



The Society of Biblical Literature has developed a new set of member profile questions, in collaboration and consultation with many stakeholders in our academic ecosystem, including those in higher education and graduate schools, publishing, libraries, journalism, religious communities, museums, and foundations.

We had three goals in developing the profile: (1) ask as few questions (2) to get the maximum information (3) in order to best serve members in the guild.

I am writing to ask you—to urge you—to fill out your member profile and to keep it up to date annually when you renew membership. Learned societies and professional organizations are founded to serve their members' needs. The more your Society knows about its membership, the more effective it will be in each and every area of its mission to support the field: advocacy, meetings, programs, publishing, grant writing, scholarships and awards, fund raising, and professional resources. SBL is a member of the American Council of Learned Societies, and many of our peer societies have this same expectation and use similar tools. All of us are better able to accomplish our work when we know more about the contexts of our members.

You will benefit directly by filling out your profile. With this aggregated information, we can assist departments and institutions in creating new positions or making the case for keeping faculty positions open. With this data we can approach funding agencies to develop programs and services that strengthen the field and give new opportunities to biblical scholars. With your help, we can better see trends, respond to them, and more effectively allocate SBL resources—your resources.

If this data is provided regularly, we can annually compile reports on our member demographics and career contexts. We can compare and extrapolate issues involving tenure and the rise of contingent faculty, time to degree, and trends in the many disciplines practiced by SBL members. Finally, with this data we will identify the schools and departments in which our members teach. We will then survey departments to map further the state of the field, the dimensions of the job market, size of faculty, types of faculty, etc.

SBL has had member profile questionnaires for a decade. These have been optional, and the questions have always been completely confidential. Of course, we cannot make the member profile required. I *can* promise you that it will profoundly help us—SBL staff, committees, boards, task forces, and Council—do our work of advocacy, support, and programming. The questions in the new member profile are crafted on those of peer organizations and after further review of other resources and tools. If updated, the aggregated profile will allow us to do solid, consistent, diachronic analysis, and help us identify needs and opportunities.

Only member contact information will be available, as it is now by permission, in the member directory. I assure you, the profile data will be strictly confidential—as it always has been. It will be used only in its aggregation, as survey results, and not on an individual basis. I also assure you that we will use this data to foster biblical scholarship in the service of SBL members. Especially, I urge you to help your organization know more about itself and its discipline.

Every calendar year will represent a snapshot of our membership profile, and we will report this snapshot to members after the first of each year. We will accumulate these snapshots into a running report—a dashboard to highlight trends and developments.

*Even though we are half way through this year, I urge those who have already renewed their membership to take a minute to go online and fill the profile out. Every member who fully completes the questions by*

*December 31 will be entered into a drawing to win one of two iPads.*

You can access the SBL member profile by logging in to the SBL website, [www.sbl-site.org](http://www.sbl-site.org) with your SBLID number. Once you have logged in to the website, click on "my profile" in the Login Box. On the next screen, click on the "Edit Button" under Member Profile.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Kutsko". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

John F. Kutsko  
Executive Director