

Seventh Annual

**STUDENT RELIGIOUS
STUDIES CONFERENCE**

Friday, February 8, 2013
Olivet Nazarene University
Bourbonnais, Illinois

Sponsored by the

**MIDWEST REGION SOCIETY OF
BIBLICAL LITERATURE**

Program

Registration

9:00-11:00 a.m./3rd Floor Burke Administration Building

Plenary Session

10:00-10:30 a.m./Burke 307

Chairs: Prof. Troy W. Martin and Dr. Jeremy Miselbrook

Session Ia **Discipleship, Ministry, and Christian Practice**

10:30-12:00 noon/Burke 403

Chair: Carolyn Love, Loyola University Chicago

Kayla Witcik, Wheaton College

Mary as a Slave to the Lord: An Exegesis of Luke 1: 39-56

The nature of Luke's writing is characterized by a great emphasis on the preference for the lowly and oppressed, the expression of joy, the model of discipleship, and the preference for women. The conditions for women in the 1st century world were very difficult, particularly for the women who were slaves. Although in comparison with the conditions of the 1st century world it may seem paradoxical, Luke 1:39-56 shows that Mary was able to find complete joy and satisfaction while enslaved to God, as evidenced through her manners of self-expression and her model for discipleship.

Madison N. Pierce, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

With a Little Help from Paul's Friends: Romans 16 as the Way Forward for Women in Ministry

It is a common hermeneutical principle that one ought to use "clear" texts to interpret the "unclear." This practice, though widely accepted, is often disregarded when it comes to the "women in ministry" debate. This paper will demonstrate the relative lexical and syntactic clarity of Romans 16 to these other texts, and thus advocate that it should be interpretive key in this discussion. Beginning with Romans 16 also allows significant females in Paul's ministry—Phoebe, Prisca, and Junia—to be afforded the freedom that the text allows, before they are diminished by difficult texts like 1 Tim 2:8-15.

Cooper H. Flatoff, Judson University

Transformational Eating: The Eucharistic Table Manners of Norman Wirzba

The Eucharist is one of the Christian Faith's most theologically foundational sacraments. Members of each Christian group gather in communion to practice this sacramental meal. Norman Wirzba's "Eucharistic table manners" model not only describes why the church practices a communal meal as a liturgical sacrament but also requires Christians to change the way they eat to rebuild damaged – while rebuilding new – communion between humans and other humans, Christ, and God's creation. Though Wirzba's model is impractical because it demands widespread adoption of agrarian practice, Wirzba's agrarian ideals can be applied to develop urban agriculture as a practical, temporary treatment to humanity's theologically destitute eating habits.

Session Ib **New Testament: Acts and Pauline Epistles**

10:30-12:00 noon/Burke 413

Chair: Jenny De Vivo, Loyola University Chicago

Jeffrey M. Tripp, Loyola University Chicago

The Corrupting Power of Temples in Acts: Riots in Ephesus and Jerusalem

Toward the end of Acts, Paul's teaching causes riots in two cities: Ephesus and Jerusalem. These narratives share many verbal and structural links, yet they are rarely read in tandem. The similarities between the stories form an argument against temples as the proper place of worship, which in Acts is rather the house. In both cases it is the temples which cause disorder and intolerance of the Way. The differences help to explain to Acts' late first century audience why the great temple of the Gentiles still stands while the great temple of the Jews has been destroyed.

Najeeb Haddad, Loyola University Chicago

Living According to the Spirit: The Role of the Spirit in Romans 8:1-17

For Paul, possession of the Holy Spirit creates a new relationship with God the Father. It is because of the possession of the Spirit, that the "adoption of sons" becomes possible. In essence, the possession of the Spirit is the ultimate expression in emulating Christ. The indwelling of the Spirit is a very real thing for Paul. It is the Spirit, for Paul, which is the driving force of the Christian life. It is the indwelling of the Spirit in contrast with the "flesh," and its relationship to those who are "sons," "heirs," and "children" which defines the role of the Spirit for Paul in Rom 8:1-17.

Nicholas Green, Christian Theological Seminary

Paul and Identity in Philippians 3:1b-11

Both in my previous work as a missionary and in my current work as a student pastor in an Hispanic congregation, I often wonder how my identity factors into my role in ministry. Paul's claims of identity in Philippians 3:1b-11 make me feel a connection with Paul that might inform my present-day understanding. In this passage, he proudly asserts that he regards those gains as a loss. What were those gains? What does it mean for Paul to count them as a loss? How does it affect the Philippian community? What are the implications for my ministry?

Lunch

12:00-1:30 p.m./ Ludwig Center Dining Hall

Session IIa **Hebrew Bible: Prophets**

1:30-3:00 p.m./Burke 403

Chair: Jeremy Miselbrook, SRSC

Ryan D. Harker, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

The Dialectical Character of Yahweh and the Hope of God's People:

An Exegesis of Zechariah 8.20-23

This paper presents an exegesis of Zechariah 8.20-23 and an interpretation in light of Walter Brueggemann's conception of the dialectical character of Yahweh in *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*. An effort is made to establish the meaning of the pericope in light of its context in the sermon of Zech. 7-8. Having established the contextual meaning, the hope of Zech. 8.20-23 for the future of Israel as grounded in the character of Yahweh is elucidated. Finally, the paper concludes with suggestions as to how the Church might orient itself around this notion of the dialectical character of God.

Emily Thomassen, Trinity Christian College

A Study of Narrative Geography in Connection to Moses, Elijah, and Jesus

This paper examines connections between Moses, Elijah and Jesus through the lens of narrative geography, the study of how geographic details function as a literary element of a story. In the Elijah narratives, the composer of Kings intentionally includes geographic details that call to mind Mosaic traditions. Both Moses and Elijah play an important role in Israel's eschatological expectations of the great prophet that is to come. This paper examines how in light of those eschatological expectations, narrative geography functions as a tool used by the gospel writers to depict Jesus as a prophet similar to Moses and Elijah, but even greater.

Jonathan E. Beck, Asbury Theological Seminary

More than Alarming: The Meaning of יבהלנני in Daniel 7:15

Translators treat the Aramaic word יבהלנני in various ways. Most of the translations (CEB, ESV, NASB, NET, NKJV, RSV) treat the second verb as a verb of emotion, denoting "stress", "anxiousness", or "worry." While some verses carry a stronger meaning of "alarm" (ESV, NET), two of the translations, namely the NLT and NRSV, render יבהלנני much more strongly, as a verb denoting "terror". In this paper, I will argue that the traditional renderings of יבהלנני, such as "disturbed" or "distressed", fail to fully convey the intent of the writer. In order to demonstrate this, I will examine the passage in its larger historical and literary contexts, both canon-wide and particular to Daniel.

Session IIb **New Testament: Gospels**

1:30-3:00 p.m./Burke 413

Chair: Michael Gutierrez, Loyola University Chicago

Andrew D. Carr, Olivet Nazarene University

Death and Discipleship: A Narrative-Critical Analysis of Mark 6:14-29

This study investigates how the Markan narrator uses elements of story and discourse to connect the episode of John the Baptist's beheading in Mark 6:14-29 to the overarching theme of discipleship in the Gospel of Mark. Key components of narrative criticism have been chosen as representative examples of analysis: (1) the technique of intercalation, (2) characterization of the Twelve and John the Baptist, and (3) standards of judgment. The paper hopes to contribute to a balance of biblical interpretation by demonstrating why it is important to take seriously the narrative form of Mark's gospel and how this might be accomplished.

Patrick Neufeld, Sacred Heart School of Theology

He Casts Out Demons by Beelzebul the Prince of Demons.

Jesus' exorcism of demons, integral to his proclamation of the kingdom, provokes some to denounce his authority as demonic. Jesus answers this accusation in Luke 11:14-23 with a reflection on the instability of a divided house or kingdom, demonstrating the reasonableness of the denunciation as doubtful; alternatively, he may show the divisions of opinion evident in the surrounding crowd are significant of the inherent instability of the kingdoms of the world. Luke evokes the Exodus myth, when for lack of faith the people were scattered.

Ellen M. Corcella, Christian Theological Seminary

John 20:19-29: The Landscape of Belief

John 20:19-29 is more than the one-dimensional portrayal of Thomas that prevails in Christian scholarship. At one level, the Thomas story is about believing without seeing the risen Jesus. John 20:19-29 is also about the role community plays in an individual coming to believe in the risen Jesus. The text supports the construction of a hermeneutic regarding the intersection between belief and community in addition to the traditional hermeneutic that the passage is about individual doubt and belief. I propose that John 20:19-29 is told in a spatial landscape that represents the importance of being in a faith community.

Session IIc The Bible and Intertextuality

1:30-2:30 p.m./Burke 411

Chair: TBD

Arlyn Drew, Andrews Theological Seventh-day Adventist Seminary

The Divine Tester of the Covenant: A Methodological Analysis

The Test of Abraham (Genesis 22), in which God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering, is one of the most difficult challenges ever posed to a believer. Though ultimately a ram was sacrificed instead, troubling questions linger about the divine Tester. This study analyzes the test methodology through inter-textual analysis to discover divine intent. When the two test commands are examined from this theo-centric approach the possibility seems to emerge of more than one right response by Abraham. One option may have been paternal mediatorial self-sacrifice for Isaac. As the narrative stands, only God was able to demonstrate this lesson through the ram.

Nate Nevius, Judson University

The Significance of Jesus and the New Covenant

The purpose of this paper is to explore how Jesus qualifies to be the fulfillment of the old covenant and the mediator of the new. Using the Book of Hebrews as the Christological foundation, Christ's significance is better realized through the author's comparing and contrasting Jesus with the old covenant.

Break

3:00-3:30 p.m.

Session IIIa Psalms, Poetry, and Aesthetics

3:30-5:00 p.m./Burke 403

Chair: David Bukenhofer, Loyola University Chicago

Clara Brandt, Valparaiso University

The Ninhursag Lament, a Literary Precedent for the Stabat Mater

The Stabat Mater Dolorosa of the Christian tradition bears a striking resemblance to the weeping goddess poems of Sumer, and in particular the Ninhursag Lament. The history behind both poems is briefly outlined, and then comparisons are drawn between the two poems' structure, imagery, movements, and use of other literary devices. Using these comparisons and evidence from the Bible, it is proposed that the Ninhursag Lament is a literary precedent for the Stabat Mater Dolorosa.

Nathaniel E. Greene, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Axis Mundi and the Battle Hymn of the Resurgent: A Psalmist's Plea for Renewed Reign

The doxological hymn to YHWH in Ps 74:12-17 has garnered a considerable amount of attention among scholars. Its relationship to other texts from the ancient Near East such as the Baal Cycle and the Enuma elish has also enjoyed numerous interpretations. This paper presents a re-examination of the structure of Psalm 74 and the subsequent implications that this new structural analysis has on the doxological hymn to YHWH in Ps 74:12-17. Namely, Ps 74:12-17 is likely a secondary insertion, positioned within the psalm by a redactor for theological purposes.

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Timothy M. Kuhn, Judson University

A Redemptive Innocence: A Synthesis of the Theologies of Art and Aesthetics of Alejandro García-Rivera
While the ideas behind Alejandro García-Rivera's book on a theology of art, "A Wounded Innocence," are sound, his conclusions and synthesis are vague. Rivera, however, also wrote a book on the topic of aesthetics in which he makes categories that are helpful for understanding his work on art. Taking his theology of art and then placing it within the framework of his theological aesthetics lead to a constructive synthesis reaching to insights on sanctification, human creativity, and a fuller sense of what art is and can be.

Session IIIb The Bible and Intertextuality

3:30-4:30 p.m./Burke 413

Chair: Jeremy Miselbrook, SRSC

Clayton D. Larson, Central College

Paul's Use of the Prophet Hosea in His Letter to the Romans

In Romans 9, the Apostle Paul argues that Gentiles are also called to be part of the new church community, along with those Jews who have recognized that Jesus is the Messiah. To justify his claims, Paul quotes from Hosea 2:23 and then 1:10, consecutively, and with some slight changes in wording. However, it will be shown that his usage of the text does not go against the original meaning of Hosea's words, which concern God's redemption of Israel, and will instead reveal a fuller exposition of Hosea, along with the Gentile's rightful share in the church body.

Michael Baptista, Eastern Michigan University

Parallel Traditions in the Book of Enoch and the Epistle to the Philippians

When comparing passages in the book of Enoch and the Epistle to the Philippians, a striking parallel between the traditions is found that displays how the theology of Philippians did not appear spontaneously. Rather, it has precedents that can be traced to adherents of Enochic Judaism who provided a rich pool of religious symbols and metaphors that helped frame its expression. This paper will examine passages from both texts and trace how the apocalypticism of Enoch provides a form critical and theological background for the messianism of early Christianity, as presented in Philippians.

The 2013 Student Religious Studies Conference

Eric F. Mason, PhD—Regional Coordinator of the Midwest Region of the Society of Biblical Literature

Troy W. Marin, PhD—Founder and Director of the Student Religious Studies Conference

Jeremy S. Miselbrook, PhD—Assistant Director, SRSC

Kevin Mellish, PhD—Olivet Nazarene University Conference Liaison

The Student Religious Studies Conference would like to thank all those who offered papers, chaired sessions, and encouraged students to participate in the conference. We also express our gratitude to Olivet Nazarene University, and in particular Dr. Kevin Mellish (School of Theology and Christian Ministry) and the Department of Religion and Philosophy for hosting the conference. We would like to especially thank Dr. Eric Mason for his support as our Regional Coordinator and former Director.

