

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

For Immediate Release August 7, 2001

Statement

Sexual abuse of children is a terrible crime that can leave lasting emotional scars on its victims. Often, child molesters are attracted to organizations that have children as members, which makes protecting children from sexual abuse a complex and important societal concern.

Jehovah's Witnesses condemn child molestation, and they do not tolerate such activity within their membership. If there is sufficient evidence that someone has exploited children in this way, he may be disfellowshipped (excommunicated). A sincerely repentant former child molester may be allowed to remain a member of the faith, but he is strongly warned against being alone with children unless one of the parents or another responsible adult is also present. Moreover, as a protection to our children, former child molesters are not permitted to receive positions of responsibility in our religion.

If an accusation of child molestation is made against a member of the congregation, the elders immediately work to assure the safety of the victim. Also, they make every effort to comply with the law. This includes complying with laws that mandate reporting the incident to the proper authorities. This is even done when a child is the only one to report the wrong conduct or when the elders received the allegation of molestation in confidence.

The victim or the victim's family may also report the matter to the authorities. They have an absolute right to report and none should interfere with this. If you would like to receive more information on how we report such matters, please contact Mario Moreno, Watchtower Legal Department. (845) 509-0416 or (845) 306-1000.

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