

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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June 5, 2006

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Child-maltreatment offenders in prison

Dear Brothers:

The Bible educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses is being carried on throughout the earth in a variety of circumstances and environments, including numerous prisons. While it is heartwarming to see individuals make spiritual progress and repent from an ungodly course of conduct, elders must be diligent to protect the flock of God in their care. In this regard, we wish to provide the following reminders to elders overseeing the spiritual activity of incarcerated individuals.

In line with the letters to all bodies of elders dated July 1, 1989, August 1, 1995, March 14, 1997, and February 15, 2002, elders should call the Legal Department regarding any inmate who may have been accused of child maltreatment in the past and who is now associating with the organization, whether he is baptized or not. (Child maltreatment includes physical or sexual abuse.) It is recognized that in some cases elders may not be authorized to inquire of the offense the inmates have been accused of, but if the elders gain knowledge of the offense, they should call the Legal Department as well as follow the other directions and suggestions in the aforementioned letters so as to protect our children. Elders should also follow the direction in the August 1, 1995, and March 14, 1997, letters if a child-maltreatment offender is released from prison and moves to another area of the country or if he is recommended for regular pioneer service in the future.

Balancing your diligent efforts to protect the flock while assisting individuals to make spiritual progress to serve Jehovah is not an easy task, and your hard work is much appreciated. We send our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

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