

STATEMENT

Jehovah's Witnesses abhor child abuse, a crime that sadly occurs in all sectors of society. The safety of our children is of the utmost importance. For decades, our journals *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, as well as our website jw.org, have featured articles for both Jehovah's Witnesses and the general public on how to protect children from abuse.

These articles include:

- "Jehovah's Witnesses Educate Parents and Children to Protect Against Sexual Predators," jw.org, posted September 2014
- "A Danger That Concerns Every Parent," "How to Protect Your Children," and "Make Your Family a Safe Haven," *Awake!* of October 2007
- "Let Us Abhor What Is Wicked," *The Watchtower* of January 1, 1997
- "Your Child Is in Danger!," "How Can We Protect Our Children?," and "Prevention in the Home," *Awake!* of October 8, 1993
- "Child Molesting—Every Mother's Nightmare," *Awake!* of January 22, 1985

Jehovah's Witnesses do not separate children from their parents. We do not have any programs, such as Sunday Schools, youth groups, or day care centers, in which we take custody of children from their parents. We believe that loving and protective parents are the best deterrent to child abuse. Thus, we continue to educate parents and provide them with valuable tools to help them educate and protect their children.—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

We have no paid clergy. Congregation elders comply with child-abuse reporting laws. (Romans 13:1) They provide abuse victims and their families with spiritual comfort from the Bible. (Isaiah 32:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14) The victim and his or her parents have the absolute right to report the matter to the governmental authorities. (Galatians 6:5) Congregation elders do not shield abusers from the authorities or from the consequences of their actions. (Galatians 6:7) Anyone who commits the sin of child abuse faces expulsion from the congregation. If such a person is serving in a position of responsibility, he is removed. Any suggestion that Jehovah's Witnesses cover up child abuse is absolutely false.

We are committed to doing all we can to prevent child abuse and to provide spiritual comfort to any who have suffered from this terrible sin and crime.