Statement regarding SBL and Former Member Jan Joosten

Please accept the profound apologies from the SBL Council for what has struck many as an insensitive response to the conviction of Jan Joosten for possession of child pornography. We express unequivocally our horror and disgust in the face of such behavior. We are saddened and outraged at the sexual and other forms of abuse of children upon which such behavior depends and which it also fosters and facilitates.

Since learning about this situation on Monday morning and receiving legal counsel, we decided upon and are in the process of implementing several measures. We asked Jan Joosten to step down from all SBL activities, and he did so. We are now continuing to discuss this matter with legal counsel and the relevant SBL committees. Other measures to address this as well as to revise policies and membership terms will be announced when they are finalized.

Addressing such severe criminal behavior, or the more frequent abuses of power, such as sexual harassment, is not a matter that can be resolved merely by a statement. SBL has procedures in place to address such issues, and we ask for your patience as we strengthen these and continue to work through the layers of action that the entire Council, SBL staff, and many of you believe must be taken. With you, we will continue to build a strongly ethical and intellectual professional society.

Sincerely,

The SBL Council
Efrain Agosto, Chair
Ehud Ben Zvi
Christian Brady
Marc Brettler
Tat-siong Benny Liew
Monica Melanchthon
Laura Nasrallah
Judith Newman, Secretary
Jorunn Økland
Hugh Rolland Page, Jr.
Adele Reinhartz, President
Chris Rollston
James C. Vanderkam, Vice President
Sidnie White Crawford
John F. Kutsko, Executive Director