

March 31, 2025

You no doubt are aware of the various policy changes by the new administration in the United States that have changed and can continue to change the landscape of higher education. The implications of these changes for our members in the US, our ability to host international members at events in the US, as well as our operations in the US are not lost upon us. We have heard from some of you about your concerns regarding interactions with US authorities if you must travel to the US for SBL related events. I write to reassure you that we are aware of these developments and their potential impact upon our mission and your participation in SBL.

Conversations about the policy changes and their potential impact upon SBL have been ongoing for the last several months. For the most part, these conversations have focused upon the impact upon our operations. In more recent time we have viewed with alarm the experiences of academics traveling to the US, or expelled from the US, and the decisions of universities regarding departments in fields adjacent to ours. While, so far, most of these policies have not directly impacted us, we are on alert about members traveling to the US and their understandable anxiety about doing so, particularly this year. You should know that it is too early to make major decisions that would change the way we plan the Annual Meeting. Nonetheless, we are preparing guidelines for international travelers that soon will be available on the website and be updated as we move towards November. We draw these guidelines from the best practices as developed from civil rights and legal organizations.

SBL belongs to networks that expand our capacity to deal with moments like these. We are currently working closely with other academic societies holding their meetings in these weeks to learn from their experiences. These networks open avenues for advocacy, particularly around laws making their way through several state legislatures that can impede the work of our members in those states. In addition, we are part of an alliance whose mission is to maintain funding and support for the humanities in the US. These networks have been critical for maintaining our steady focus upon our mission during these times.

SBL SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

These are the times when members can leverage the benefits of belonging to an association. SBL is its members. Members can voice concerns to their elected representatives. Members can sustain the association through their participation. Members can generate the needed knowledge that can shape public conversations. SBL offers several opportunities for its members to advance their work. While we understand the appeal of the Annual Meeting, we offer other options to our members to participate in meetings and events. [The Global Virtual Meeting](#) takes place this week, April 01-04 featuring several critical sessions and you should look at the program. Members can [register for only \\$40](#). The [International Meeting](#) in June is now open for registration in Uppsala, Sweden. This meeting features innovative sessions that reflect the unique Nordic and broader European contexts.

We ask for your continued support for our shared society through active membership, participation, and strategizing together. We can achieve more together than we can do apart. These are the times when your solidarity with colleagues and institutions facing challenges proves to be the best strategy to maintain the health of the discipline and that can defy the forces that threaten our mission.

With every good wish,

Steed Vernyl Davidson

Executive Director