

AGM 2024 Staff Team Report

This has been a busy year at SCM. The Faith in Action project continues to go from strength to strength and having two brilliant new project workers each year is a joy for the whole movement. Pheobe and William have been wonderful additions to the team, working with members and groups to make so many new resources and act in new ways to bring faith to life. This year's Berlin trip was a joy again and we were really thrilled that we were able to fully include a wheelchair user in the complex travel the trip entails, not that it was perfect for them, but we experienced the whole trip together and it really showed how possible as well as how joyful inclusion is.

Our profile has continued to grow over the year with gains in social media following as well as new opportunities for partnerships and speaking opportunities. The growth of our comms work is massively due to Ruth's attention to crafting the movement's voice to reflect our members views and passions. As every year we are hearing from new students in our blog and in *Movement* magazine, our social media reach lends a loudspeaker to them. Two trustees have been regular attendees at the Church of England's consultation about same sex relationships, providing a vital, young, inclusive voice and showing that SCM is an important organisation to work with.

SCM graduates formed a panel speaking on vocation after graduation at Greenbelt this year and made a real impact. We are in talks with Greenbelt about making an even bigger contribution to the programme this year as a result. The student meet-up at the festival was also a brilliant success, taking over the Jesus Arms with banter and serious chats for a session.

In the Autumn term we launched our Affirming Christianity programme with our first course 'How to be a good Christian Ally'. We've had such a great response to this, selling copies to a lot of churches we've had no previous contact with as well as groups running the course on campuses. Sending out these packs is one of the hidden jobs that the admin staff do on a daily basis, and we never want to take for granted. Once again, I want to say that it wouldn't be possible to have all these outward facing innovations without Jen and John who do a phenomenal amount in part time roles, the stability and reliability of the movement is hugely down to them and I am so grateful for all that they do.

As always, we are excited to share below more of the work the staff team having been doing over the past year, and look forward to all that the coming year has to bring.

Revd Naomi Nixon, CEO

Strategy and Governance

We have run our first full year of our renewed vision and strategy this year and is working well at focusing our work and enabling staff to report back to trustees on how the objectives they have set are being met. It is taking a bit longer to integrate the reporting of GC portfolio holders into the strategy monitoring report but we are working on it.

The big change in governance this year has been a new convenor and deputy convenor stepping in for a year before finishing their time with SCM and handing over to a new generation, Josh and Russell have served SCM with passion and we offer our thanks to them and the other trustees who are completing their terms this year. It is so good to see a good number of new trustees being nominated this year so that the baton will continue in a really natural way.

Communications and Marketing

Social Media

We continue to see steady engagement across our social media platforms, especially over on Instagram which is where most of our digital comms focus lies. With Facebook use dwindling, it's been a struggle over the past few years finding a place online to build community. We've tried Mastodon and Discord, with not a huge amount of take-up, so over the last few months I've been exploring other options. Off the back of that, this year we're also going to be trialling a new WhatsApp community and starting an Instagram channel as we move away from the Facebook group. More on that soon...!

I am always looking for students to collaborate with to keep our socials content relevant and representative, so if you would be interested in helping with any content creation for any social media (particularly TikTok!) please do pop me a message.

Blogs and Resources

One of the highlights of my job is getting to read so many thought-provoking blogs from staff, students and supporters, and this year has been no different. Phoebe's creative protest blog series has been a great hit, and extremely inspiring as we consider ways to protest other than the usual marches and sit-ins. Our recent lent series on Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time, which William beautifully book-ended with intro and conclusion blogs, has seen a lot more students writing for the blog. From queering the Bible to rediscovering Jesus in rest, I would really recommend you go and read the series if you've not already.

William has also resurrected the SCM Podcast for a glorious season 2! We started the podcast back in 2019 but due to staff capacity it fell to the wayside, so it's been really wonderful to see William using the medium again to explore the life, theology

and legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Listen on Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts!

If you'd like to write for the blog you can join our [writers' group on Facebook](#), or get in touch with me at ruth@movement.org.uk.

Movement Magazine

Victoria and Melody have done an amazing job of commissioning and publishing *Movement*, our bi-annual magazine for students packed full of theology and the latest SCM news. The last two issues included interviews with Ashwin Thyssen and Jay Hulme, and articles exploring everything from being in God's presence and defending arts and humanities degrees to finding God through sand play and depictions of faith on film.

In The Loop

We send a monthly e-newsletter, In The Loop, to our members and supporters to keep them updated on what we've been up to, provide info on upcoming events, and to advertise opportunities for engagement. John does a great job each month putting these together and they are always well received. If you'd like to subscribe to the newsletter you can do so here: <http://eepurl.com/gpWqf>

As always, if you have any suggestions of things you'd love to see more (or less) of on in our communications do get in touch 😊

Ruth Harvey, Communications and Marketing Officer

Members and Communities

Over the last year we have averaged between roughly 120-135 members, with the majority having three-year memberships. This is a slight decrease of overall members from the previous year, and the preference for three-year memberships has been consistent for some time. As well as continuing to improve our communication regarding expiring membership, John has created a short survey for those choosing not to renew their membership to try and capture some of the reasons why.

Members survey

Around this time last year, we conducted our annual members survey. In general, there was lots of positive feedback, as well as some really useful constructive criticism for the staff and GC to consider.

- There was an increase in members feeling connected to the national movement.
- The vast majority of Members said that SCM had "deepened my faith and prayer life".
- Everyone said they would recommend SCM to others.

Communities

This academic year John has worked with Ruth to continue the SCM Community Leaders group chat. It has moved to Instagram as that is the platform our Communities use the most. It has been great to see them work together and support each other. As well as this, John and Ruth led the first Check In for Community Leaders. The hope is that this will become a regular forum for Community Leaders to discuss ideas, gain support, and share their success.

John Wallace-Howell, Movement Administrator

Projects and Campaigns

Faith in Action

The Faith in Action project has been running since 2012, and is a major part of SCM's work. Supported by Project Bonhoeffer, the aims of the project are to

- increase the understanding of Bonhoeffer's approach to faith and the meaning of Christian Discipleship amongst students and recent graduates;
- enable students and recent graduates to reflect theologically on their experience of life, work and study, and live out their faith in action; and
- develop the skills and confidence of students and recent graduates to challenge the structures of injustice and be leaders of social and political transformation.

During the last academic year our two project workers, Grace Stewart (Theology & Resources) and Naomi Orrell (Social Justice) continued the amazing work of their predecessors by running workshops, creating resources, and finding ways of engaging students in taking action for social justice. Highlights included [Grace's 'Lent Prayer Adventure' blog series](#), and the [Finding the Divine in...](#) collection, Naomi's ['Christ at the Picket Line' workshops](#) and the institution of the Trans Theology Group.

Last September we welcomed William Gibson (Theology & Resources) and Phoebe Edmonds (Social Justice) as the 2023-24 Project Workers. During their first week they attended the 'No Faith in War' vigil opposing the DSEI arms fair in London, and haven't stopped challenging injustice and engaging in theological reflection since! During the autumn term they ran workshops with SCM communities to explore how Bonhoeffer's idea of 'Christuswirklichkeit' (Christ's reality) can inform responses to injustice faced by asylum seekers and refugees, culminating in a campaign where members wrote messages on origami boats to be sent to the Home Secretary. For which, we got a response from the Home Office, and are currently working together to put out a response to the letter received. We have also been running a number of workshops on Pride as a Protest, and have more booked in. Phoebe also worked with the Trans*theology group to design and deliver a vigil for TDoR in November.

Alongside the workshop visits Phoebe and William worked together to create a [resource pack breaking down a speech by Suella Braverman](#) and comments made in subsequent interviews about those claiming asylum in the UK, what NGOs and the UN said in response to her comments and what Christian tradition and Church

teaching offers to the situation. They also created a resource pack to help members learn more about the conflict in Israel and Palestine, as well as a 'Protest Toolkit'. They also joined together with JustMoney Movement to create an online campaign around switching banks in the new year, which also involved running a combined workshop with Birmingham and Coventry.

On the blog you can also find Phoebe's [Creative Protest blog series](#) and wherever you get your podcasts you can listen to William speaking to lots of Bonhoeffer scholars such as Dr Jennifer McBride, Dr Eleanor McLoughlin, and Andrew Clark-Howard.

Affirming Christianity

The first course in our Affirming Christianity series, 'How to be a good Christian Ally', was published in the autumn, and we have been excited to see such a good take up from a variety of churches and groups. Orders for the booklets are still coming in regularly and we are in the process of gathering feedback from those that have run the course.

Work is well underway on a second course focussing on Progressive Evangelism, and we hope to have more information about a publication date very soon.

Events

National Gathering: We had 31 people at the National Gathering in total, including staff and speakers. The title of the weekend was 'Walk Humbly', drawn from the summary of what God asks of us in Micah 6:8, to 'act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.' Throughout our weekend together we thought about how to put this into practice, especially by listening to voices which are often excluded. We heard from our members' experiences of being Christian students in Scotland and Wales, and participated in workshops from our partners at Women and the Church and the Council of Christians and Jews, as well as sessions on mapping life experiences and lino printing.

Greenbelt: We had lots of great engagement at the SCM stall, with a few new members and friends signing up. It was also great to see lots of familiar faces! We ran a panel with SCM members discussing how they discerned their vocation for work after university which was really well attended by both students and graduates, and lots of people stayed around after to chat!

Berlin: Run for a second year, our 4-day trip to Berlin was moving, informative, and a great opportunity for theological reflection. From visiting Pastor Niemoller and Bonhoeffer's houses to seeing the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church and the Chapel of Reconciliation, each story we heard and memorial we saw expanded our understanding of reconciliation and peace work and challenged us to act and forgive in our own lives. I don't think any of us left Berlin unchanged.