

SBL SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Joint Statement by the Society of Biblical Literature and InterVarsity Press 30 October 2016

The Society of Biblical Literature and InterVarsity Press have been in conversation regarding the exhibition of IVP books at the Annual Meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion. This joint meeting is the largest academic conference for the study of religion and religious texts within the context of the humanities and social science disciplines. The exhibit hall is the largest annual bookstore for biblical scholarship and religious studies. A recent InterVarsity Christian Fellowship reaffirmation of theological positions that can impact employees raised concerns for SBL regarding IVP's commitment to critical discourse.

Speaking on behalf of IVP, Jeff Crosby, IVP Publisher, stated: "InterVarsity Press has an historic commitment to peer-reviewed scholarship. This scholarship focuses on historical, textual, and theological subjects from multiple, competing, and even contradictory points of view—and IVP's publications have done so in thoughtful and civil ways. IVP understands that SBL has expressed concern that our internal personnel policy might have an effect on the practice of critical scholarship and the expression of ideas. However, it should be understood that IVP remains committed to the free exchange of ideas in its books, even engagement with ideas that challenge IVCF as an organization. IVP also recognizes that participation in the SBL forum necessitates dialogic discourse. Indeed, IVP remains committed to the ongoing diversity of its program and to fostering the type of critical engagement that both affirms and challenges ideas."

SBL Executive Director, John Kutsko, has responded as follows: "The Society of Biblical Literature seeks to advance academic study of biblical texts and their contexts as well as of the traditions and contexts of biblical interpretation—both secular and religious. It does so by facilitating broad and open discussion from a variety of critical perspectives. SBL recognizes InterVarsity Press's historic willingness to engage in the frank and open critique of many theological and social issues, including positions it holds. Further, SBL commends IVP for affirming its ongoing commitment to self-reflection and the free exchange of ideas. This is a bedrock principle of scholarship and essential to the environment SBL seeks to create with organizations and groups that participate in its meetings. SBL remains unwavering in its expectation that all groups participating in its meetings permit free expression and promote the critique necessary for the advancement of knowledge."

These statements address SBL's concern regarding IVP's commitment to critical discourse.