

*Biblical Studies and Spiritual Care: Intersections of Pastoral Praxis and Biblical Hermeneutics*

In response to the lack of a coherent interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of biblical studies and spiritual care, Silvia Castelli and Peter-Ben Smit have initiated and are currently chairing the SBL Annual Meeting program unit *Biblical Studies and Spiritual Care: Intersections of Pastoral Praxis and Biblical Hermeneutics*. This unit aims at integrating in biblical scholarship the hermeneutical perspectives offered by the multifarious contexts of spiritual care and highlights the relevance of biblical literature for the professionalization of chaplains. It fosters methodologically rigorous research through sustained interdisciplinary collaboration between the two fields and actively partners with other SBL and AAR units, including *Biblical Literature and the Hermeneutics of Trauma* and *Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care*.

In 2024, the unit organized four sessions on the intersection of biblical interpretation and spiritual care in healthcare contexts: two at the I-SBL meeting in Amsterdam and two at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in San Diego, focusing. In 2025, three sessions were organized at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in Boston, centered on the carceral context, one of which co-sponsored with the AAR unit *Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care*. In 2026, at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in Denver, three sessions are planned on the military context, including one co-sponsored with the same AAR unit and another with the SBL unit *Biblical Literature and the Hermeneutics of Trauma*.

A volume entitled *Biblical Interpretation and Spiritual Care in the Context of Healthcare* is under peer review with Brill's *Biblical Interpretation Series*, and a second volume, focusing on the carceral context, is in preparation.

Several initiatives are connected to this interdisciplinary research, including a symposium on the use of the Bible in prison chaplaincy at VU Amsterdam on 30 June. Please feel free to contact Silvia ([s.castelli2@vu.nl](mailto:s.castelli2@vu.nl)) and Peter-Ben ([p.b.a.smit@vu.nl](mailto:p.b.a.smit@vu.nl)) if you are interested in this line of inquiry. We also welcome inquiries from prospective PhD students working on related topics.