

SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE ICI REPORT FOR AUGUST 2014

(a) THE NEXT SBL INTERNATIONAL MEETING

We are very excited about the fact that the next SBL International Meeting will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 20-24 July 2015. It would be good to see scholars from all over the world attending this meeting, in order to deliberate and interact with our colleagues from Latin-America!

(b) SBL ANNUAL MEETING IN SAN DIEGO, CA

The SBL Annual Meeting will take place in San Diego, California, from 22-26 November. The Call for Papers is closed, and the online program book is available now.

See: http://sbl-site.org/meetings/Congresses_ProgramBook.aspx?MeetingId=25

Registration and accommodation bookings are open. See the following link:

http://sbl-site.org/meetings/meetings_registrationAM.aspx

An **ICI forum meeting** will again be held at the San Diego conference, where any interested person will be welcome to join us to share their ideas and views on how the work of the ICI can be expanded/improved. The meeting will take place on SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER at 09:30-10:30AM in Room 310 B (Level 3 Aqua) - Hilton Bayfront (HB). We look forward to meeting you there!

(c) OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE PART IN SBL ANNUAL MEETING THROUGH WEBEX VIDEO CONFERENCING

Liaisons who are interested in hosting, or facilitating others in hosting, a group of scholars and/or students to **participate in a session from the Annual Meeting via Webex video conference** should contact [Leigh Andersen](#). There are openings for participation in sessions scheduled for Sunday 23 November at 9:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 4:00 pm and on Monday 24 November at 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm (times are all Pacific Standard Time; please take this into account when requesting a session). **The deadline has been extended to September 9**. Slots for participation will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. The SBL technology staff will work with the groups to determine if their internet connections are sufficient for participation.

The goal of this project is to make some of the scholarship and discussion that is presented at the Annual Meeting available to students and scholars who would not have an opportunity to participate otherwise. In 2013, we successfully transmitted six sessions via Webex conferencing over the internet to eleven ICI countries on three continents. We are using what we learned to improve the process for the 2014 meeting.

One of last year's participants writes, "It is our general consensus that the programme is very rewarding and it has opened to us a wider experience of international scholarship in Biblical Studies." We hope that you will choose to be part of this "wider experience" in your institution!

(d) PUBLICATION IN ANEM/MACO

ANEM/MACO is a series that was established by the SBL at the request of the International Cooperation Initiative (ICI), and which is co-edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Roxanna Flammini. The series publishes volumes on the Ancient Near East (including ancient Israel) electronically and makes them freely available for download. (Paperback and hardback versions of the volumes are available too, for a reasonable price.) Any work published in ANEM/MACO is freely available in electronic version to anyone in perpetuity. To view the volumes published in the series, please go to http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books_ANEmonographs.aspx

The latest volume in ANEM/MACO is:

Divination, Politics, & Ancient Near Eastern Empires

Edited by Alan Lenzi and Jonathan Stökl

This collection examines the ways that divinatory texts in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East undermined and upheld the empires in which the texts were composed, edited, and read. Nine essays and an introduction engage biblical scholarship on the Prophets, Assyriology, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the critical study of Ancient Empires.

Features:

- Interdisciplinary approaches include propaganda studies
- Essays examine how biblical and other ancient Near Eastern texts were shaped by political and theological empires
- Index of ancient sources

To download the book for free, paste the following link into your browser:

http://sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/9781589839984_OA.pdf

(e) PUBLICATION IN IVBS

IVBS is a series that was established by the SBL at the request of the International Cooperation Initiative (ICI), and which is co-edited by Monica Melanchthon and Jione Havea. IVBS encourages in particular submissions from scholars in the present seven international regions for which it has editorial boards: Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East-South Asia, Northeast Asia, Pacific, and Southeast Asia. Interregional collaborations are also welcome. IVBS publishes works in English and in any other language for which its editors can find qualified peer reviewers. Any work published in IVBS is freely available to anyone in perpetuity. The series publishes work generally in the area of reception history and criticism. The scope is not limited to any particular biblical text or historical timeframe. The works will mainly be published in English and, wherever possible, also in primary languages of authors. For more information please go to <http://ivbs.sbl-site.org/home.aspx>. If you would consider publishing your work in this series, feel free to contact one of the two general editors, [Monica Melanchthon](#) or [Jione Havea](#).

(f) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – NEW BOOKS ADDED

(For the full list, please go to http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books_ICIbooks.aspx)

Fragile Dignity: Intercontextual Conversations on Scriptures, Family, and Violence

Claassens, L. Juliana and Klaas Spronk. *Fragile Dignity: Intercontextual Conversations on Scriptures, Family, and Violence*. Semeia Studies, 72. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Human dignity insists that every human deserves respect and a safe place to live. For many, this is not a reality. The essays collected here analyze the background of this problem in contemporary family life and society at large, with special emphasis on the role of women and on the Bible as a source of inspiration and transformation. The collection is the product of a six-year conversation on family, violence, and human dignity between the Protestant Theological University in Kampen, The Netherlands, and the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, a North-South dialogue that included annual conferences, a series of responsive letters, and additional external responses. The contributors are Cheryl B. Anderson, Hendrik Bosman, Gerrit Brand,

Athalya Brenner, L. Juliana Claassens, Dorothea Erbele-Küster, Leo J. Koffeman, Frits de Lange, Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon, Magda Misset-van de Weg, Beverly Eileen Mitchell, Anne-Claire Mulder, Ian Nell, Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel, Jeremy Punt, Petruschka Schaafsma, D. Xolile Simon, Lee-Ann J. Simon, Gé Speelman, Klaas Spronk, Ciska Stark, Elsa Tamez, Charlene van der Walt, Robert Vosloo, and Yusef Waghid.

Left Behind and the Evangelical Imagination

Gribben, Crawford and Mark S. Sweetnam, eds. *Left Behind and the Evangelical Imagination*. Bible in the Modern World, 35. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

Left Behind – twelve novels that dramatize one evangelical perspective on the end of the world – is now established as the best-selling fictional series in American literary history. But it has been met with a range of critical receptions. This volume gathers essays by new and established critics of the series to interrogate the series' significance and its cultural and commercial success, and includes, for the first time, a response to these criticisms written on behalf of one of the series' authors.

Mark S. Sweetnam considers the challenge that the organically theological nature of Left Behind has posed for cultural scholars. Amy Frykholm situates the novels' discussion of gender within wider traditions of sentimental and domestic fiction. Jennie Chapman nuances the general assumption that the series' conspiracy plots have been poached from secular accounts of subversion that emerged from the radical Right. Crawford Gribben contextualizes the treatment of Jews and Muslims in the rapture fiction tradition. Jarlath Killeen identifies a profoundly ambiguous attitude to Catholicism in the novels, accounted for by the emergence of lobbying and campaigning alliances between evangelicals and Catholics on a range of social issues. John Walliss outlines the manner in which rapture films speak to an evangelical audience, and addresses the failure of these films to gain significant crossover appeal. Katie Sturm interrogates the series' ecumenical reflections. Marisa Ronan traces the role of Christian fiction in the shaping of evangelical identity. Thomas Ice addresses the theological background of the novels. Writing on behalf of Jerry B. Jenkins, Kevin Zuber responds to the criticisms provided by the volume's contributors.

Network Apocalypse: Visions of the End in an Age of Internet Media

Howard, Robert Glenn, ed. *Network Apocalypse: Visions of the End in an Age of Internet Media*. Bible in the Modern World, 36. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

In the twenty-first century, religious belief is undergoing change, driven in part by new communication technologies. Such technologies have often given rise to notable

changes in religion, some of the most revolutionary of them being apocalyptic in character. What, then, is the nature of the changes in religious belief created or enabled by the Internet?

In this collection, the first of its kind, nine scholars consider whether the empowerment offered by Internet communication generally encourages the exchange of ideas or whether, rather, it allows individuals to seal themselves off into ideological ghettos of the like-minded. These nine essays explore those possibilities by documenting and analysing the diversity of apocalyptic belief online.

Andrew Fergus Wilson looks at those using the Internet to explore the syncretism that lies at the heart of the 'cultic milieu'. William A. Stahl examines the online discourse about climate change to find the apocalyptic structures undergirding it. Dennis Beesley examines End Times discourse on the video sharing Web site YouTube. J.L. Schatz explores how the apocalyptic imaginings of science fiction set the trajectory of our shared future. Amarnath Amarasingam documents how the Internet is encouraging the belief that President Barack Obama is the Antichrist. Salvador Jimenez Murguia analyses an Internet-based service offered to those wishing to communicate with their loved ones who might be 'left behind' after the anticipated 'Rapture'. David Drissel documents how social networking facilitates connections among Muslims who share a belief in a nearing apocalypse. James Schirmer examines an apocalyptic computer game individuals use to explore personal ethics. Robert Glenn Howard documents the first Internet-based new religious movement—reflected in the beliefs of the suicidal 1997 'Heaven's Gate' group, extant in their archived websites.

Adam and Eve in the Armenian Tradition, Fifth through 17th Centuries

Stone, Michael E., *Adam and Eve in the Armenian Tradition, Fifth through 17th Centuries*. Early Judaism and Its Literature, 38. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

The Adam and Eve stories are a foundational myth in the Jewish and Christian worlds, and the way they were recounted reveals a great deal about those doing the retelling. How did the Armenians retell these stories? What values do these retellings express about men and women, their life in the world, sin and redemption? Presented here are twelve hundred years of Armenian telling of the Genesis 1–3 stories in an unparalleled collection of all significant narratives of Adam and Eve in Armenian literature—prose and poetry, homilies and commentaries, calendary and mathematical texts—from its inception in the fifth century to the seventeenth century. This seminal resource contributes to the lively current discussion of how biblical and apocryphal traditions

were retold, embroidered, and transformed into the lenses through which the Bible itself was read.

(g) JBL ARCHIVE

Take note that an archive with JBL articles from volume 122.1 of 2003 through volume 130.1 of 2011 is now available online to people accessing the SBL website from any ICI country. See http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/ICI_JBLarchive.aspx. All articles in those volumes can be downloaded for free!

(h) EVENTS

The SBL maintains a significant list of events taking place anywhere in the globe. For the full list please go to <http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/events.aspx>

A selection of events is listed below—mainly those taking place in ICI regions.

Please provide information on conferences in your region, including calls for papers, to Sharon Johnson at sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org.

October 9-10, 2014

International Theological Conference “The Knowledge of God: East and West. Dogmatic and Spiritual Dimensions”

The Conference intends to be a theological forum for Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Protestant theologians to discuss different approaches to the “knowledge of God” based on Western and Eastern traditions. The Conference will take place at the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology of the Ukrainian Catholic University, L’viv, Khutorivka St. 35a.

[More information](#)

November 22-25, 2014

[SBL Annual Meeting](#)

The SBL Annual Meeting is the largest gathering of biblical scholars in the world. Each meeting showcases the latest in biblical research, fosters collegial contacts, advances research, and focuses on issues of the profession. The Annual Meeting will be held in San Diego, California. (See note above about accommodation sharing.)

May 7-9, 2015**East-West Theological Forum**

The 4th conference of the East-West Theological Forum will be held on 7-9 May 2015 at Sogang University, Seoul, Korea. The 2015 conference has been called for on the theme: "Crisis and Hope: The Church in a Changing World". We cordially invite you to our coming conference and to submit papers for EWTF Prize (10,000 US\$) or proposals for parallel session. [More information](#)

(i) SBL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FREELY AVAILABLE

There are links to numerous educational resources on the SBL website. The following are freely available: (i) Resources on Teaching the Bible; (ii) Freely downloadable Hebrew, Greek and Transliteration fonts (amongst others); (iii) Resources on Bible translations and commentaries; and (iv) Research tool resources.

See <http://sbl-site.org/educational/default.aspx>

The exiting news was also received recently that the newly-developed **Bible Odyssey** online portal had been launched now. See www.bibleodyssey.org.

(j) PLEASE PASS THE INFORMATION.

It is surprising that we continue to have correspondence from scholars in ICI countries that are just learning about the ICI programs. Please share this newsletter with your colleagues and students and become a liaison for your institution and SBL. (Please contact our liaison officer, [Tim Langille](#), if you would like to assist as contact person in your region.) Your advocacy for ICI strengthens biblical studies as a discipline and builds relationships in the global community. Thank you for those who have done so in the past—we also receive letters from people who received the newsletter from someone else.

With best wishes for your Bible scholarship!

Louis Jonker, SBL – International Cooperation Initiative