

THE NINTH ANNUAL

**STUDENT RELIGIOUS
STUDIES CONFERENCE**

HOSTED BY THE

MIDWEST SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2015

**OLIVET NAZARENE UNIVERSITY
BOURBONNAIS, ILLINOIS**

PROGRAM

9-11 a.m. **REGISTRATION** Burke Admin. Bldg.

9:45-10:00 a.m. **ORIENTATION** Burke 307

10:15-11:15 a.m. **SESSION ONE**

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Burke 411

*Chair: Andrew Higginbotham, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
drhigg79@gmail.com*

10:15 **Patrick Dawley**, North Park University

At the Threshold of New Life: A Theological Interpretation of Job 42:1-6

The concluding speech within the Book of Job will be analyzed in 42:1-6. The paper's primary argument stands in a threefold structure; namely, the three steps of Job's epistemological development. The wisdom of Job is brought to fruition in 42:1-6 as Job crosses the threshold into new life: his reformed self-identification within God's cosmic reality is a fundamental shift in knowledge that extends beyond the mere problem of suffering. The Incarnation acts as a property of God's self-sacrificing participation in the world's suffering and gives context to Job's incomprehension in the midst of despair.

10:45 **Michael Cox**, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

The Stubborn and Rebellious Son: A Case of Intertextuality in Psalm 78

This paper examines the intertextual relationship between Deut 21:18-21 and Ps 78:8, i.e. “stubborn and rebellious”—a phrase occurring in only three places in the OT (cf. Jer 5:23). I argue three theses. Each are defensible, but each places more weight on the allusion. First, I argue that Ps 78:8 is an allusion to and dependent upon Deut 21:18-21. Second, I argue that Israel is characterized as the rebellious son throughout the psalm. Finally, I explore the possibility that the psalm is a “parable” of a stubborn and rebellious son, namely Israel.

Chair: *Cambry Pardee, Loyola University Chicago cpardee@luc.edu*

10:15 **Shane O’Leary**, Judson University

The Unseen Future of Hebrews 11

An exegetical paper on the contents of Hebrews 11:1-12:3. This paper highlights how the author understands these "heroes of faith" as people who saw past their present trials and looked ahead to a greater future, which was the promise of God, even though they did not see it at the moment. The author uses these examples as encouragement to his audience to continue on in faith by highlighting the struggles that these people had to go through, mainly that they were all faced with the reality of death but chose to look beyond the grave in the hope brought about by faith. Among other things, this paper examines how to understand the definition of faith provided in 11:1, the importance of how each example of faith is presented, and the author's understanding of Jesus as the "pioneer and perfecter" of faith.

10:45 **Tyler Kerley**, Judson University

A Call to Maturity: An Exegesis of Hebrews 5:11-6:12

In Hebrews 5:11-6:12, the author of the book of Hebrews exhorts his audience to press on toward a mature theological understanding of Christ's character and his priestly ministry, despite what appears to be mounting persecution from the surrounding society. Specifically, Hebrews attempts to provoke his listeners to maturity by shaming, warning, and encouraging them so that they might not remain in their stubborn laziness.

11:15-11:30 a.m. **BREAK**

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **SESSION TWO**

Chair: *Dr. Jenny DeVivo, Loyola University Chicago jdevivo@luc.edu*

11:30 **Rachel McGill**, University of Evansville

God's Getting Married: The Wedding at Cana as a Dramatization of Eschatological Fulfillment

An often-overlooked passage in John's gospel is the changing of water to wine, Jn 2:1-11. This paper seeks to demonstrate that this passage is actually crucial to a theological understanding of the purpose of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and how both will lead eventually to eschatological fulfillment. This paper addresses both the internal and external elements of the passage, including Johannine motifs and language, allusions to the Old Testament, the significance of the order and placement of the passage within the narrative, cultural background, and parallels with the Synoptic gospels and the book of Revelation.

12:00 **Charles Cruise**, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Judgment According to Works? The Significance of Christology in Matthew

Matthew 16:27 is typically regarded as a judgment according to works. Some scholars acknowledge the apparent works righteousness of the verse but hasten to add that grace predominates in Matthew (1:21;26:28). Such readings introduce theological difficulties and overlook many of the interpretive clues in the surrounding context, such as Matthew's emphasis on Jesus' identity as the Son of Man. Rather than weighing of deep *per se*, Matt 16;27 pictures a life sacrificed for the sake of the Son of Man, one in which the traditional distinction between faith and works is blurred.

Historical/Theological

Burke 413

Chair: *Andrew Higginbotham, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion*
drhigg79@gmail.com

11:30 **Mitchell Mallary**, Judson University

Beyond Natural Theology: A Proposal

Through an examination of the shortcomings of the various relationships between science and theology from the scientific revolution onward, this paper will conclude it necessary to reject the possibility of any natural knowledge of God. As such, this proposal suggests that the proper relationship between science and theology is one in which neither science nor theology have direct implications on one another. This will come through the realization that the uniqueness of God's self-revelation demands that scientific theory in and of itself must not lead us to any conclusions about God's nature or His relationship to the world. Therefore, unlike natural theology, this paper develops a theology of nature in order to allow us to theologically engage science and understand natural happenings (such as biological evolution) as part of a purposeful process guided by God toward the eschaton.

12:00 **Wyatt Graham**, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Gregory of Nazianzus: How the Church Formulates Doctrine

My project work will answer the question, “How does Gregory believe that the Church should formulate doctrine in his letters to Cleodnius?”, in order to ascertain how the early church created orthodox doctrine and to suggest a model for contemporary theological formulation.

12:30-2:00 p.m.

LUNCH

Ludwig Center Cafeteria

2:00-3:00 p.m.

SESSION THREE

New Testament/Theology B

Burke 411

Chair: *Dr. Jenny DeVivo, Loyola University Chicago jdevivo@luc.edu*

2:00

Iain Chester, North Park University

1 Peter 2:1-10 A Call to be a Messianic Church

This paper attempts four things with concern to 1 Peter 2:1-10. Firstly, to provide a historical and theological context to the passage itself and to put it within the context of the First Epistle of Peter. Secondly, to present an exegesis of the passage that takes into account a variety of scholarship. Thirdly, to examine a major theme of the passage, in the form of the living stone, and examine this theme in relationship to other parts of scripture. Lastly, the paper will examine Martin Luther's use of the passage, how Luther's arguments have been misappropriated and what that means for the church.

2:30

Zoe K. Post, University of Evansville

Parts of the Body: How Jesus' Marital Status Affects Modern Sexual Ethics

In opposition to creative interpretations or sensationalist media regarding Jesus' marital status, this paper explores the arguments for and against Jesus' potential marriage, drawing on historical, cultural, and exegetical evidence from the gospels. An investigation of Pauline purity ethics in 1 Corinthians 7 then reveals the foundations of sexual ethics for the modern church, and its failings in regards to issues of sexism, heterosexism, human sexuality, and sexual power structures. By reimagining Jesus' sexuality and observing Jesus' ethics of justice, this paper suggests how contemporary Christianity can address these issues to create a holistic and competent sexual ethic.

Chair: *Cambry Pardee, Loyola University Chicago cpardee@luc.edu*

2:00 **Jonathan Sherwell**, Judson University

The Identity of "I" in Romans 7

The nature of ἔγω in Romans 7:7-25 has been debated by many scholars, and has found such prevalence that hardly an essay can be written on Romans 7 without, at some point, appealing to one position or another in this argument. Ἐγώ, or "I," does have a very particular and complex position in Paul's understanding of sin and the law; it is best understood as the converted Paul's perspective on the life of unbelieving Jews as informed by his own extensive experiences as a Pharisee.

2:30 **Matthew Tinkham Jr.**, Andrews University, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

The Incomparable Love of God in Romans 5:6-8

In Romans 5:6-8, Paul related a robust contrast between the love of God as it was concretely expressed in the death of Christ and the deepest conceptions of human love. However, a great deal of disagreement among scholarship exists regarding the passage's contrast, particularly over the identification of δικαίου and τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ in v. 7. This paper explores some of these scholarly perspectives and applies literary, syntactical, and historical-cultural analyses to provide another look at the meaning of v. 7 and how it contributes to Paul's overall contrast between human love and the love of God.

3:00-3:15 p.m.

BREAK

3:15-4:15 p.m.

SESSION FOUR

New Testament/Theology C

Burke 411

Chair: Owen Chesnut, Andrews University theodc@hotmail.com

3:15 **Seth Stadel**, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary

Experiencing the Cruciform Christ as the Only True Source of Life: A Second Look at Colossians 2:16-23

In Colossians 2:16-23, Paul juxtaposes certain perverted ideologies with the preexistent Christ, who is described in Colossians 1, and reveals that those who adhere to such beliefs seek to find their experiential life outside of Christ and so are deceived. Contrary to following these people, Paul warns the Colossian church to stay firmly connected to Christ. While Paul does not condemn certain practices (i.e. the study of philosophy, tradition, and severe treatment of the body) for all time, he does condemn such things when used for the purpose of deriving one's experiential life outside of Christ.

3:45 **Hans Mosciche**, Marquette University

A Comparative Study in Early Syriac Thought: The Soteriologies of the "Oratio Ad Greacos" and the Acts of Thomas' "Hymn of the Pearl"

This paper, building on the work of Han Drijuers and Emily Hunt, explores the impact of Tatian's "Oratio Ad Greacos" on the Syriac "Hymn of the Pearl." I conduct a comparative analysis of both texts' soteriologies, examining the similarities and differences between Tatian's concept of regaining lost possession of union with the divine spirit and the 'Hymn's' notion of regaining possession of the heavenly garment. I also compare the narrative arch of Tatian's conversion account to that of the "Hymn", with particular focus on Tatian's use of the Matthean Kingdom Parables.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The officers of the societies would like to thank the following publishers who support the activities of our region by displaying their books, journals, and other products at this meeting:

Anselm Academic
Baker Academic
Conversations with the Biblical World
Eisenbrauns
Fortress Press
IVP Academic
SBL Press
Westminster John Knox Press
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
Zondervan

Thanks to Oxford University Press and Anselm Academic for providing review copies for our book review sessions.

The societies extend their appreciation to the administration of **Olivet Nazarene University** and the **School of Theology and Christian Ministry** for hosting the 2015 Regional Meeting. We offer special thanks to Kevin Mellish, Larry Murphy, and Eddie Ellis, ONU faculty members who coordinate the local arrangements, and to Jean Bakke, secretary of the STCM.

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Tentative date and location for the 2016 Meeting

February 5-7, Olivet Nazarene University, Bourbonnais, Ill.

Olivet Nazarene University's Main Campus (BOURBONNAIS, ILL.)

Main Campus Entrance
University Avenue
and Main Street

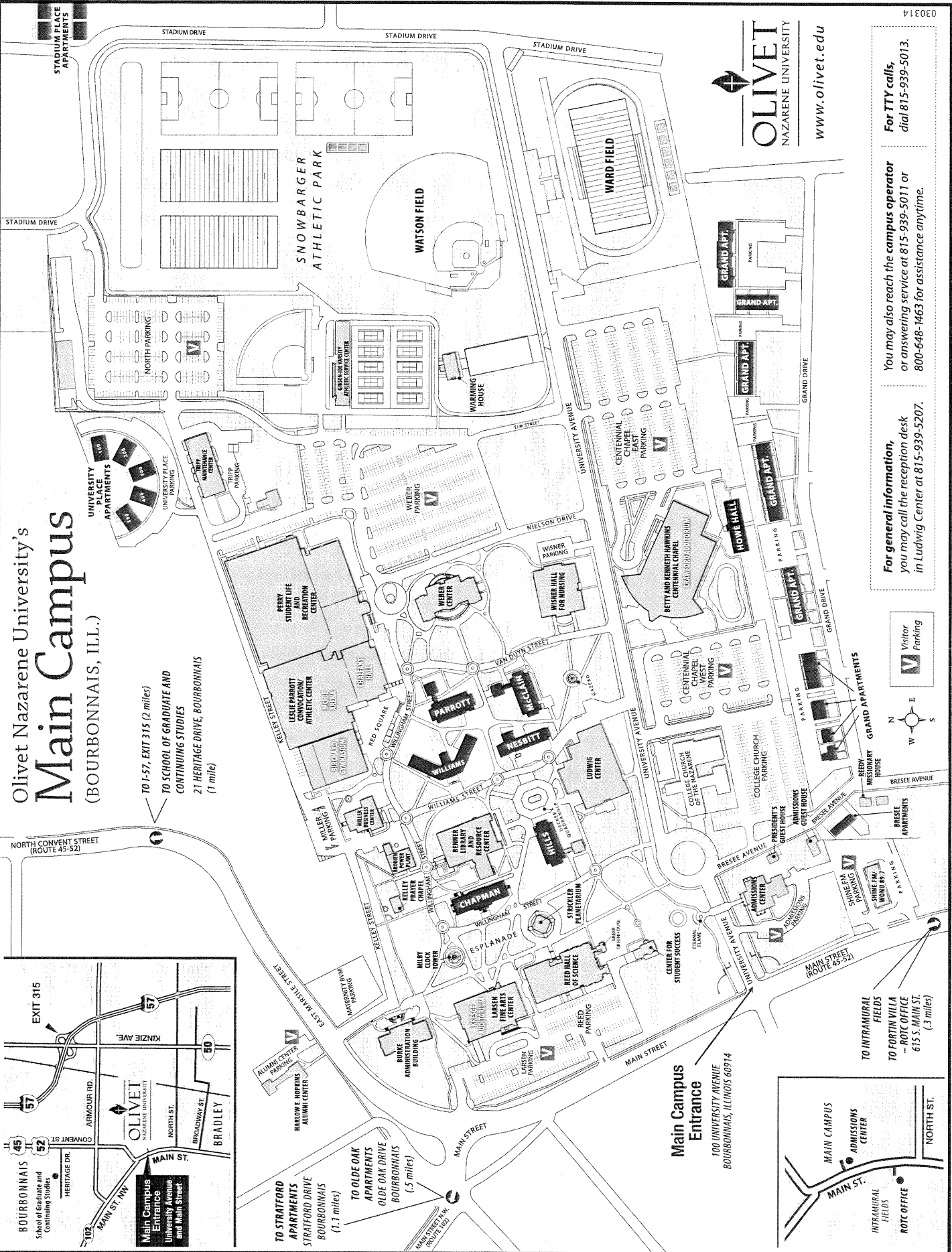
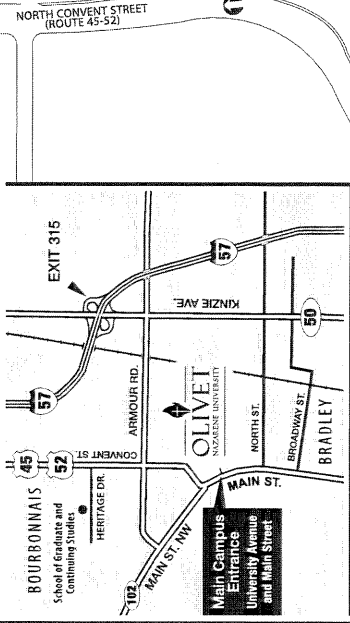
TO I-57, EXIT 315 (2 miles)
TO SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND
CONTINUING STUDIES
21 HERITAGE DRIVE, BOURBONNAIS
(1 mile)

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APARTMENTS
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