

Palmer Congregation Of Jehovah's Witnesses  
Brimfield, Massachusetts 01010

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November 14, 1999

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Watchtower Bible and Tract Society  
25 Columbia Heights  
Brooklyn, NY. 11201

Attn. SDK:SSM

Dear Brothers:

Greetings. This letter is in response to your request for more information regarding accusations made against brother [REDACTED] (letter of 10/21/99). We thank you for your direction because we feel it has been quite helpful and has proven to shed more important detail on these matters. Brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were chosen by the body of elders to meet with Sister [REDACTED].

We first contacted and spoke with [REDACTED] husband, Brother [REDACTED]. He spoke with his wife [REDACTED] and they were agreeable to meeting with us. While we waited for them to get back to us on a time when we could meet, we received a phone call from [REDACTED] husband [REDACTED]. Apparently [REDACTED] had mentioned to [REDACTED] our request, and the result was that now [REDACTED] herself felt that she could talk with us as well. Although this was not part of what you requested, we did feel it was an important development since we were unable to do this previously. Therefore, we have been able to speak with both sisters and their husbands separately. This has provided us with a much clearer picture of things.

First we spoke [REDACTED] and her husband [REDACTED] of Brooklyn. [REDACTED] reaffirmed her previously made allegations. Being able to speak with her finally though was helpful in getting a feel for her rationale and demeanor. We spoke for nearly one hour by way of a three-way conference call. Though the subject was highly sensitive and at times difficult, her expressions seemed to be logical and rational. Rather than being "repressed" memories, these seem to be issues that have been struggled with for her whole life. Her interest in speaking of them seemed to be out of concern for the protection of any others who may be endangered as well as to try to cope and heal herself. There seemed to be no trace of ill intent toward her father.

[REDACTED] described a childhood that was abusive. Though feeling that it was mostly emotional and physical abuse that took place, there were definite signs of sexual abuse as well. As to the emotional and physical abuse, she related examples of injuries that resulted in trips to the hospital, or that were noticed by school teachers. She expressed that she would lie about their cause out of fear of reprisals. Too, she noted that whenever she would be questioned about them, her father made sure to be present, thus not allowing her to confide in anyone. As to the allegations of sexual abuse, they also seemed to have substance. [REDACTED] expressed that though never actually penetrating her, he did repeatedly touch her and examine her over a period of



many months. This event was described in her letter to our congregation which we believe you already have a copy of. (dated Aug. 29, 96) This would make her feel "dirty". Thus even in her adult years intimate contact even with her husband came with difficulty. According to [redacted] this began when she was 5 years old. in 1974, the year that her father was baptized. Though expressing that the sexual abuse occurred for many months, the physical abuse lasted until she left home at the age of 18.

We questioned [redacted] of any congregational knowledge of these events. Apparently while quite young and still in the W.Hartford CT. congregation, there was an older brother whom her father took her before. This brother [redacted] apparently is now deceased. However, the reason that he took her before him was to receive counsel on his feelings that she was masturbating. According to her accusations, he would examine her to see if she was masturbating at night, although he would tie her to the bed to prevent it. [redacted] now raises good question as to whether a 5-yr old would ever actually be inclined to engage in such a habit. [redacted] said that brother [redacted] would from time to time inquire how she was, and she always felt he was asking her in regard to this accused habit. Again, her father would always be present thus not allowing her to confide in anyone.

Apparently their mother knew of the physical abuse, but never of the sexual abuse. By their description, it might have been that the mother was likewise in an abusive relationship and unable to do much to protect them. The description was one of household fear in standing up to their father.

When [redacted] was 18 years old she left home. However, she feared that her younger sister was endangered. Therefore, she tried to get her 16 year old sister out of the family house and to live with her. This was not accepted well. Apparently the brothers in Fort Kent Maine were involved in some of these issues. [redacted] feels that [redacted] convinced the brothers there that his daughters were simply rebellious children. Somewhere in this time period, [redacted] and his wife moved out of Fort Kent to the Machias congregation. It was apparently while serving here that [redacted] received an appointment as an elder. However, when they later returned to Fort Kent, [redacted] was not re-appointed. We felt that some of these details should be confirmed by those brothers in Maine, and noticed that you were already in contact with them, therefore we have not pursued any contact with them ourselves.

As to the intensity [redacted] feelings, she stated that if she were ever to have a child, that [redacted] would never be allowed to know the child or be close to it. She said that she feared for any vulnerable ones whom [redacted] may have access too. She felt that there should be concern for the fact that her father works with the mentally handicapped. Unknown to [redacted] though was that last year we became aware that [redacted] was fired from that job, according to his expressions it was because he used excessive force in self defense with one of the clients. Of course, we are not allowed access to any information regarding this other than what [redacted] himself tells us.

We next were able to speak with the younger sister [redacted] and [redacted] live in Springfield Massachusetts. Though being acquainted with [redacted] and his family, we have known really nothing of [redacted] We regretted that with this daughter living so close to us that we have never had contact with her. We were intending to question whether she was able to confirm any of her sister's allegations. However, it turned out that her recollection turned out to be even more personally severe than that of her sister. While wishing to be respectful of our request, she and her husband were quite hesitant about it ever being made known to [redacted] that



they spoke. They felt that coming forward would have potential to cause more harm than good. We assured them of the confidentiality of these matters, being open with them though that we were communicating with you about these details.

██████ description also involved occasions of visits to the hospital for injuries. She said that she also would have to lie to cover up what really had happened. By her description, her father would use the scriptures and the theocratic arrangement to his advantage. For example, he would often refer to Co. 3:20 and Eph. 6 to teach the girls that a parent had the right to take the life of any children who were disobedient. ("that it may go well with you") Therefore, she felt that if she did not lie about the injuries or spoke of the abuse, that their father would hurt them.

██████ related that in her teen years she did question her father on this understanding of the scriptures, and that it resulted in a trip to the hospital for injuries.

██████ also gave details of personal sexual abuse. She has had to have some professional help to cope with the affect on her life. However, she has never before been able to make these allegations before the congregation. According to ██████ when she was 3 years old, her father began to molest her. She described that there was "fondling and touching." She also described that there was "fellatio" which we understood to mean that there was some oral contact as well. This went on for years and eventually escalated to her being raped by ██████ at the age of 8-years old. This developed into a history of about 4-years of continued rape. She described that her father would sit on the bed afterward and cry as he prayed with her. Apparently her mother though aware of the physical abuse, was not aware of the sexual abuse. It seems that even her sister ██████ was unaware of it at the time as well. She was told by her father that if she ever told her mother or her sister that "someone would get hurt". She understood this to mean that he would kill whomever she told. This is why she even now is fearful of his finding out that she has spoken to us. She describes her mother as someone who is emotionally fragile and fears for how any repercussions would affect her. She fears seriously that it could result in the death of her mother if this comes out. Her mother was divorced from ██████ back in Fort Kent it seems. Since then she had been disfellowshipped for some time, however is currently reinstated and serving in the same congregation as the ██████ attend. They are her care providers in her later years. We assured them of our concerns for the spiritual, physical, and emotional safety of all. We did express though that our ability to question ██████ on any of these details would definitely be hindered by not being able to refer to her word. She definitely was not ready to stand behind her word as yet.

Apparently ██████ was also raped at the age of 13 by a stranger. When going to counseling for this, her father insisted on being there. The ██████ feel that this was apparently out of concern for what would become known there. There was some contact with the body of elders in Ft. Kent over this rape when she wanted to pioneer. Apparently ██████ was present for this as well.

██████ mentioned that in recent years she did try to open up to an older Elder whom we know in the Enfield CT. Congregation. (██████) She felt that because of his age and maybe some senility that he did not respond with much reaction to her expressions. She felt that maybe that was Jehovah's answer to her desire to speak. Again, we tried to reassure her of Jehovah's love and concern.

██████ said that on touring the Holocaust Memorial Museum, a predominant feeling was that her father had "missed his calling, that he would have made a good SS". According to her feelings, "he is creative when it comes to breaking someone's spirit."



Our impression upon speaking with both girls was similar. That they were both quite rational. It certainly appears that these were real events. It did not seem that they had conferred together on their "stories", as some of the things that [REDACTED] spoke of likely are not even fully disclosed to [REDACTED]. We thought it spoke of their character and strength that both girls are in full time service to Jehovah. Both expressed concerns for any contact that their father may have with any children. Neither could respect any further appointments, they likely would be horrified if such were the case. They even question how he can serve currently as a ministerial servant. Though not sure of any other molestation's, both express question over the possibility of other victims since after remarriage, there were other teenage girls in the house. Apparently the family home was one that was always busy with activities and young visitors. There are a number of grandchildren as well.

Clearly, these issues need to be looked at seriously. It is our opinion that these allegations have substance. Some details seem to fit into place with some questions we have had all along. For example, as Brother [REDACTED] has been reaching out for some time, we have had several occasions to speak with him to offer personal counsel. Repeatedly [REDACTED] has asked whether any information from Fort Kent was what was holding him back from appointment as an elder. When the [REDACTED] moved to us from the Enfield CT. congregation, we were never given any information regarding these accusations. We have wondered what Brother [REDACTED] has feared from his past. Interestingly, his expressions have always been that he felt he never received a reappointment due to personality differences. Also, in regards the letter that he sent to [REDACTED] responding to her allegationse it appears that he avoids any fair explanation for the described examinations of her private parts and being tied to the bed.

This does pose a handful of questions on our responsibility at hand. We have concern about the purity of the congregation. We would like to question Brother [REDACTED] on these accusations, however, we have assured the girls of confidentiality. [REDACTED] has already made a formal accusation to [REDACTED] however, [REDACTED] is not emotionally prepared to defend herself before him. Also, we wonder about the threats that have been suggested, as to whether any harm could actually result.

We certainly have been disturbed by hearing these things. However, we feel Jehovah's hand in matters. We appreciated your direction and will wait for further instruction to come. We have reviewed the articles in the 1/1/97 and 11/1/95 Watchtower articles, as well as any letters to the body of elders pertaining to such things. We have also prayed for Jehovah's direction and guidance, as we will continue to do. We tried to assure the daughters of Jehovah's love and to find comfort in His care as we had opportunity. We will wait for your direction.

With Warm Christian Love,  
Palmer Congregation

cc [REDACTED], MA-9