



# WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

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LLH April 23, 2004

The Body of Elders

REDACTED

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Brothers:

We would like to thank you for the comprehensive report provided on the matter of alleged child molestation on the part of REDACTED. It would seem that nothing further could be done at this time. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we will have to accept the denial of the accused. If the police and the Department of Community Services are unable to proceed then the matter will have to be left in abeyance. Please keep us informed on any future developments.

It is evident that much work will be required of the elders to ensure that the ill feeling generated by these allegations does not further upset the peace of the congregation. We would suggest that in making a shepherding call on the family of the victim you explain the Scriptural requirements for testing evidence. When investigating allegations of any kind, elders must be guided by Bible principles, including the Bible's clear direction on hearing testimony: "No single witness should rise up against a man respecting any error or any sin ... At the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses the matter should stand good." (Deuteronomy 19:15) Additionally, Deuteronomy 17:6 states: "At the mouth of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one dying should be put to death. He will not be put to death at the mouth of one witness." Jesus himself reaffirmed this principle at Matthew 18:16 and John 8:17, 18, and the apostle Paul did also at 2 Corinthians 13:1 and 1 Timothy 5:19.

It is recognized that child molesters usually engage in such practices away from the presence of others, and thus establishing a matter by two witnesses may not be possible in a particular incident. Of course, that does not mean that the victim is not telling the truth and we would never imply that we disbelieve the victim's testimony because two witnesses cannot be found. However, often other incriminating evidence is available to corroborate the victim's claim. The molester may have assaulted more than one child. If two victims testify to separate incidents of the same kind of wrongdoing, their testimony may be deemed sufficient to take congregational action against the perpetrator. However, even if the elders cannot take such action, they are expected to report the allegation to the branch office, which has been done in this instance. At times, accusations are made with a wrong motive, and on investigation prove to be without substance or are withdrawn. To outsiders, who are not privy to all the facts, inaction on the part of elders may give the impression they do not believe the complaint by the alleged victim or are unwilling to act, but be assured that the elders under the direction of the Faithful and Discreet Slave will do all that is possible to exercise justice.—See *The Watchtower* November 1, 1995, p.28

Hoping that this information is helpful to you, we send our warm love and best wishes for Jehovah's guidance and blessing.

Your brothers,

*Watchtower B.S. Society*  
OF AUSTRALIA