

Minutes of Section Leaders Lunch Mtg  
17 February 2008

### **Report on 2008 Midwest SBL Meeting to Section Leaders**

- Overall attendance and participation was up slightly over our meeting in 2007: a little over 100 attended this year, and the banquet drew at least 70 (2007: 45)
- Target groups (younger scholars, women) are significantly boosting their participation, although we need more senior scholars and people of color
  - o SBL Midwest started a competition in the Toronto (Canada) area to attract Canadian grad school students to our region: Ellen White of Tyndale University College organized this activity and brought 4 students with her
  - o Larry Lahey again brought a contingent of students from Tulane University in New Orleans
- There were 44 papers total (32 SBL papers), not counting book report session, or the two grad school award-winning papers
- 26 papers were presented in the first annual “Student Religious Studies Conference,” and about 50 people attended
- 10 women attended the Women Scholars Lunch
- About 14 people attended the “Graduate Student Professional Development Seminar,” sponsored by the SBL Student Advisory Group
- Midwest SBL and AOS/ASOR continue to dialogue concerning a new way to foster goals of continuity of program, expansion of participation, and shared financial load
- Ken Way, last year’s nominee for Regional Scholar, was named “SBL Scholar of the Year” last fall
- Theme for next year’s mtg (2009): “Garden, Trees, Paradise, Eden”
  - o Next year’s meeting will be 13-15 Feb at the same location (Olivet Nazarene University//Bourbonnais, IL; one hour south of Chicago)
  - o We will host our third annual Student Religious Studies Conference” again next year: 13 Feb during the day at the SBL mtg site
    - Eric Mason (Judson University) is now chair of the SRSC
  - o All info for next year’s meeting (and special programs and awards) will be uploaded as it is available at [www.midwestSBL.org](http://www.midwestSBL.org).
- Some individual themes for various sections include:
  - o Bible Meaning through Tradition: “Jericho in the Face of Pacifist Traditions?”
  - o Early Christian Literature: “Jewish-Christian Relations”
  - o Pauline Epistolary Literature: “Orality in Paul’s Text”
  - o Gender Studies: “Gender in the Ancient World”
- New officers for SBL: Ritva Williams (Pres); Mark Whitters (VP), Richard Choi (coordinator)
- Discussion: Paper quality seemed to be better than last year, so our efforts seem to be working!