangements for local outings and excursions to local places of interest during the conference itself are much appreciated, especially if good guides can be provided. Many spouses also like to have adequate time for refreshments and souvenir purchase. The timing of excursions (as for the academic programme) should be such as to allow as generous as possible an interval before the start of the social programme in the evening.

(v) The Saturday excursion is always much enjoyed. It is probably a sound principle to make it not too elaborate, not too expensive, and to ensure that there is plenty of opportunity for participants to mingle with one another.

(vi) At many of our Meetings it has been customary to have a group photograph. Ideally it should be taken when everyone (including accompanying persons and guests) is able to be present and it should be available for members to pick up before they leave. A good time for the photograph in recent experience has been immediately after the Presidential Address.

(vii) At large meetings, especially where accommodation is diffuse, it is sometimes difficult for members to contact each other. If it is possible (within the constraints of security) to make an accommodation list available to members (either in the programme, a supplementary sheet in the conference pack, at the conference office, or on the noticeboard), this would be appreciated.

(viii) To encourage feedback on the annual meeting or the Society's policies or procedures in general, local organizers might wish to have a suggestion box available during the meeting.

9. Presentation of Invitation.

A major feature in the proposal is that it should address the requirements listed in the Notes on the Organization of SNTS General Meetings. In supplying information to enable the Committee to make its decision, the proposers might wish to provide the following documentation:

- (i) An official invitation directed to the Society from the head(s) of the inviting institution(s) with confirmation that the institution(s) in question is prepared to host the conference.
- (ii) A list of the academic facilities available for the meeting, with maps or other logistical information.

- (iii) An overview of the available accommodation.
- (iv) A list of other physical facilities in the immediate vicinity of the campus or on the campus itself.
- (v) A list of possible excursions.
- (vi) A summary of travel facilities and arrangements.
- (vii) A survey of costs.

A one-page digest of the above information, which can be circulated in advance to the Committee, would in addition be most helpful. Proposals must be received before the end of May to be considered at the next conference.

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