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Advocates for Awareness of Watchtower Abuses

Press Release – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AAWA welcomes the Charity Commission’s opening of “statutory inquiries” into Jehovah’s Witnesses in the UK

June 17, 2014

Advocates for Awareness of Watchtower Abuses (AAWA) welcomes the decision by the UK Charity Commission to open statutory inquiries into Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain (registered charity number 1077961), and one of the congregations, Manchester New Moston Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses (registered charity number 1065201).

We note that the initial request for an effective child protection policy was made in 2008.

We are, therefore, concerned and disturbed that so many more children continue to suffer and that there is still no evidence that such an effective policy has been developed and implemented.

We are even more surprised that the spokesperson for the UK branch of Jehovah’s Witnesses suggests that an effective, robust child friendly policy and procedure exists.

AAWA would welcome the opportunity to review and comment on Watchtower’s said policy because many of its members have suffered due to the lack of effective processes, which have left them scarred, shamed and humiliated.

Many elders, who were appointed to enforce Watchtower policies, are also ashamed of decisions that have left so many children vulnerable to predators.

AAWA has tried to communicate with the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses and offered assistance to make sure that no more children or adults suffer due to these policies.

We are still awaiting a response.

We would also welcome a public apology from Watchtower's leaders to the numerous children and adults whose silence was required to maintain an organizational facade of openness and caring.

It is not just AAWA that is justifiably concerned. The Director of Survivors Network of those of Abused by Priests (SNAP) recently stated:

"I can't recall ever seeing a policy anywhere that is more predator-friendly and self-serving than the Watchtower's 'two witnesses' rule. This policy endangers kids and invites predators. It protects only one small group – the Jehovah's Witness hierarchy. Even then, it protects them only in the short-term. Thankfully, more victims are finding the strength to report child sex crimes, more police are investigating them, more prosecutors are prosecuting them, and more lawyers are suing them."

AAWA is available and willing to help provide information and advice to the Charity Commission as it is in everyone's' interests that Jehovah's Witnesses comply with modern child protection policies.

Ongoing accountability is essential if families are to be given the chance to heal. Attention also needs to be given to the Watchtower's shunning policy, which allows abuse survivors and others to be ostracized by their families. Families have been torn apart by Jehovah's Witness statements in their literature that admonishes their believers to ignore their family ties or "face destruction at Armageddon." For example:

"Do not look for excuses to associate with a disfellowshipped family member, for example, through e-mail." (Watchtower, January 15, 2013, p.16) Many social and legal experts agree that this kind of interference with private family relationships violates basic human rights.

To draw attention to this continued interference – Watchtower Victim's (survivors) Memorial Day will take place on 26 July 2014. That day has been set aside so that the thousands of people who have had their families taken from them can be given the opportunity to remember and petition for a change to a Watchtower shunning policy that undermines family relationships – a human right given to all.

One of the organizers of this event, Bo Juel Jensen, who was molested by a Jehovah's Witness elder from age 5 until 9 as a child and still shunned by his Jehovah's Witness family for speaking out, said:

"It is inhumane to be shut off from having contact with my family. I have not hugged my daughter since she was 9-years old. She now has her own child, my grandson, who I have never seen or held. The abuse and interference with family by Jehovah's Witnesses policies has to stop.

"I hope people will watch my video and think about the undue influence religious groups have over normal family contact, especially Jehovah's Witnesses who continue to protect abusers and block family from having loving relationships."

AAWA will work closely with government approved personnel and officials to see what changes the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses are willing to make to bring their policies in line with criminal responsibility, fairness and human rights.

More Information Links:

- [Shunning Policy Explained](#)

- [Child Molestation Information](#)
- [Domestic Abuse](#)
- [Anti-education](#)
- [Refusal of Blood Transfusions](#)

Advocates for Awareness of Watchtower Abuses (AAWA)

Background: AAWA is a religiously neutral organization, a not-for-profit corporation with 260 volunteers from over twenty countries committed to objectively and respectfully raise awareness and to help victims of abusive Watchtower (Jehovah's Witness) policies. URL: <http://aawa.co>

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