

Secular Bible Study Organizational Meetup Agenda and Resolutions

Feb 9, 2010, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Trinity-United Methodist Church SBS Meetup Locale, NE Mpls

Attendees (12, in first-name alphabetical order):

Amy
Dean
Frank (moderator)
Gordon
Keith
Ken
Kent
Matthew
Nualle
Sorcha
Steve
Teresa

I. Discuss and Vote on New Secular & Religious Co-Organizers (or a Co-Organizer Team)

Current co-organizers' status:

Chester (religious co-organizer/co-founder, Spring '09): Still on indefinite hiatus to work on his Ph.D.

Grant (secular co-organizer/co-founder, Spring '09): Still tired from chemo and cannot devote any future effort to SBS.

Bjorn (replacement secular co-organizer, Fall '09): Moved to leadership position at Twin Cities Atheists and cannot devote any future effort to SBS.

John (replacement religious co-organizer, Fall '09): Can serve again as one of our presenters / discussion-moderators beginning in May 2010, once Spring Semester teaching duties are ended at United Theological Seminary; but did not and does not consider himself to be a "co-organizer."

Discussion:

- Chester and Grant were well liked because they invested a lot of time and considerable expertise to make SBS Meetups interesting and to find and invite expert guest speaker-moderators.
- Chester and Grant's "gung-ho" – their whole-heartedness – was great.
- But the SBS members did not like having no role in choosing replacement organizers, nor in helping to lead SBS, once Chester and Grant had to step down after Spring 2009.
- For 2010, SBS volunteers as organizers should be welcome.
- The 2009 "biumvirate" model of leadership must go, as long as an organizing committee can get things done and can represent the interests of both religious and non-religious SBS members.
- An organizing team would ensure continuity of leadership, in case individuals are off-and-on.
- The organizing team should have floating or rotating positions of leadership, but with a constant core.
- The organizing team should be diverse – and it must be trusted.
- The organizing team should serve as facilitators, not dominators.

Interested in serving as a future SBS co-organizer:

Keith

Amy

Ken, possibly.

Frank, but only if no suitable co-organizers who can respectively declare themselves as "religious" and "secular" can serve; would also prefer "team"-based organizing, if sufficient interested members exist.)

Interested in serving on a future SBS co-organizing team:

Keith

Amy

Ken, possibly.

Frank

Nualle, but only if not a "diptarchy/biumvirate" as it has previously been run.

Teresa, possibly.

SBS Attendee Votes (Unanimous):

- SBS is not to be disbanded, but helped to flourish, as a unique metro-area forum for trans-belief dialogue.
- SBS authorizes formation of a volunteer SBS Organizational Committee (SBS OrgCom);
- SBS OrgCom actions will require unanimity, to provide equivalent representation/voice by committee members whose beliefs may be in the minority;
- SBS OrgCom Members are (as of Feb 12, 2010):
 1. Amy
 2. Dean
 3. Frank
 4. Keith
 5. Ken
 6. Kent
 7. Nualle
 8. Teresa
- SBS appointed Frank to continue administering & maintaining the SBS Meetup website, and to coordinate initial OrgCom electronic communications;
- SBS OrgCom members Nualle and Keith volunteer to edit SBS Website description;
- SBS OrgCom member Amy volunteers both to prepare the SBS OrgCom Agenda, and to be in charge of designing a potential ancillary webforum for SBS attendees and remote SBS members.
- SBS OrgCom members Kent, & Teresa, and Dean, volunteer to serve on SBS OrgCom remotely (advising it while located in North Dakota and Oregon, respectively);
- SBS OrgCom member Ken volunteers to serve on the committee when not traveling (regularly) to Colorado;
- SBS OrgCom will communicate initially by email (as well as potentially by Amy's accessory web forum linked to the SBS Meetup website), and later possibly by in-person meetings held at candidate future SBS Meetup venues. SBS OrgCom agrees that their committee meetings will neither replace, nor conflict with the "every-other-Tuesday 7-9 pm" schedule of, full SBS Meetups.

II. Discuss and Vote on New (and Who!) Secular & Religious Organizational Co-Sponsors

Secular Co-sponsor Orgs:

1. Minnesota Atheists:

Current and founding secular co-sponsor, 2009.

State "Positive Atheist" non-profit.

SBS liaison: Grant, Bjorn.

MN Atheists Board of Directors voted to withdraw co-sponsorship without Grant or Bjorn able to serve as secular co-organizer --SBS needs to find one or more replacement "secular co-sponsor orgs" and a replacement Meetup website-"organizer" (administrator) ASAP -- before the Feb 26 Meetup website subscription expiration date and March 10 website deletion date.)

2. Twin Cities Atheists:

Metro "Positive Atheist" non-profit.

SBS liaison: Bjorn.

TC Atheists leadership (Bjorn) cannot agree to co-sponsor SBS -- they are focusing on building their own membership, and on St. Paul Interfaith Council representation.

Discussion:

MN Atheists support was largely contingent on Grant's authority as MN Atheists' President. Since his stepping down, the MN Atheists Board has become disinterested in sponsoring/endorsing trans-belief dialogue at SBS, unless a regular MN Atheists dues-paying member were to be an SBS Co-Organizer. However, since Bjorn, who served that role after Grant, also stepped down to begin TC-Atheists, no SBS members remain who both serve a major role in MN Atheists and would serve a similar role in SBS. Nor is the SBS membership any longer inclined to continue ceding sole SBS-organizing authority and duties to any individual, or to persons whose sole claimed leadership qualification is belonging to a sponsor organization.

3. The Circle of Reason:

International "Ecumenical Rationalist" non-profit (sponsors or endorses local groups of "reasoning dialogue and fellowship between those with disparate beliefs and backgrounds," such as SBS.)

SBS liaison: Frank.

The Circle of Reason is willing to serve as a co-sponsor of SBS; share co-sponsorship with other secular and religious orgs SBS may choose; and donate SBS Meetup Website administrative subscription fees.

Discussion:

The Circle of Reason was seen by most SBS attendees as being a suitable replacement secular co-sponsor for SBS. Nualle initially noted that The Circle of Reason was described in the agenda as an "ecumenical" rationalist organization, which to her connoted being exclusively religious (if interfaith); but Frank, a member of The Circle of Reason, assured SBS attendees that the use of the term "ecumenical" was intended to more broadly connote "pluralistic" -- and that the home page of The Circle of Reason website notes it is not a religious organization but a rationalist organization of both the religious and the non-religious, that sponsors or endorses trans-belief fellowships like SBS. This clarification alleviated members' concern, although Kent and Teresa recommended later that it would be good to additionally recruit local "pure" atheist organizations as additional co-sponsors/endorsers (in contrast, Keith later suggested he'd prefer The Circle of Reason as a secular co-sponsor because it, like SBS, is a religious + non-religious rational fellowship.)

Religious Co-sponsor Orgs:

1. Trinity-UMC (pre-merger):

Current and founding religious co-sponsor (Pastor Greg Garman, liaison)

Liberal religious church

Merging with neighboring church at end of Spring 2010

Current meeting locale will close at end of Spring 2010

2. Trinity-UMC (post-merger):

Adjacent meeting facility may remain open and available after old church building closes.

3. The Circle of Reason (see above.)

4. Consider outreach to other churches or interfaith groups (e.g., St. Paul Interfaith Network/SPIN)?

Discussion:

Left unresolved was whether SBS, after filling the present gap in secular co-sponsorship/endorsement caused by the withdrawal of MN Atheists, should later seek out additional secular and/or religious sponsors/endorsers (as many attendees suggested SBS should do); or, instead seek to eliminate all sponsors/endorsers and instead try to expand SBS membership by direct recruitment (as Nualle and Amy suggested). Discussed Pros: Multiple sponsors/endorsers would be good for SBS. Our association with them has attracted -- and will continue to attract -- attention to the SBS Meetup website page, and will recruit new SBS members from within the sponsoring/endorsing groups themselves and from within the larger community that is aware of the sponsoring/endorsing groups. Also, multiple religious and secular sponsors would provide a more balanced religious-&-secular composition within SBS. Third, sponsors/endorsers can provide cash and Meetup website support (although Sorcha noted SBS members can also support the Meetup intermally.) Finally, it was noted by Frank that it would be impolitic to remove Trinity-UMC as a sponsor/endorser while it or its post-merger reincarnation is literally still hosting SBS, by providing its meeting locale; and that if SBS were to have Trinity-UMC as its lone sponsor/endorser without any secular co-sponsors/endorsers, it would make SBS appear to be a religiously-oriented group. Discussed Cons: Having plural sponsors/endorsers is not as good as having zero sponsors, because additional sponsors and their members joining SBS could risk shifting SBS's dynamic to that of proselytizing for particular beliefs (e.g., if a religious sponsor/endorser org were to be a very conservative church, rather than, say, a liberal church like Trinity-UMC; or, conversely, if SBS were to repopulate with members of a strong atheist org less willing to hear religious perspectives.)

SBS Attendee Vote (Unanimous):

- SBS will at present retain Trinity-UMC as its religious sponsor (as well as Meetup locale host.)
- SBS delegates to the SBS OrgCom the decision on whether to substitute The Circle of Reason as a replacement secular co-sponsor/endorser for the withdrawing MN Atheists.
- SBS OrgCom: The committee members later unanimously agreed to substitute The Circle of Reason for the lapsed MN Atheist secular sponsorship, in lieu of leaving SBS with only religious sponsorship by Trinity-UMC.
- SBS OrgCom: 4/8 committee members, as of 2/12/2010 (Nualle, Ken, Teresa, Frank), favor further outreach to other atheist & secular groups as additional prospective secular co-sponsors/endorsers.
- SBS OrgCom: Tabled the final decision on whether to keep long-term its present and potential future secular and religious co-sponsors/endorsers (e.g., pre- and post- merger Trinity-UMC, other

churches, St. Paul Interfaith Network/SPIN, TC-Atheists, Humanists of MN, Atheists for Human Rights, other metro freethinker groups, and The Circle of Reason.)

III. Discuss And Vote On New Discussion Topics And Moderators

Interested in presenting/moderating a future SBS Meetup topic (and what topic):

John: Can present various topics again beginning in May 2010.

Teresa: Creationism (have a degree in Zoology) and also misconceptions of both believers and atheists.

Dean (if in town): topics of translation, ethics and secular ethic systems, philosophy of religion (distinct from theology), and natural theology (including logical proofs of god's existence).

Nualle (later this year): The Communal Meal as a Central Practice of Early Christianity; Philo of Alexandria (in several months.)

Frank: The Influence of Biblical Belief in an Afterlife on History and Society; possibly also The Feminist Gospels.

Ken (any time he's in MN): Any sort of Bible-related or faith-related issues.

Keith: Mythology.

August: The Problem of Evil; The God of the Gaps. (These presentations would be greatly enhanced if I could find a religious person to partner with.)

Gordon (maybe): To explore members' beliefs -- what shaped them & their reasons for continuing to explore their beliefs & those of others. Would be done in an open forum with group sessions to test their ideas with each other, then having groups/individuals report back.

Lee: Book of Job (need at least 2 weeks to prepare.)

Barbara: My good friend, Dan Kent, is an adjunct professor of theology at Bethel so he's got a ton of great material for talks. He'd be a great one to have, if you're interested. [Frank heard Dan Kent on Theology Soup online, and Dan appeared a well-spoken, liberal religious speaker somewhat reminiscent of Chester.]

Matthew: Gays and Christianity.

Frank: It is also possible that we could solicit presenters/moderators from within the group of SBS members who've not yet attended to date -- like Kristine Holmgren, the former Strib writer and current Presbyterian pastor who also likes to attend atheist meetings to hear secular perspectives.

Frank: Also, if we assemble a volunteer co-organizer team, perhaps they would know of and/or be able to dig up and invite guest speakers, including religion educators or local biblical scholars in the larger religious and secular communities. For example, see Barbara's suggestion of Dan Kent, whose contact phone number has been provided by Barb for the SBS Meetup Organizer(s) files.

Nancy: There's a free online Old Testament Religious Studies class through Yale University ["Open Yale Courses"] that complements this Meetup topic very well. Here's the website:
<http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/introduction-to-the-old-testament-hebrew-bible/>

[Frank adds: There's also a "New Testament" Open Yale Course at the same site, at <http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/introduction-to-new-testament/>. Both Open Yale Courses provide a class summary, reading assignment, pdf handout, and html transcript, mp3 audio and Flash & Quicktime video of each lecture.]

Meetup Topic Website Suggestions:

Lee: *Discussions on the Book of Job*

The book of Job is one of the oldest books of the Bible. Some say it may be one of the first if not the first book written, possibly even older than the book of Genesis. What insight is the author trying to convey to us about the nature of the human condition? It would be interesting to see how believers and nonbelievers may agree or disagree about the ancient authors perceptions compared with contemporary perspectives. Seems like there are a variety of ways we could study this book from a secular perspective.

Keith: *Christian Church History Overview*

Discuss the evolution of early Christian movements of the 1st Century, through the formation of the Roman and Eastern Churches, through the Reformation, and the formation of the many new Christian groups in America born in the wake the Great Disappointment of the 1800's, the birth of American fundamentalism in response to Modernity, to the direction of Churches today. This could be span over several meetings, but would offer members the chance to relate our current culture and issues within the greater context of history and the influences of Christianity through Enlightenment down to today. An understanding like this could provide a larger context for discussions for those bringing different aspects of this to the table in our dialogs of diverse points of view.

Frank: *The Afterlife and Life*

Discussion of biblical, secular, historical and personal perspectives about how our attitudes about an "afterlife" or "multiple lives" affect world society and how we live our lives as individuals.

Former Member: *Astrology as an Ordering Principle of The Bible*

The evidence of astrology both in godly & demonic symbol and allegory is clearly seen in even the most cursory study of the Old and New Testaments. Why? And what has been and remains astrology's continuous role as a theological ordering principle throughout Jewish and Christian history and religious thought?

Former Member: *Bible Prophecy & End Times Scenes*

The history of bible prophecy, its relationship to the prophets' role, and the effect of its predictive accuracy (or lack thereof) to specific cultures.

Frank: *The Feminist Gospels*

A presentation and discussion of feminist texts in the Hebrew Bible, the canonical Old and New Testament, and apocryphal texts -- including the tales of Lilith in the Hebrew Bible; and the apocryphal "Gospel of Mary", "The Acts of Peter" (leading to his death in Rome for inducing Romans' wives to become celibate) and "The Acts of Paul and Thecla" (the virgin-celibate feminist saint and miracle-worker of the earliest church.)

Former Member: *How & Why Does Nature Exist?*

Do we perceive the existence of nature as random phenomena, divinely inspired purposeful creation or hold both possibilities as humanly experienced and observed via time-space continuous historical reality events?

Bjorn: *Topics for Discussion*

1. Feminist Perspective on Bible
2. American Religion
3. Heresies/Non-canonical books/Gnosticism
4. Process Theology
5. Eschatology
6. Belief/Epistemology/Metaphysics
7. Christianity and Other Religions
8. Book of Job
9. Book of Revelation
10. The Fundamentals of Christianity (Not Fundamentalism)
11. Talks from Christians who have become atheist and vice versa
12. First-Century Christianity
13. Theodicy
14. Theology of US Founders
15. Ethics of Christianity and Atheism
16. Theologies of Christianity
17. Mormonism
18. Fundamentalism

Chester & Grant: *Initial Outline of Topic Blocks* (Followed by Actual SBS Meetup Topics to Date)

Block 1: History and Culture

Formation of the Canon
Major Periods of History of Judah and Israel
Formation of Select Books of Bible Major
First Century Judaism

Block 2: Books of the Bible

Differences Between Translations
Book of Job
Book of James
Satan (interpreted by Rene Girard)

Block 3: Related Topics

Creationism/ID and Evolution and the Bible
Feminism and Women in the Bible
Homosexuality and the Bible
Theologies and Ethics of the Bible

Formation of books of the Bible

Formation of Canon: Paul's Letters
Stereotypes of Religious and Secular Groups
Relationship between the Sciences and Religion
Getting to Know Different Kinds of Atheism
Translation and the Bible
Genesis in Space and Time
An Anthropological Look at Satan and Myth
Exploring Ethics: Nonreligious & Religious Perspectives
Digging Deeper into Stereotypes
Mormonism
Early Christianity: Kingdom of God and The Q Documents
Early Christianity Part II: The Q Documents
Gnostic Christianity Part I
Gnostic Christianity Part II
Exploring Gnostic Christianity: The Gospel of Phillip
Ethics: Biological or Biblical?

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Genesis, the Enuma Elish, & Inner and Outer History

Other Suggestions Concerning SBS Meetups:

Lee: I do have a couple of suggestions for the subject matter and organization of future meetings: I would like to see us focus more on specific individual books of the Bible. The intent would be to focus on understanding the writings of the Bible from the author's perspective.

1. What may have been the conditions of the time that influenced the writings?
2. What is the current relevance today?
3. How do Believers and Non-believers of today find relevance in the writings?

4. I would like to see less mixing of believers and non-believers at individual group tables during meetings so that the differences or similarities in understandings between the groups can be more clearly identified and discussed.

Lee: Have a great meeting; wish I could be there. Hope there will be a short summary of discussions and decisions that result published on the website.

Dean: Offers these suggestions to maintain good future SBS attendance:

1. Avoid no (or poor) co-organizer (leadership) transitions and lack of communication to members.
2. Avoid long summer hiatuses and irregular scheduling gaps.
3. Consider weekly meetings (or at least meetings every other week without exception.)

Dale: I have enjoyed the meetings (perhaps the earlier ones more). It seems that each time there is something that clicks and makes it worthwhile.

Frank: Perhaps SBS would also want to recommit itself to being a secular-religious dialogue group (whether or not within its present context of being an academic bible study group), and so would want to try to invite more religious people to SBS, to restore the balance in its number of religious and secular attendees.

Matthew: Reminds us that other SBS members have called for increased social / ethnic / racial diversity in SBS -- which could be achieved by outreach to culturally distinct churches or religious houses.

Discussion:

Attendees agreed that one of the most attractive features of the Chester-&-Grant-organized SBS Meetups was their providing SBS a variety of expert guest speakers; and agreed the SBS OrgCom should seek to recreate that (and see more of them.) Amy proposed that a mix of experts and involved SBS members would be good, if the SBS members were also either experts or presented content that was vetted by experts on the SBS OrgCom. Keith voiced the concern that the SBS OrgCom should vet outlines of all speakers' talks, to ensure the talks would be adequately academic, saying, "Secular [Bible Study] means *critical scholarship*." However, Steve, Ken and others noted that SBS should invite outside and internal speakers to share their perspectives even when such perspectives might not be defensible by rigorously academic critical scholarship (such as in presentations that support a closely-held belief or premise, or during a speaker debate.) Steve added that SBS should be open to a wide range of topics and expertise levels, as long as we claim to respect divergent views. Teresa said SBS should exist in part to listen to even conservative religious views. Such openness, these SBS attendees claim, is a part of SBS's mission to share different perspectives of the Bible. All SBS attendees agreed on the popularity of the "speech + table-discussion" format of talks.

SBS Attendee Vote (Unanimous):

- SBS OrgCom will preview and invite agreed-upon guest expert speakers, cursorily vetting their handouts and/or speech outlines, while asking them to employ SBS's "speech + table-discussion" format.
- SBS OrgCom will preview and invite agreed-upon SBS member-speakers who intend to present reasoned topics even if they are not academic experts, and will vet their handouts

and/or speech outlines, while asking them to employ SBS's "speech + table-discussion" format.

- SBS OrgCom will also consider inviting speakers (whether guests or SBS members) who intend to present a particular oppositional perspective on a topic, if such presenters can present with a co-presenter who will present the opposing perspective (e.g., August would like to present topics on "The Problem of Evil" and "The God of the Gaps," from an atheist's perspective, but wishes to have a religious co-presenter to offer a religious counter-perspective or counter-arguments.)
- SBS topics can be on other subjects than the Bible -- but, if so, should refer back to biblical texts for the purpose of textual, philosophical, or theological comparison (e.g., a talk on the Koran, Bhagavad-Gita, Confucius, Greek Myths, or Buddhist Mahayana Sutras should refer to, or be contrasted with, biblical content or texts. Similarly, although biblical apocrypha, which can be considered to be early biblical texts, could presumably be presented in isolation, such presentations would likely be enriched by discussion of their historical relevance to biblical canon and/or the historical impact of their deletion from such canon -- one example being the early exclusion of the feminist gospels of Lilith, Mary, and Thecla from the Bible.)
- Proposed guest speakers and in-house volunteer speakers for SBS OrgCom consideration are (as of Feb 12, 2010):

Proposed Guest Speakers

1. Dan Kent, Adjunct Professor of Theology, Bethel Seminary, past speaker on Theology Soup (a local online radio program). (Recommended by Barbara, who says, "He's got a ton of great material for talks. He'd be a great one to have, if you're interested.")

2. Nate Ramsayer, Instructor, Experimental College of the Twin Cities, past speaker at the Science and Religion Lunch Seminar at NDSU, currently attending the U of M. (Recommended by Kent, who says, "In fact, I would like to plug his class -- it is called 'Introduction to the Bible: Historical Context of Ancient Israelite Scripture,' and information on it is available at www.excotc.org. I believe that Nathan would consider himself to be an atheist, although I honestly do not think that this has much of a bearing on his actual presentations. I can personally vouch for the high quality of his presentation.")

3. Rev. Chad Koppes, Prospect Park United Methodist Church. (Recommended by Dean, who says, "Prospect Park is a very progressive inclusive church. Chad has a background in philosophy and knows his existentialism well, especially Kierkegaard, the founder and most religious of the existentialists. But I think he just had a kid, so he might be busy/unavailable for a while.")

4. Rev. Bob Taylor, Presbyterian pastor. (Recommended by Dean, who says, "My childhood pastor. Very traditional/conservative, but still a good guy, honest in his beliefs, and able to speak with me without trying to convert/return me to the fold.")

5. Rev. Tom Trapp, Lutheran pastor. (Recommended by Dean, who says, "Again, very conservative. But he is perhaps the best versed most knowledgeable person about the Bible, what it says, and all the notes about it, that I have ever met. I wouldn't be surprised if he could recite the whole Bible from memory. Part of this is that he also knows all the original texts and translations. He frequently travels abroad, and may be able to speak about either translation issues or historical contexts.")

6. Kristine Holmgren, Presbyterian Pastor, Former Strib Columnist, SBS non-attending member, and attendee of other secular atheist Meetups. (Recommended by Frank.)

SBS Members Volunteering as Speakers

7. John Gustav-Wrathhall, Adjunct Professor, United Theological Seminary, can return May 2010 as a Speaker-Moderator.

8. Dean Berzins, Graduate Student, Philosophy Dept, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

9. Keith Johnsen

10. Ken Meyer

11. Nualle Schallenberger

12. Gordon Donnelly

13. Lee Snetting

14. August Berkshire

15. Matthew Richardson

16. Teresa Klostreich

17. Frank Burton

IV. Discuss and Vote on New Activities

Shawn: *Social meet-and-greet discussion without set topic or verse.*

I think it would be nice just to sit and talk -- perhaps over beers/sodas. [Lee, Keith, Sonya, Michelle, Frank also liked this suggestion.]

Sonja: *Movies?*

I'd love to watch movies with a message and discuss them realizing that we will have a variety of interpretations.

Frank: *Other Texts?*

We should discuss whether SBS would also be interested in studying and discussing additional texts --such as the Muslim *Koran*, Hebrew *Tanakh*, Hindu *Bhagavad Gita*, *Analects of Confucius*, and Buddhist *Mahayana Sutras*.

Prior SBS Poll: *What would increase your likelihood of attending more meetings? (SBS has seen attendance drop to about half of usual attendance. The organizers would like to find out why.)* 19 SBS Members Responded:

Expert outside speakers (Biblical scholars, theologians, archeologists, sociologists): 8 votes (42%)

More interesting topics: 2 votes (11%)

Different location: 7 votes (37%)

Different time/day of the week: 7 votes (37%)

More focus on the Bible: 5 votes (26%)

Less focus on the Bible: 0 votes (0%)
Topics lead by group members rather than experts: 3 votes (16%)
More atheist topics: 0 votes (0%)
More Christian topics: 2 votes (11%)
Topics on other religions: 6 votes (32%)
Less formal meeting structures: 3 votes (16%)
Duplicate meetings (same topic, but more than one location and day): 2 votes (11%)

Discussion:

Most SBS members thought the SBS Meetup should remain a formal “secular bible study”; where any non-Bible topics should relate back to the biblical texts; and where social meet-and-greets or movie-discussions, if they occur at all, should be spontaneous (informal) meetings called from within the membership (e.g., spin-off informal groups for beer, etc.), and called for non-conflicting times and locales. A minority of members thought additional volunteer and/or meet-and-greet activities would be beneficial, but agreed they could be allowed to arise organically from within the membership. Frank reminded SBS members that any future local Circle of Reason-Minneapolis would not only recommend its members also join SBS, and schedule its own events for days other than those for SBS Meetups, but could provide some of the proposed fellowship activities SBS programmatically declines.

SBS Attendee Vote (Majority):

- SBS OrgCom will stick to formally organizing only secular bible study meetups.
- SBS OrgCom will not preclude other SBS members from internally organizing additional member-activities that don't conflict with the regular schedule of SBS Meetups. (Frank, as SBS Meetup Webmaster, will discuss with SBS OrgCom how best to allow SBS members to use the website's message board or other ancillary capabilities, or Amy's linked web forum for SBS members, to internally organize spontaneous activities without misrepresenting them as formal SBS Meetups.)
- SBS OrgCom authorizes Amy to investigate setting up an ancillary webforum to permit remote SBS members to converse about SBS and its topics.

V. Discuss and Vote on New Locales or Times

Sonja: It looks like people are having difficulty getting to the location/being available on the nights when the study takes place. I'd love to be more involved, but the timing and place are difficult for me...could we meet in the *south metro*?

Jeff: Suggests the SBS Organizing Meetup discuss siting future SBS Meetups at "Java Jack's" Cafe (*South Mpls*, near Bryant and 46th, in the Lake Harriet area -- a straight shot west from I-35W.) Anyone been there and know if it's quiet on Tuesdays and has a back room for meetups? Other SBS members have also asked us to consider centrally-located and non-"church-smelling" (non-musty) locales. Any suggestions besides Java Jack's, or our first meeting locale, Diamonds Cafe (in NE Mpls)?

Also from Jeff: I've been in touch with Lucy Bacon (who owns the [*NE Mpls*] Diamonds Coffee Shop, where we first started out), and she seems supportive of having the group back again. That "hallway" area probably can't hold more than 15-20 people, but with our turnout it hasn't been much more than that anyway. I will also check out Java Jacks, and also "Lisa's" (?) farther north on Central Ave.

Frank, for Corinne: A new SBS member who showed up last Meetup only to leave a few minutes later, Corinne told Frank she had to leave because of the musty aroma in the old church. She would thus prefer alternate, coffee shop-like locales.

Sonja: A *weekend day*? Please? Please?

Discussion:

Most SBS members thought SBS should continue meeting every other Tuesday, but without any summer hiatus or other significant scheduling gaps that might interrupt attendance habits; and that SBS should continue using the Trinity-UMC locale as long as it remains available. It was said by Teresa that many original attendees of the first SBS Meetup in Feb 2009 (the one reported in the *Star-Tribune*) complained that same night that they wouldn't be able to come to subsequent Tuesday night meetings due to workweek constraints; and Frank confirmed that other non-attending SBS members even now say they're unable to attend meetings on Tuesday night, or can't make the Trinity-UMC locale. But most members felt that any change in date would simply create a different excluded group of SBS members, and that the benefits of the Trinity-UMC locale outweighed its potential drawbacks.

SBS Attendee Vote (Majority):

- SBS instructs the SBS OrgCom to schedule SBS Meetups on a regular, non-interrupted basis.
- SBS's Meetup schedule is to remain an (uninterrupted) every-other-Tuesday schedule.
- SBS OrgCom will continue calling for the SBS Meetups to be held at Trinity-UMC until that locale becomes unavailable.
- SBS OrgCom's "in-person" committee meetings must not time-conflict with the every-other Tuesday, 7-9 pm, SBS Meetup schedule.
- SBS OrgCom's "in-person" committee meetings may be held at future possible SBS Meetup locales (e.g., Java Jack's in SE Mpls, Diamonds Café in NE Mpls), to help the SBS OrgCom scout out the best ones.