

Report on 2009 Midwest SBL Meeting to Section Leaders

- **Attendance.** Attendance and participation was significantly up from our meeting in 2008: **94** registered with MWSBL and AOS, and **63** for SRSC. Twenty-eight of the SRSC registrants registered also for SBL. All of the Graduate Student Paper Competition contestants chose to attend SBL. The banquet drew 94, 69 for MWSBL and 25 for SRSC (2007: 45)
- **General Impressions.** Posting the SBL materials on the National SBL website may have helped boost the number. Student network is getting stronger. Students generally find the atmosphere friendly. **Alec J. Lucas** will take over David Creech's position as coordinator for student lunch. 30 students attended the student luncheon this year. Student papers were of very good quality. Well-published, senior scholars' presence may have also encouraged students to attend.
- **Target groups** (younger scholars, women) are significantly boosting their participation. We had significantly more senior scholars this year, as well as more Asians and one black. More work needs to be done to get more African American scholars involved in the Region SBL. Topics such as liberation, perhaps, could appear in our program to attract them to the meeting.
 - o **Canadian Student Paper Competition.** Midwest SBL started a paper competition in the Toronto (Canada) area to attract Canadian grad school students to our region: Ellen White of Tyndale University College organized this activity. **Jean-Pierre Fortin**, this year's winner, and his wife came and presented a paper at SRSC. Mr. Fortin may be asked to be the next year's organizer.
 - o **Larry Lahey** brought 10 students from Tulane University in New Orleans. Larry is leaving Tulane this year.
- **SBL/AOS/ASOR** There were 53 papers total, a number that includes 35 SBL papers and the two grad school award-winning papers.
- **SRSC.** 26 papers were presented in the annual "Student Religious Studies Conference." About 69 people attended the meeting on Friday.
- **Women.** 10 women attended the Women Scholars Lunch (Maybe do breakfast). 29 women attended SBL.
- **Lunch Meetings.** About 30 people attended the "Graduate Student Professional Development Seminar," sponsored by the SBL Student Advisory Group. **David Creech** was proactive in contacting students, which helped to swell the number of participants at this year's luncheon. This meeting, however, conflicted with women's lunch.
- **Panel on Censorship.** There were 17 people present at the panel on censorship, not including **Holly Hearon**, the convener, and the panelists. The papers

- generated a good 20 minutes of conversation, and the applause at the end suggested that it had gone well. The conversation raised concerns about publishing (liable suits; the economic situation leading to people being more cautious in their writing in order to retain or gain jobs), ways in which people perceive they are being censored (the imposition of 'inclusive language' standards), and the role of public pressure in determining and enforcing standards that lead to voluntary or forced censorship. **Hearon** feels that people would be interested in 'special interest' panels of this kind in the future.
- **Midwest SBL and AOS/ASOR** will explore ways to move administrative responsibilities of organizing the annual meeting to SBL to facilitate continuity in programming, expansion of participation, and shared financial load. Budget and written policies will be worked out between AOS and SBL.
 - **Ken Way**, last year's nominee for Regional Scholar, was named "SBL Scholar of the Year" last fall.
 - **Theme for next year's plenary session** (2010): "Social Identity Textual"
 - o Next year's meeting will be on Feb 12-14 at Valparaiso, Valparaiso, Indiana, about an hour southeast of Chicago.
 - o We will host our fourth annual Student Religious Studies Conference" again next year: Feb 12 during the day at the SBL meeting site.
 - Eric Mason (Judson University) will continue to serve as chair of the SRSC
 - o All info for next year's meeting (and special programs and awards) will be uploaded as it is available at <http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/default.aspx>.
 - **Individual Section Leaders' Reports:**
 - o The *Gospels and Acts* section had an enormous turnout.
 - o A new section *Hebrews and General Epistles* will be added with Eric Mason as the chair.
 - o *Hebrew Bible* had 9 papers. The room was packed. The papers were good.
 - o AOS sessions were organized round the papers that came in. Had very good attendance.
 - o *Bible Meaning through Time and Tradition*: Next year's theme will be "Suzanna." 17 people showed up for the 2 papers.
 - o *Early Christian Literature*: Next year's theme will be "Post NT Christology." 6 papers were presented. They were of good quality. The attendance was good.
 - o *Pauline Epistolary Literature*: Next year's theme will be "Paul and Social Identity." 7 papers were presented this year. Attendance tended to be small.
 - o *Gender Studies*: Theme was "Gender in the Ancient World." The section is looking for better ways to attract participation.

- *Apocrypha and Cognate Literature*: 8 persons came for each of the two papers. This is about twice what it was last year. There was no theme this year. No theme has been decided for next year.
 - *Teaching the Bible*: Only 5 people attended the session. Nonetheless, there was a very lively conversation that ran the full 90 minutes. The group expressed interest in keeping the section going and liked the conversational/discussion format as opposed to formal presentations. Holly Hearon will compile a list of topics that she might follow-up with next and to circulate these to the group. A couple of the topics included tools for evaluating students' learning and the best uses of inductive and deductive methods.
- **Regional Scholar.** Ellen White was nominated as the Regional Scholar.
 - **New officers** for SBL: Mark Whitters (Pres); Clare Rothchild (VP), Richard Choi (coordinator)
 - **Grad Student Paper Competition.**
 - This year's winners were **Daniel M. O'Hare of the University of Notre Dame** ("Exegetical Pluses in the Vorlage of LXX Ezekiel 40-48") and **Alec J. Lucas of Loyola University Chicago** (Evocations of the Characteristic Calf Rebellion: Romans 2:5-11 and LXX Deuteronomy 9:1-10:22)
 - Next year's winning papers should be integrated into the regular session. 30 minutes should be adequate to present their papers. In their time slots, introduce new sessions called "**Region's Distinguished Scholars.**" Have a one hour paper session each for HB and NT.
 - **Paper Quality**
 - Discussion: Paper quality this year was very good, so our efforts seem to be paying off.
 - The SRSC featured "knock out" papers. Paper quality was impressive. Conversations were very good.
 - **Recognition.** This will be **Michael Fox's** last meeting. He is retiring and moving to Israel. We wish him and his wife well.