

I decided to look back to what I wrote on this day five years ago, and I started to laugh — it's *exactly* the same think I was thinking just yesterday, about all the trillions of books that get written about the Bible and the scholars who write them. I've decided to re-post it, and simply update it to this very moment.

I've had a terrific and interesting first few days at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting here in San Diego. This society comprises professors and other scholars of biblical literature mainly from the U.S., but with attendees from overseas as well. It meets along with the American Academy of Religion, which is the professional society for all professors of religion who are not teachers of biblical studies (so experts in Christianity outside the NT, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, anthropologists of religion, historians of religion, and so on and on). All together it is a very large group. I don't have the exact numbers, but I think maybe there are 10,000 or 11,000 people here for the meeting. That's a lot of experts on religion in one place!

One of the most important aspects of the conference for me is the book display. Dozens of publishers of books in every field and aspect of religion are here - from major well known publishers such as Oxford University Press and Princeton University Press to religious publishing houses such as Eerdmans and Zondervan to small nich publishers to ... you name it). These publishers all set up an enormous ballroom with their exhibits, which are mainly copies and posters of the various books they've published. The publishers obviously can't bring every book they publish on the topic, and so typically bring only what has come out over the past year. There are many, many thousands of books here.

Attendees can browse the book display, look through whatever books they're interested in, buy books at a discount, make notes on what books to buy later, and so on. find the book display to be both invigorating and somewhat depressing....

To get some insight about what it means to do be a biblical scholar, and to publish books in the field (how good do the books need to be?), you'll need to keep reading. For that you'll need to belong to the blog. It's easy to join, inexpensive, and by all reports an incredibly ecstatic experience. All proceeds go to charity. So why not give it a try?

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