

News of the Society

Greetings from the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies! The fall newsletter contains important information about the society and its activities. (Check out our [website](#), [blog](#), or [Facebook](#) page).



This issue includes:

- Information about the Annual Meeting of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies in Conjunction with the AAR
- Report on the 15th International Conference of the European Network of Buddhist Christian Studies
- Reports on Buddhist-Christian Encounters 2024
- A Consensus Declaration of the ICCGC-CoNGO Collaborative Conference in View of the 2024 UN Summit of the Future
- Transformation of the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies
- New Publications
- Membership, Contribution, and Other Contact Info

**The Annual Meeting of the Society for
Buddhist-Christian Studies
In Conjunction with the American
Academy of Religion
November 23-26, San Diego**

Board Meeting
Friday, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Omni-Boardroom 2 (Sixth Floor)

**Reflecting on Buddhist-Christian
Double Belonging: A 2024 Update**
Saturday, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Grand Hyatt-America's Cup AB (Fourth Level)

This session will serve as a current update on various aspects of the oft-discussed theme and growing phenomenon of Buddhist-Christian double belonging. The panelists come from various backgrounds but what binds them together is that each one of them has been engaged deeply in practice of and reflection about Buddhist-Christian double belonging. Each of them will therefore offer important reflections as well as concrete suggestions

about this current phenomenon and its promise and potential problematic aspects.

Presiding
Grace Song
Won Institute of Graduate Studies

Presenting
James Ford

Kunihiko Terasawa
Wartburg College

Todd Yonkman

Ruben L. F. Habito
Southern Methodist University

Responding
Sarita Tamayo-Moraga
Santa Clara University

Honoring Ruben Habito's Many Contributions to Buddhist-Christian Studies

Sunday, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Grand Hyatt-America's Cup AB (Fourth Level)

This session will be a special tribute to former SBCS president, theologian and Zen Rōshi, Ruben Habito, for his many significant contributions to Buddhist-Christian Studies. The panelists will address various aspects of Habito's work, such as multiple religious belonging, the healing character of Buddhism and Christianity, Zen and the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, as well as the intersection between Zen, spirituality, and Christian trinitarian reflection. It will conclude with a response-reflection from Habito himself.

Presenters

Jane Lancaster Patterson

Paula K. R. Arai

Institute of Buddhist Studies

Sarita Tamayo-Moraga

Santa Clara University

Karen Baker-Fletcher

Southern Methodist University

Responding

Ruben L. F. Habito

Southern Methodist University



A Buddhist-Christian Dialogue on the Body: Report on the 15th International Conference of the European Network of Buddhist Christian Studies

Perry Schmidt-Leukel
President of the ENBCS

The conference took place from June 27th to July 1st, 2024, at the Archabbey of St. Ottilien (near Munich, Germany) which hosted the network. Participants came from various countries such as USA, Thailand, Sweden, United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Austria, and Germany, among them several students. There were nine thematic sessions with two invited speakers per session plus five open panels with altogether twelve speakers (primarily postgraduates, young and rising scholars) presenting current research papers.



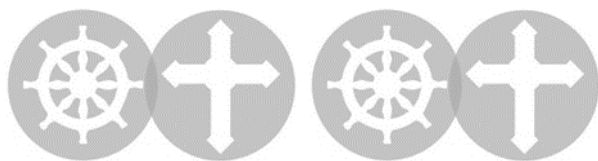
The thematic sessions were organized as real dialogues, with two speakers presenting their views on the same topic and subsequently entering a dialogue between themselves and with the audience. The speakers of the first session, Elizabeth Harris and Andreas Nehring, pointed out the various facets of the topic and the ambiguous role of the body in the Buddhist and Christian tradition. In the second session, Michael von Brück and David Loy addressed the connection between bodies and the environment and highlighted its implications for contemporary ecological awareness. The third and fourth sessions explored central anthropological features of bodily existence and their religious interpretations: the transience of the body (Perry Schmidt-Leukel, Shodhin Geiman) and the body as a medium of social relations (Claudia Jahnel, Werner Vogt). Sessions five and six were dedicated to the interconnected issues of body and gender (Kajsa Ahlstrand, Carola Roloff) and body and sexuality (Sybille Fritsch-Oppermann, Amy Langenberg). In session seven, Fabian Völker and Raquel Bouso discussed the various interpretations of

mind-body relations in both traditions. In session eight, Peter Tyler and Markus Rüscher explored the role of the body in different forms of contemplation, prayer and ritual. The concluding ninth session was dedicated to religious ideas of the embodiment of transcendent reality, presented and discussed by Thomas Cattoi and Ruben Habito.

The conference papers will be published in 2005 or early 2026 with EOS Books (St. Ottilien) in a collection edited by Elizabeth Harris, Andreas Nehring and Perry Schmidt-Leukel. Some of the papers from the open panels are likely to be published in academic journals.

The Network decided to continue the topic by dedicating its next conference (2-6. July 2026) to the topic of "Buddhist and Christian Perspectives on the Mind," to be held in Hamburg in cooperation with the University of Hamburg.

At the 2024 conference, ENBCS's latest publication was presented containing the papers of the 2022 conference: *Euro-Buddhism and the Role of Christianity*, ed. by Kurt Krammer, John O'Grady, and Martin Roetting. St. Ottilien: EOS 2024.



Reports on Buddhist-Christian Encounters 2024

Leo D. Lefebure

It has been a remarkable year for Buddhist-Christian encounters. In March 2024 I traveled to Taipei to lecture on interreligious relations at Fu Jen Catholic University, to visit Buddhist monasteries, and to participate in a Vatican-sponsored colloquium on relations with the Confucian tradition. My SBCS colleague Kunihiro Terasawa was already at Fu Jen when I arrived, and on my first day I attended his lecture on Kitaro Nishida and

the Kyoto School, which was well received. On the next day Kuni and I traveled together with Professor Su-an Lin, who teaches Buddhist Studies at Fu Jen University, and doctoral student Su-chen Huang, to visit Fo Guang Shan Monastery, where we received a welcoming tour of the monastery and the Buddha Museum; afterwards we had a lively discussion of the Maritime Silk Road over tea with our Buddhist hosts. After Kuni had departed, I traveled on successive days with Paulin Batairwa Kubuya, the Under-Secretary of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican, and Raphael Ling, the vice president for mission and chaplaincy of Fu Jen University, to visit Dharma Drum Mountain Monastery and also Ling Jiou Mountain Wu Sheng Monastery founded in the northeastern corner of Taiwan by Master Shih Hsin Tao. It was a special pleasure to see Maria Reis Habito, wife of former SBCS president Ruben Habito, who was translating the remarks of Master Shin Tao into German for the retreatants. Master Hsin Tao was very interested in the work on Buddhist-Christian relations of Paulin in the Vatican and in our interreligious doctoral program at Georgetown University, and he spoke of his fervent hope to open a new Buddhist university in Myanmar if and when circumstances permit. If this comes to pass, he will welcome assistance from SBCS members.

In May 2024 I traveled to Norway, where I visited my longtime partner in Buddhist-Catholic dialogue, Sister Gilchrist Lavigne, at Tautra Mariakloster Trappist Monastery, located on a beautiful fjord north of Trondheim. I spoke to the community there about Buddhist-Christian relations, and two of the younger sisters expressed a strong interest in becoming active in Buddhist-Catholic monastic dialogue. Then I went to Oslo, where I visited the Karma Tashi Ling Tibetan Buddhist Temple and spoke to their Buddhist-Christian dialogue group. I also gave a lecture on Buddhist-Christian relations at the University of Oslo, and I was honored and delighted to hear the warm

response to my remarks from Ven. Unapana Pemananda Thero, a resident monk at the Sri Lankan Buddhist Vihara in Norway.

In August I traveled to the south of India to join SBCS colleague Anh Tran at the Bodhi Zendo near Madurai for a meeting of the Buddhist Studies and Dialogue Group of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. The zendo, which is modelled on Japanese Zen meditation centers, is perched on a hilltop elevated considerably above the valley below where it enjoys much cooler temperatures. Jesuits and Buddhist and Christian friends gathered from across the Asian world to reflect on Buddhist-Christian relations. I gave a talk on the experiences of Christians in the United States who engage in a meditation practice derived from a Buddhist tradition. Afterwards, several of us traveled to Colombo, Sri Lanka, to visit Aloysius Pieris, a great pioneer in Christian dialogue with Theravada Buddhists and a founder of Asian Christian liberation theology who recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday and the fiftieth anniversary of his research and dialogue center. He showed us a number of works of art by Buddhist artists portraying figures from the Bible, and we had a delightful conversation with one of them, the Ven. Uttarananda. We visited the nearby Buddhist Temple in Kelaniya, which according to Sri Lankan tradition received a visit from Shakyamuni Buddha himself. On another day we met the Ven. Galkande Dhamminda Thero, the director of the Walpola Rahula Institute for Buddhist Studies; he in turn invited us to visit him at his Institute, which we did, where we saw the office and books of Walpola Rahula and learned about the efforts to continue research and interreligious dialogue in honor of his memory.

Later in August I traveled to the Won Dharma Center in New York State to join SBCS colleagues Mark Unno, Carolyn Jones Medine, Kunihiro Terasawa, JK Kato, together with Won Buddhist friends and other dialogue partners, for a weekend meeting preparing

for the Interfaith Coalition Conference for Global Citizens (ICCGC), which met the following two days at the Church Center of the United Nations in Manhattan. There were a number of talks and discussions on topics relating to interreligious collaboration and global citizenship. I was part of the drafting team for a public declaration, which was led by Liberato Bautista, the assistant general secretary for the United Nations and International Affairs at the General Board of Church and Society and the President of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO).

At the ICCGC meeting in New York City, Mark Unno chaired a panel discussion on "Ethical and Global Citizen: Not Whether but How," which featured a presentation by Kunihiro Terasawa. Carolyn Medine offered reflections on another panel on the topic of: "We Want Peace: How Can We Promote and Build Peace in Our World?" I chaired a session on "Aspirations for the Common Good: Working Together for Shaping a Brighter Future," which included a fine presentation by JK Kato. At the conclusion of the meeting, JK Kato participated in the reading of our declaration: A Call to Global Community and Action for A Just, Peaceable, Inclusive, and Sustainable World: A Consensus Declaration of the ICCGC-CoNGO Collaborative Conference in View of the 2024 UN Summit of the Future.

In September 2024 I traveled to Singapore to participate in the International Conference on Cohesive Societies, in collaboration with SBCS member Gerald Kong, who is the Executive Secretary of the Archdiocesan Interreligious Dialogue and Ecumenism Centre of Singapore. The next international Buddhist-Christian Colloquium organized by the Vatican is scheduled to take place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in May 2025, and I have been invited to participate and hope to do so.



A Call to Global Community and Action for A Just, Peaceable, Inclusive, and Sustainable World

A Consensus Declaration of the ICCGC-CoNGO
Collaborative Conference in View of the 2024
UN Summit of the Future

The collaborative conference on “Global Citizens Pursuing A Just, Peaceable, Inclusive, and Sustainable World,” co-hosted by the Interfaith Coalition Conference for Global Citizens (ICCGC) and the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO), took place at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York on August 26-27, 2024. Participants from many parts of the world reflected together on the intersections of religious imagination and responsible governmental and multilateral leadership in light of current wars, intractable conflicts, and polycrisis, including ecological catastrophes and climate change. Recognizing that all people have a stake in the future and cognizant of the specific ethical dimensions that must inform our reflections, we issue this consensus declaration in the hope of contributing to shaping the future and the world we want.

Participants acknowledged the need to equip religious and spiritual leaders with new tools and skills for meaningful participation in multifaith and multilateral platforms, contributing to global visions of peace, justice, human rights, and ecological integrity. We believe a deep, future-oriented spirituality, rooted in the past and actively engaged in the present, is essential for nurturing global citizenship.

We commit ourselves to developing a new generation of leaders able to integrate religious values and global ethics with local

and international efforts to achieve the UN Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the UN Summit of the Future in September 2024, including its expected outcomes—the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact, and the Declaration on Future Generations.

As spiritual and social leaders united by a shared vision, we stand at a critical juncture in human history. The profound challenges we face—climate crises, growing inequality, conflict, and widespread spiritual and social division—demand an urgent response grounded in the highest principles of our shared global ethics. With participation from diverse organizations, the conference drew upon a collective exchange of wisdom and strategic action, highlighting the transformative power of interfaith collaboration and engagement with civil society.

1. Embracing Inclusivity and Respect for Diversity

We celebrate the richness of our ethnicities, cultures, and religions as sources of wisdom and resilience. We recognize that these differences have been exploited in the past to sow division and conflict, and they remain sources of tension in many contexts today. We commit ourselves to the freedom of all religions and beliefs, to the equal participation and involvement of people of all genders and ages in social, economic, cultural, and political arenas, and to the flourishing of all humans in harmony with the community of life on this planet.

2. Advancing a Global Ethic of Peace and Justice

True peace is a state where the dignity of every human being is honored, and their inherent rights are protected. Our world has seen inordinate violence and untold suffering from historic and systemic injustices, including poverty, slavery, colonialism, racism, sexism, political divisions, and

economic inequalities within and among countries and regions.

We endorse a global ethic calling for active participation in peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding in our local communities and international initiatives. We commit to an ethic of nonviolence and the right of everyone to life, liberty, and personal security. For this global ethic to flourish, we commit ourselves to protecting civic spaces, ensuring the promotion of the freedom of assembly and expression, and all elements of democratic and participatory discourse.

3. Protecting the Planet: Our Sacred Duty to Future Generations

We honor our planet and the entire community of life as invaluable treasures. We lament the current threats to life in all their forms and call for respect for the cosmic common good. Education plays a crucial role in cultivating global citizens who understand and address transnational challenges like climate change, forced migration, social and health pandemics, and threats to biodiversity.

We commit to promoting and protecting the human rights of all to a healthy environment and the rights of nature and the entire ecosystem to be viable and sustainable. This commitment comes with the recognition that our current generation has responsibilities to future generations, including ensuring the right of all people and communities to peace and development. This responsibility urges us to imagine and act for human and planetary security, which, as common public goods, deserve and require public support in policy and funding.

4. Empowering Future Generations Through Ethical Education and Civic Engagement

Education is essential for cultivating self-respect and strong communities. To address intractable and pressing global challenges like climate change, forced migration, global

hunger and poverty, and armed conflicts, we prioritize global citizenship education that broadens perspectives and equips individuals with a multidimensional, action-oriented mindset rooted in local and global awareness. Together with Indigenous communities, we acknowledge our responsibility for intergenerational solidarity in caring for the future of our ecosystems and planet.

We recognize today's pervasive use of information, communication, and digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, in all areas of personal and collective life. We commit to calling attention to the ethical dimensions of these technologies, especially equitable access to their benefits, and addressing the abuses and excesses in their development and applications.

5. Strengthening Interfaith Collaboration for Global Unity

Interfaith dialogue is a noble pursuit and an invaluable, skillful means of fostering a just, peaceable, inclusive, gender-just, and sustainable world. To these ends, interfaith dialogue is vital in promoting mutual respect, understanding, intergenerational justice, and youth empowerment and participation.

The challenges are immense, but our determination and commitment to positive change are even more vital. The wisdom shared and the actions taken today will shape the world that future generations will inherit. By integrating the ethical teachings of various religious, cultural, faith, and ethical traditions, we can build a global community grounded in peace, justice, harmony, compassion, and mutual understanding.

We recognize the indispensable role of the United Nations, including its convening and norm-setting functions. Therefore, we urge everyone to engage the themes, processes, and outcome documents related to the UN Summit of the Future and make this multilateral and multifaceted effort

successful and its goals beneficial to people's lives and relations.

A profound and transformative spirituality is urgently needed in today's world—one that religious institutions and civil society have both the duty and capacity to develop and nurture. Prioritizing children's and youth's rights and empowering their active participation in society is essential, as their perspectives and unique needs are fundamental to securing a sustainable future. Our commitment to this cause is not just for the present but for our countless future generations who will live in the world we create today.

August 27, 2024 | New York City



Transformation of the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies

Kunihiko Terasawa
International Advisor for SBCS
Associate Professor, Wartburg College

The Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies has recently undergone a significant transformation. As noted in last year's newsletter, many former board members were aging or retired, which raised concerns about the Society's sustainability and ability to engage new voices. In response, a new board was established in 2023 to address these challenges, uniting younger researchers and active scholars, including myself, to discuss strategies for revitalizing the Society.

Over the summer, an election was held that resulted in a new governing board, which combined seasoned members with new leadership roles dedicated to the Society's future. The six newly elected board members are Dr. Samoa Ishii (Atomi-Gakuen),

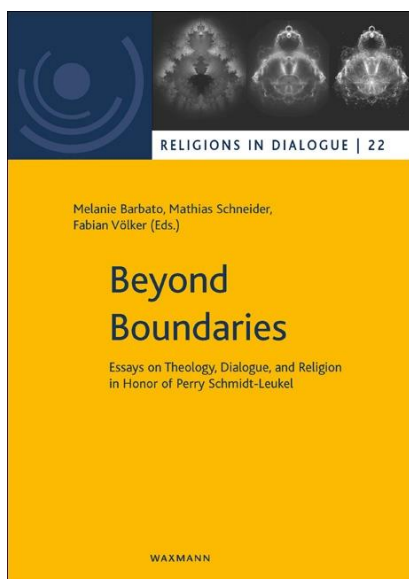
Dr. Yutaka Tanaka (Sophia University, Emeritus), Rev. Shoten Minegishi (Soto Zen priest), Dr. Kunihiko Terasawa (Wartburg College), Dr. Anna Ruggeri Takeuchi (Kyoto University of Foreign Studies), and Dr. Seung Chul Kim (Nanzan University). Most notably, Dr. Ishii was selected as the new President, becoming the first woman to hold this role since the Society's founding in 1981. Dr. Takeuchi, a native of Italy, and I will contribute to the international dimensions of the board, underscoring the Society's renewed commitment to global engagement and strengthening connections with both emerging and active scholars, particularly in Japan.

With the new leadership structure in place, the board now meets monthly via Zoom to discuss important issues, including upcoming conferences, advancing the Society's mission, and expanding international collaborations.

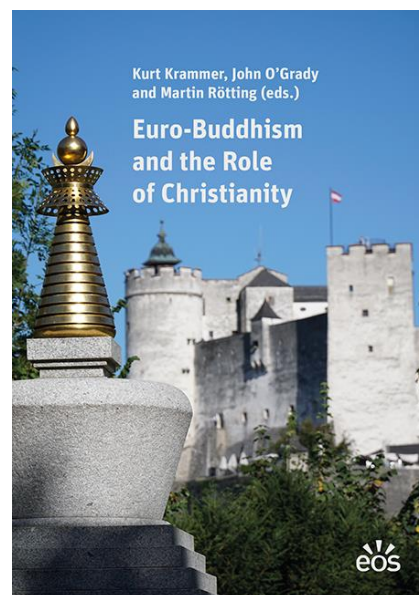


New Publications**(Click on covers for purchasing options)*****Beyond Boundaries Essays on Theology, Dialogue, and Religion in Honor of Perry Schmidt-Leukel***

Edited by Melanie Barbato, Mathias Schneider, Fabian Völker with the assistance of Madlen Krüger (Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2024)

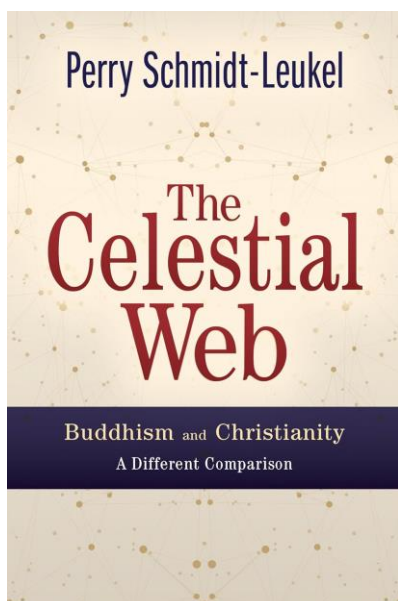
***Euro-Buddhism and the Role of Christianity: Papers from the 13th Conference of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies***

Edited by Kurt Gakuro Krammer, John O'Grady, and Martin Rötting (Eos, Sankt Ottilien, 2022)



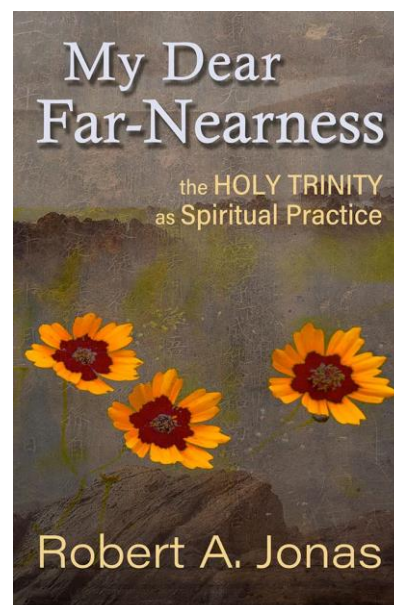
The Celestial Web: Buddhism and Christianity: A Different Comparison

By Perry Schmidt-Leukel (Orbis Books, 2024)



My Dear Far-Nearness: The Holy Trinity as Spiritual Practice

By Robert A. Jonas (Orbis, 2022)



Membership



If you haven't renewed for 2024-5, please do so now. Membership includes our newsletters, our journal, and other benefits.

[You can renew via our website.](#)

Some of you have asked about how membership works. Here is a brief Question & Answer.

What are current dues?

Dues range from \$10 for students to \$25 for Adjunct Professors, Independent Scholars, and Assistant Professors and \$45 for Associate and Full Professors.

What are the terms of membership?

You may join or renew at any point during the calendar year, although it is more convenient to join at the start. Membership is for the current year (2024), but regardless of when you join you receive the same benefits for that year.

What is included in annual membership?

All memberships include an annual print copy of *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, inclusion on our email list (two e-newsletters), and voting rights in member meetings.

How does membership contribute to broader Buddhist-Christian cooperation?

Our dues support a variety of recent efforts. We have worked to make the Journal more easily available, have added it to our webpage (for instance, it includes the last 13+ years of newsletters), and continue to work on ways to connect scholars.

Write for us! (Submitting a Blog Post)

A long-term goal of SBCS has been to offer community members a chance to interact and

share news, opinions, and resources via our updated and improved website. We are looking for blog posts on a variety of topics:

- News updates about conferences, events, courses, or other resources
- Topical discussions of important issues
- Posts about pedagogy, teaching, syllabus development, creative exercises, or other topics
- Interviews, samples, or reviews of SBCS member books

Blog posts are vetted by our social media committee and will appear on the website.

Typically, we will also post the blog to our Facebook page; we may ask for permission to use it elsewhere. An ideal post:

- Engages the intersection of Buddhist and Christian traditions
- Is approximately 800 words in length
- Includes an image
- Offers a short bio of the author (25-50 words) and contact info

Please visit our blog for more information:

<https://www.society-buddhist-christian-studies.org/about-the-blog>

Also, check out our Facebook page and give it a like:

<https://www.facebook.com/BuddhistChristianStudies/>

To Nominate a Book for the Streng Award

The book must have been published within the last five years. Nominations can be made by any person using the [online form](#). Please check the website for the most recent information.

Nominations are now welcomed. Publishers of books must be willing to supply review copies to members of the committee for evaluation in order for the book to be considered.

CONTRIBUTE A REPORT TO THE NEWSLETTER

The *Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Newsletter* is published twice annually: in the spring and the fall. Please contact the Editor to share information with our readers. The deadline for the Spring issue is March 15.

In addition to reports on our annual meeting (concurrent with the American Academy of Religion) and calls for the Frederick Streng Book Award for Excellence in Buddhist-Christian Studies and for the Graduate

Student Essay Prize, the *Newsletter* also publishes information on conferences, retreats, lectures, and other events. We welcome obituaries and reports on significant figures in the field of Buddhist-Christian Studies.

We are always grateful for information, news, or other submissions that members and others can share with the Society. Submissions may be edited for clarity and length. Send items to newsletter editor John.Becker@csulb.edu.

SOCIETY FOR BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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