

Correspondence with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society over

Child Abuse in Canada

Watch Tower Bible
and Tract Society
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Dear Brothers:

In addition to the article in the December 1, 1996 Watchtower Parents, Find Pleasure In Your Children under the heading Providing Little Ones Protection, I am pleased to read the January 1, 1997 Watchtower article Let Us Abhor What is Wicked under the heading What of a Child Molester? The prevalence of this problem in society in recent years has certainly put the Christian Congregation in jeopardy. It is heartwarming to learn that Jehovah is directing his faithful and discreet slave to alert the brothers to this danger.

In Ontario, Canada a law requiring all those serving in an official capacity must report to the authorities even the suspicion of child abuse. However, even when individuals have confessed to child molestation, the elders seldom report the matter to the authorities. The article mentions, 'the congregation will not protect him from the sanctions from the State'. Does this mean that they need not report such offenses to the state?

Child molesters often share many characteristics in common. Most appear to be kind, considerate, loving people who are especially fond of children. The molesters that I have known have a 'smooth tongue' and are mild mannered, often reticent, quick to burst into tears when confronted, but reluctant to be forthright in admitting their guilt. Most have admitted their guilt only after they have been confronted by irrefutable proof.

However, these molesters with which I have been acquainted have seldom been publicly disfellowshipped or publicly reprovved in the Christian Congregation for their child molestation. Because of the veil of secrecy imposed by the elders, the only ones who know who these molesters are are the victims and their parents. The elders counsel the parents and victims to tell no one. Parents who have ignored this counsel and have warned other parents to protect their children lose privileges in the congregation and are often marked by the elders in the congregation.

Even when molesters have repeatedly offended, even having served a jail term, they are still recognized as publishers sending their report from the prison each month.

According to local authorities the average molester has more than 100 victims by the time he is apprehended and he has practiced his sexually aberrant behavior over a period of years. The probability of his reoffending is considered to be about 97%.

No doubt these offenders have shown some degree of remorse after their offenses have been exposed. The article goes on to say "If he seems to be repentant, he will be encouraged to make spiritual progress..." Is remorse understood to be included in this statement? Should remorse be interpreted as repentance?

I am pleased to see that this article treats this matter as the serious offense it is. Since Jehovah desires all to attain to repentance it is appropriate that concern for the restoration of the offender be evident. However, nothing is said about how the congregation is to provide protection of the victims or potential victims in the congregation. The article states, "Therefore, the congregation has a responsibility before Jehovah to protect its children. Well-trained children learn to obey and honor their parents, the elders, and other adults."

The December 1st issue, under the subheading Providing Little Ones Protection provides some valuable information to parents as to how they can shield their children from the "subtle sexual advances" of child molesters. However, does the responsibility of protecting children from sexual predators rest solely with the parents of the children?

Some protection is afforded potential victims inasmuch as molesters may never again hold authority positions in the congregation. Surely the congregation's responsibility to protect the children does not end here. How can parents protect their children from such predators if they do not know who they are, if these men have not been publicly named, nor their offence identified if publicly reprovved. When their children become victims by such sexually deviant men in the congregation, how can children honor their parents and elders, and moreover how can parents honor the elders and other adults if the knowledge of the presence of such dangerous wolves in their midst has been withheld from them?

Should not some consideration be given to the victims to spare them from reliving the trauma of such abuse every time the predator attends a congregation meeting? The very presence of a predator intimidates all his victims including those who have not yet had the courage to expose him. It may very well be the predators sole purpose in attending meetings is to intimidate such victims and to lure others into his fold of victims. Out of love and consideration for the well

being of the victims should not the predator be prevented from attending congregation meetings where his victims are present and especially so if he has been disfellowshipped?

Some predators threaten the victim with death and the death of their parents if the victim talks. They even visit the schools to bribe their victims with money and/or intimidate them, often despite restraining orders imposed on them by the Courts. Others have gone so far as to attempt to carry out their death threats. Yet these very ones have free access to the congregation and their members because they are deemed repentant and there are seldom two witnesses to such intimidations.

The authorities claim that a very high percentage of boys who have been molested, will themselves become predators when they become adults. I personally have seen this taking place in boys who are not more than fifteen years of age. It is alarming to see that Satan and his demons are making such inroads into the younger generation in our congregations

In one such congregation, the secular authorities warn parents not to attend congregation meetings at the Kingdom Hall, that it would be a miracle if by attending such meetings their children did not sooner or later become molested. The Kingdom Hall, they say, is the most dangerous place parents can take their children in the entire district.

Can it truly be said that these predators are repentant when they have confessed their sins only after they have been apprehended and confronted with proof. Some confess to one or two offenses in their display of remorse when in fact it is learned later that they have dozens of victims. Are they not in fact confessing before the elders or the Courts of the land so that they may get a more lenient sentence? Can such confessions be indicative of repentance? On the other hand an offender who confesses voluntarily on his own after his first or second offence would seem to be repentant if he has approached the elders in the spirit of James 5:14,15 and Proverbs 28:13

It seems that there is an urgent need to provide real protection to our children when there are sexual predators in our midst. Should not elders view this matter in the same way that Joshua dealt with Achan? Although Achan confessed after being apprehended, there is no evidence that Joshua considered Achan repentant because of his remorse, but rather he exposed Achan's sin before all the assembly of Israelites and carried out Jehovah's judgment against him.

Should not elders display the same courage as Joshua when the congregation is threatened by child molesters? If the confession comes about only after the offender has been apprehended, is the offender repentant? Should not his sin be exposed before all the congregation so that parents can protect their children from danger? Would not a public reproof given to the offender, at least before all parents and guardians of children in the congregation be appropriate? Some elders may fear legal repercussions by so doing. Then why not make it a requirement for the offender to confess his sin and beg forgiveness before all parents and/or guardians of children in the congregation before repentance can be acknowledged?

I have worked with young people from the ages of 5 to 20 in the Educational System in Ontario for more than 35 years. As a result of my experience I can often recognize the signs identifying a victim of sexual molestation. However, it is next to impossible to recognize a predator unless one catches him in the act of molestation.

Victims of incest and molestation are often told by the predator that they are responsible, it is their fault and that if they tell they will be in trouble. Many view the victims of molestation and incest as 'dirty' even in the Christian congregation and refuse to let their children associate with them. As a result of this isolation the victim develops a low self-esteem and begins to act out his frustration and feelings of guilt and loneliness. This often leads to association with 'bad actors' in the schools, as a result becoming involved in smoking, using drugs and immorality. Sad to say, these victims are usually disfellowshipped in short order by the congregation elders, while the predators continue to secretly practice their vices in the congregation. What message does this convey to other victims in the congregation?

On behalf of our children, and grandchildren, in recognition of the sanctity of Jehovah's worship and the purity of his congregation, I prayerfully petition that decisive action be taken to abort Satan's efforts to destroy Jehovah's people by the insidious cancer of sexual molestation.

In the spirit of Leviticus 5:1, I humbly submit these matters to you for your consideration. Faithfully, I remain

Your dedicated brother,

Watch Tower Bible
and Tract Society
The Writing Department
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Dear Brothers:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter that I wrote to your office several weeks ago. Since I have received no acknowledgment of its receipt from you I am wondering if it became lost in the mails.

On the other hand, I do understand that it may require some time and extensive research before all of these matters can be addressed.

In addition to the questions asked in my letter, I am also concerned about the legal implications where convicted pedophiles (repentant or otherwise) who are baptized publishers and have been permitted to attend congregation meetings. I am aware of sexual advances and molestations taking place in the lobby and washrooms of the Kingdom Hall. Can the body of elders be held legally responsible for damages to victims if launched with a civil suit at some future date? Do the parents of the victims have the moral and legal right to expect that the Kingdom Hall be a safe haven for their children?

An answer to this question along with those posed in the enclosed letter would be very much appreciated.

I rejoice with you to see how Jehovah is blessing his people with increase the world over. Faithfully serving Jehovah, I remain

Your brother,

c. The Legal Department
The President's Office



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

WRITING DEPARTMENT
25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201-2483, U.S.A.

PHONE (718) 625-3600

Dear Brother

We are pleased to acknowledge receipt of your letter of . Please accept our apologies for our delay in replying.

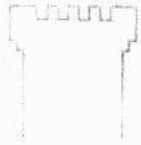
We note your observations and questions concerning the article "Let Us Abhor What is Wicked," in the January 1, 1997, issue of *The Watchtower*. We have carefully considered what you say in your letter, and it may be that in the future we will be able to provide some further information concerning the questions and issues you raise. Presently, we want you to know that we have received your letter and that it has not been ignored.

It is a pleasure to be associated with you and our brothers worldwide in the grand work Jehovah is having done in the earth today. We join you in eagerly looking forward to the momentous events just ahead in connection with which he will sanctify his holy name and deliver his people into his new world.

Your brothers in Jehovah's service,

Watchtower B. & T. Society

OF NEW YORK, INC.



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

WRITING DEPARTMENT
25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201-2483, U.S.A.

PHONE (718) 625-3600

Dear Brother

We are now in a position to provide some further comments regarding your letter of

We appreciate your sharing with us your observations based on your own experience in working with young people in the educational system in Ontario for more than 35 years. Be assured the points you make in your letter are well taken. Presently some additional information has been given to all bodies of elders as to what can be done further to protect the children associated with our congregations. We do appreciate your concerns, and we will forward your letter to those who must decide what is to be published in the future. Again we wish to thank you for taking the time to share this information with us.

With our letter we send our Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers in Jehovah's service,

Watchtower B. & T. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.

TELEPHONE / TÉLÉPHONE
(905) 873-4100



WATCH TOWER
BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF CANADA

Box / B.P. 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4, Canada

FAX / TÉLÉCOPIE
(905) 873-4554

Dear Brother

Thank you for your letters dated _____ and _____ The
Canada Branch has been asked to respond and we apologize that we could not reply
sooner.

You state in your letter dated _____ that you are aware of sexual
advances and molestation taking place in the lobby and washrooms of the Kingdom Hall.
We expect that you brought this to the attention of the elders so that they can follow
through to protect the children. We are sending a copy of your letter dated _____
to the elders and are asking them for their comments.

Also in your letter dated _____ you ask if elders can be held legally
responsible for damages to victims of child abuse. This question has been put before the
Legal Department. The Legal Department cannot give an opinion on such a broad
statement without a specific example.

In your letter dated _____ you state that elders seldom report child
molesters to the authorities. We do not agree. Our Legal Office advises elders who then
follow through according to the legal requirements. Please be assured that the
congregation has a process in place to meet the needs of reporting child abuse.

The *Watchtower* of January 1, 1997, and the *Awake!* issues of January 22, 1985,
and October 8, 1993, show that the congregation takes active steps to protect children
from child abuse. Jehovah's earthly organization has made it very clear that child abuse is
not tolerated in the congregation. The *Watchtower*, January 1, 1997, in the article "Let Us
Abhor What is Wicked," contains further direction that serves to protect young members
of the congregation. The article states, "...a child molester is subject to severe
congregational discipline and restrictions."

The October 8, 1993, and January 22, 1985, issues of *Awake!* provide excellent suggestions for parents in how to educate their children to avoid and resist advances by pedophiles.

Regarding support for victims of abuse the October 8, 1991, issue of *Awake!* focuses on the need for the victim not to ride out the storm of returning memories by herself or himself. Rather they could seek the help of qualified professionals, trusted friends, a marriage mate, family members or Christian overseers who will listen with empathy and respect.

As this world progresses from bad to worse in its depravity, we appreciate now more than ever the "food at the proper time" provided by the faithful and discreet slave. —Matthew 24:45.

We trust the above comments will be helpful to you. We take this opportunity to express to you our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & J. Society
OF CANADA

Watch Tower Bible
and Tract Society
The Writing Department
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201-2483

Dear Brothers: Attention:

I am writing in response to your letters of
as well as the response from the Canada Branch of
which were in reply to my letters of
and . I appreciate very much your taking the
time to respond to my letters.

The letter from the Canada Branch provides a number of
references to articles that have appeared in the Watchtower and
Awake in recent years. Prior to writing my letter of
, I studied these articles carefully and as I stated in my
letter to you, I recognized that the counsel in these articles
was very valuable to parents. However, if you will examine
carefully the context of my questions you will see that these
articles have not answered the queries that I posed in my
letter.

At the present time there appears to be no answers to these
perplexing problems. Therefore, like the prophet Micah, I am
determined to show a waiting attitude and trust that Jehovah
will hear my prayers on behalf of my brothers. Micah 7:7

As my letter inferred, in an attempt to
silence us we have been subjected to continual harassment, some
of which is life threatening. Much of the harassment has been
with respect to tampering on our motor vehicles. It puzzles me
that after putting forth an effort to assist my daughter and her
children in their struggles against pedophiles, a Medical
doctor, a Social Aid Worker and the Director of Education have
been in three separate head-on collisions with their cars. The
death of three people resulted from these collisions and another
person was hospitalized for several weeks. An undercover
investigator with some thirty years experience assures me that
these accidents are not coincidental.

Since my letter has been passed to the Canada Branch and
the local body of elders, the harassment has not abated, but
accelerated. I am reporting these matters in confidence to your
Brooklyn offices and therefore, I humbly request that you do not
betray my confidence.

Writing Department
September 2

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With full confidence in Jehovah and his now reigning King Jesus Christ as well as his Faithful and Discreet Slave, may we be found loyally doing God's will when he eliminates all wickedness and ushers in his righteous new world.

Your brother,

incl.: , Canada Branch letter
c.: President's office