

Dear Members of the Midwest Region,

We are pleased to invite you to the 2015 Joint Annual Meeting of the Midwest Region of the Society of Biblical Literature, the Middle West Branch of the American Oriental Society, and the American Schools of Oriental Research-Midwest. The meeting is scheduled for **Friday-Sunday, February 6-8, 2015**, at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois. Please see the region's website ([http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/rm\\_midwest.aspx](http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/rm_midwest.aspx)) for hotel information and the Olivet Nazarene University website for maps (<http://www.olivet.edu/campus-map/pdf>). The region also hosts the Student Religious Studies Conference (SRSC), scheduled for Friday, February 6. Please see more information on the SRSC below.

The officers of the societies invite you to **submit paper proposals for the region meeting by Monday, December 8, 2014**. We do not intend to extend the proposal deadline this year, so please be sure to act by this date. (The SRSC has a different schedule for proposals; see below.) Program decisions will be communicated no later than January 10, 2015. Please see the section descriptions document at the region's website for information on proposals and section descriptions. Also, please note that paper proposals will be submitted through an online form, available at <http://goo.gl/forms/Pn9HVfXMgb>. Please do not send paper proposals to section chairs.

Registration will again be available online at the region's website (see link above). **Registration should open on December 8, 2014, and close on February 2, 2015**. We strongly encourage everyone to utilize this online registration option. A \$10 fee will be added for on-site registrations, and these should be paid by check.

### **Theme and Schedule Highlights for the 2015 Meeting**

**Plenary Session:** The theme for the meeting is "**Negotiating Diversity**," and the Friday evening plenary session is organized by AOS/ASOR. Additional information about the plenary session participants will be distributed later.

**Midwest SBL Regional Spotlight:** This Saturday afternoon session, now in its fourth year, features a presentation and question-and-answer period with a prominent scholar from our region. Our speaker this year is **David E. Aune**, the Walter Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, emeritus, at the University of Notre Dame. The title of his presentation is "Confessions of a Parallelomanic."

**Presidential Address:** AOS President **Mark A. Chavalas** (University of Wisconsin-La Crosse) will deliver the 2015 presidential address at the Saturday evening banquet. His title is "Herodotus and Babylonian Women."

**Book Review Session:** The subject of the annual SBL book review session is *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of Their Early Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2013), by **Gary N. Knoppers** (University of Notre Dame). Everyone is welcome, but we especially

invite attendees to read the book in advance of the meeting and join the discussion at this Sunday morning session.

**Program Units:** The 2015 program includes thirteen SBL sections along with the AOS/ASOR section. We now have three Hebrew Bible sections: Pentateuch, Former and Latter Prophets, and the Writings. (The latter replaces the Psalms and Wisdom Literature section.) Please see the section descriptions document at the region's website for more information.

**Midwest SBL Graduate Student Paper Competition:** Up to two prizes of \$300 each will be awarded for outstanding papers by doctoral students, typically one for a paper in Hebrew Scriptures/Ancient Near Eastern Studies and another for a paper in New Testament/Christian Origins. See the region's website for additional information. Entries must be received by **December 1, 2014**.

**Midwest SBL Regional Scholar Award:** This program honors outstanding early career scholars who are at least ABD but no more than four years past receipt of the Ph.D. The candidate selected by the region will receive a prize of \$400 and advances for consideration as a national SBL honoree for the following year. See the region's website for additional information. Please note that various application materials are due at different times, with **the first deadline scheduled for December 8, 2014**.

**Student Religious Studies Conference:** The SRSC, now in its ninth year, meets during the day (beginning at 10 a.m.) on Friday, February 6, 2015, and concludes before the opening session of the regional meeting that evening. The conference provides an excellent opportunity for students to present their work and network with people from other institutions and program levels. Please encourage your students (undergraduate through pre-dissertation doctoral) to attend and especially to present papers at this conference on topics spanning Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, New Testament, Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism, patristics and early Christianity, theology, historical studies, and comparative religions. **Proposals are due by January 10, 2015, and must include the complete paper.** The paper proposal form and an information poster are available at the region's website. Please direct any SRSC questions to the new coordinator, Darrell Cosden ([Midwest.SBL.SRSC@gmail.com](mailto:Midwest.SBL.SRSC@gmail.com)).

The joint annual meeting offers a wonderful opportunity to meet new colleagues, see old friends, try out research ideas, and enjoy a lively exchange in a friendly environment. All students, professors, and others interested in biblical studies and study of the ancient world are welcome. Please feel free to contact me at the email address below with any questions.

Sincerely,

Eric F. Mason  
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