

Elders are untrained and unpaid volunteers who are NOT qualified to handle allegations of child abuse:

Quote from the Confidential "All Bodies Of Elders" Letter sent from Britain 's Watchtower Bible and Tract Society Headquarters to All Bodies of Elders in Britain :

December 1, 2000

ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN BRITIAN

Dear Brothers:

CONFIDENTIAL

[...] "Elders are spiritual shepherds but are generally not qualified to evaluate the genuineness or the seriousness of an allegation of child abuse."

Quote from the Paducah Sun (Kentucky) Newspaper - January 28th 2001 :

Both Brown and Moreno said that the elders, who volunteer and are essentially untrained clergy, might err in their application of a policy both believe puts protecting children first.

[...] "It's a matter of trying to balance confidentiality and protecting the child," Brown said. "It's not always easy. Have mistakes been made? Very likely, they have."

Quote from "An Unlikely David : Barbara Anderson 's struggle to stop predatory pedophiles in the cloistered world of Jehovah's Witnesses"

September 3rd 2002 :

By Michael Morris

Parents of most denominations would not hesitate to call police first when sexual abuse of their child is reported. But to the Witnesses, all outsiders - even police and social workers -- are co-conspirators with Satan, part of the condemned world soon to be destroyed by God. As a Witness, when dealing with any wrongdoing "you go to elders first, and then elders make the decision for where you go [from there]. To bypass the organization would be treason," said Anderson .

But these same elders "volunteer, and are essentially untrained clergy," according to a Jehovah's Witness spokesman in the Paducah Sun. They attend no seminary, and have no minimum education requirements, beyond basic literacy. They are equipped for nothing more than enforcing organizational guidelines, delivering biblical platitudes and offering a moment of prayer. When encountering a case of child sexual abuse for the first time, their instructions are first to "call the Legal Department" at the group's headquarters.