

**WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.
25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS. BROOKLYN. NEW YORK 11201-2483. U.S.A PHONE (718) 560-5000**

BODY OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

We have given consideration to your letter dated xxxxxx xx,xxxx, regarding Brother xxxx. Enclosed you will find an S-52 form showing the deletion of Brother xxxxxx as an elder.

For good reason, the January 1, 1997, issue of The Watchtower, page 29, states: "A dedicated adult Christian who falls into the sin of child sexual abuse reveals an unnatural fleshly weakness. Experience has shown that such an adult may well molest other children. True, not every child molester repeats the sin, but many do. And the congregation cannot read hearts to tell who is and who is not liable to molest children again. (Jeremiah 17:9) Hence, Paul's counsel to Timothy applies with special force in the case of baptized adults who have molested children. 'Never lay your hands hastily upon any man; neither be a sharer in the sins of others. , (I Timothy 5:22) For the protection of our children, a man known to have been a child molester does not qualify for a responsible position in the congregation." Therefore, in the best interest the congregation and its members, neither the local congregation nor the Society should be viewed as delegating authority or position to one who is a known child molester.

Now that we have given careful and prayerful consideration to all the factors in the case of Brother xxxxx xxxxx, we believe that what is stated in the foregoing applies to him. Hence, you should not extend to him any specific responsibility that could be construed as an assigned duty, even though some assignments might be considered minor. He should not be used to handle accounts, literature, magazines, subscriptions, or territories. Nor would he be used as an attendant, microphone handler, to operate sound equipment, to represent the congregation in prayer, or to present "Announcements" on the Service Meeting. He would not be used as the reader at the Congregation Book Study or Watchtower Study, nor to conduct a meeting for field service. It would be advisable not to have a book study in his home. And, he would not qualify to auxiliary or regular pioneer. Whereas he could volunteer to assist with general care of the Kingdom Hall where he attends meetings, he could not be approved to work on other Kingdom Halls or Assembly Halls. He may give student talks on the Theocratic Ministry School and share in non-teaching parts on the Service Meeting, provided that his doing so will not be offensive to those in the congregation who know of his past wrongdoing.

Please be reminded of the following direction that appears in the Society's March 14, 1997, confidential letter to all bodies of elders regarding known child molesters: "Individuals who have manifested a weakness in this regard should be sensitive to their need not to be alone with children. They should refrain from holding children or displaying other forms of affection for them. It would be appropriate for elders to give kindly cautions to any who are doing things that may be a temptation or a cause for concern to others in the congregation." (1 Corinthians 10:12,32) This would include not allowing children (other than his own) to spend the night in his home, not working in field service with a child, not cultivating friendships with children, and the like.

After a number of additional years have gone by, you may wonder whether certain privileges can be extended to this brother. If he has continued to build a commendable record, if there are no complaints either by his victim(s) or by relatives, and if the body of elders concludes that no one would find fault with his being given extra privileges of a minor nature in the congregation, you may write the Society and make known your observations and recommendations, indicating how you feel he can be used in the congregation. Explain clearly what the current feeling is toward him on the part of the one(s) he wronged and by relatives, and how the congregation views him now. Direction from the Society should be obtained before certain privileges are extended to him.

Along with this letter we send you our warm Christian love. Your brothers,

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

Of New York, Inc.