

Later Workers

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Letter by Dale Shultz

Overseer of Saskatchewan, Canada

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TTT Editor's Note: In 2003, Dale Shultz became Overseer of California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and Pacific Islands. At the time he wrote this letter, he was Overseer of the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada

April 12, 1999

Dear _____.

I want to send letter to a number of people in Alberta who have been communicating with me by letter and/or phone. I have followed the developments in Alberta with interest and concern over these past months. Some of the more recent developments that I am aware of being the court case in Edmonton, the Wednesday study removed from the home of Sam & Barbara Tschetter in Lethbridge, the visit that Eldon Tenniswood, Ernest Nelson and Sydney Holt made to Bevan & Heather Olson at Didsbury, the sale of the Didsbury convention farm which followed that visit and the removal of the Wednesday meeting from the home of John & Shirli O'Dell in Calgary.

I do know that those of you to whom I am writing have felt, for various reasons, that your confidence in the oversight in Alberta has been eroded to a larger or lesser extent in different cases. You have hoped and, at times, expected that some change in the oversight would be implemented. A year ago now, my own expectation was that the overseers as a group would have seen fit to have implemented some changes affecting the province of Alberta. However, as you know, the decision coming out of the meeting of overseers last July was to support the status quo in Alberta. That was not the thinking of everyone there, but it was the decision of the meeting. With Eldon, Ernest and Sydney coming into the province in recent weeks; it remains very evident that the overseers generally are fully supporting Willis and Jim and their oversight in the province.

We could wonder why the support remains so solidly behind Willis and Jim, and it would be possible to advance a number of possible reasons. We know that this stand has been taken after hearing a number of concerns expressed from both workers and friends. **I would just like to encourage you to accept this support that Willis and Jim have at the present time as a reality and to respect that decision because it comes from a group of men whom God has called and whom God is using in guiding his work in this part of the earth. If our attitude towards them becomes disrespectful, it is a reflection on our attitude towards God as well.**

We realize that the fact that we are servants of God, or even very responsible servants of God, doesn't make us infallible. However, something that is very much a part of being a child of God is to respect those who are over us in the Lord, to pray for them, to obey them, to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. **Their judgement may not always be right, but it is always right for us to respect that judgement and to work with it in the best way that we possibly can.**

So, there are two possibilities regarding the decision of the overseers to maintain and support the status quo in Alberta. One possibility is that the decision is a right decision for the province. That would mean that they are seeing some things in the picture that some of us are missing when we look at it. Another possibility is that it was not the best decision for the province. **But, whichever is the applicable possibility in this case, it does remain the right thing to respect that decision because of where it has come from and to work with it no matter what our own thoughts might be on the subject. This is a very practical area where we can exercise the teaching of 11 Corinthians 10:5, "- bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." We may think that we are "obeying men" and not "obeying Christ" when we submit to something that seems wrong to our own thinking. However, the scriptures teach so much about submission e.g. to the government of the land, wives to husbands, children to parents, the Lord's people to the ministry, etc. That teaching doesn't just apply when the governments, husbands, parents or workers are 100% on the right track, but it applies in a very comprehensive way.** We also know that a point could be reached in these different relationships in which submission is generally expected where, because of some deep conviction before God, we would feel that we could not submit to something that is being asked of us. However, there is also great danger in "not submitting" and in taking a rebel attitude when the situation doesn't warrant that extreme position in God's mind.

So, I would like to encourage all of you to accept the present situation, knowing that quite a bit has been done to bring concerns to the attention of the overseers. The present situation remains in spite of these concerns having been very publicly expressed and drawn to the attention of the overseers. **Whether the decision is right or wrong, the right thing for all of us is to respect it because of those who have made the judgement.** If the decision is wrong, I am sure that the Lord will have ways of correcting that over time. He still is very much on the throne. In the final analysis, there are some things that we just have to leave in his hands. I believe that for anyone to try to force changes now, after all that has been done to bring issues into focus, that it could mean just being very much out of our place.

It is evident that when any stand is taken to restrict the welcome of any workers to your homes that your home will then be considered unsuitable for a meeting. I would certainly encourage you to make the workers welcome in your home. It has been pointed out that this would give you opportunity to show the spirit of Christ to them. We don't want to add to the building of walls in the kingdom; but, rather, be amongst those who are building bridges. The polarization and division that has become so evident in Alberta is extremely dangerous and gives Satan a lot of territory in which to work. Many people tend to be caught up in it and to form camps. It would be wonderful, and very much in keeping with the spirit of Christ, if we could all desire to reach out and begin to build bridges that would span the gulf of division that has evolved. Most of the people on the other side of this gulf are people with whom you would have never had any problem had it not been for this issue which resulted in you taking different sides. When we can get into the presence of the Lord in prayer, find bread for our souls, be influenced and motivated by his spirit, then our influence can be as Ephesians 4:1-3, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

I have appreciated a few visits by phone with Bevan & Heather Olson before and since the day that Eldon, Ernest and Sydney had the visit there. I marvel at their spirit of acceptance and the gracious way that they are handling this matter that could have left them feeling very bitter. They are real examples. It will be people like them that will be contributing to a solution rather than promoting a further problem. The spirit of the lamb, the spirit of a little child, the spirit that can take loss graciously without resentment or fighting back – this is the spirit that will not only preserve the kingdom (and preserve our salvation individually) but will also, in time, unite the kingdom.

I can understand your concerns and your feeling of perplexity. I do want you all to come through this experience with your faith deepened and your spirits enriched. In light of the present situation and the understanding of it that I have (which is limited, of course), I have felt that I would like to exhort you in the way that I have expressed in this letter. I think that you know that I am writing to you in this way because of concern and love and a deep interest in your future and the welfare of your souls. I hope that these few lines may be of some help. I have appreciated your communication in the past. I would welcome your response to this if you care to respond.

Yours in Him

Dale Shultz

Dale Shultz CSA Guidelines for California Workers – July 2006

GUIDELINES REGARDING INCIDENTS OF CHILD SEXUAL MOLESTATION

(1) According to California law, workers fall into the legal category of "mandated reporters" and have a legal obligation to report any sexual abuse inflicted on a minor (person 17 years of age or younger) if she or he is still a minor at the time the information comes to us.

(2) There is no legal obligation to report a case where the victim is no longer a minor at the time the information comes to the worker (even though the abuse happened when the victim was still a minor), but there may be a moral obligation in some cases if there is reason to believe that other minors remain at risk.

(3) If you receive such information as a younger companion, take it to your older companion.

(4) The companions in a field are advised to take the matter to your regional overseer(s) or to your general overseer.

(5) The regional overseer(s) and general overseer will discuss the matter with the local workers who received the information with the option of bringing in any other consultants whom they agree may be helpful at arriving at decisions.

(6) We will discuss here four different directions to go with this information that comes from a victim, an offender or from a third party concerning the abuse. The selection of one of these or possibly a combination of two of these will depend on the particulars of the case you are handling and the level of cooperation you are receiving from the victim or offender. We need to remember that we have a legal responsibility as "mandated reporters" to report such cases and that the victim and offender would benefit from therapy. It is possible that other family members would benefit from therapy as well. While California law stipulates that a "mandated reporter" is required to report a case of child abuse within 36 hours of learning about it, we believe that the law would be flexible regarding the time factor. However, this stipulation does indicate the importance of dealing with the matter as soon as possible. Following are the four options regarding handling such information when it comes to us:

(a) There is a definite advantage in getting the victim and the offender to a certified counselor for help. This provides help for the victim in learning to deal with the experience. Therapy provides help for the offender in managing and overcoming his or her abusive tendencies. It also can transfer the responsibility of reporting the criminal conduct from the workers to the certified counselor. We are not freed from the responsibility of reporting a case simply because we have referred the victim or the offender to another "mandated reporter," which in this case is the counselor. We should visit with the counselor and come to an understanding that he or she will assume the responsibility of reporting (if the case warrants it) rather than ourselves. The counselor has training and resources to better determine if the case should be reported. Also, it puts us in a better position to help people on both sides of the issue if we have not done the reporting.

(b) It would be possible to go to a counselor alone without the victim or offender and convey the information that has come to us. This would work best in cases in which the counselor already has had some experience with our group and has reason to trust us. In this

way, the counselor (a mandated reporter) is receiving information from a third party (in this case, the worker also being a mandated reporter) and then there would need to be an understanding and agreement that the counselor accepts the responsibility to “report” or “not report” rather than the worker continuing to have that responsibility. This is one of the optional routes in cases where the victim or offender is unwilling to see a therapist.

(c) Another option is to report the incident to Child Protective Services which is part of the county Social Services Department. They will keep the name of the reporter confidential. There is a difference in reporting the case to Child Protective Services rather than directly to a law enforcement agency. The difference is that Child Protective Services will send a social worker to evaluate the case and determine its severity. This is one step removed from the law and does not put the responsibility of determining the validity or severity of the case on the workers. Child Protective Services has “mandated reporter status” and will report the case to the law if the decision is made that way. Child Protective Services will also refer the victim and/or offender to therapy (counselors). However, the victim or offender would also have the option of seeking out therapy on their own.

(d) The fourth option is to report the incident to the Police Department, the Sheriff’s Department or the County Probation Department. The initial report can be by telephone or in person followed up by filling out a required form issued by the California Office of the Attorney General.

Options (a), (b) & (c) would usually be the preferred ones – and sometimes a combination of two of them. In more severe cases, there may be instances when option (d) seems preferable.

(7) An offer to help the victim, victim’s parents or the offender in selecting a certified counselor would be in order unless they choose to let Child Protective Services look after that. We have friends who can help us in making these choices because of their associations in the work place. There may be instances where it would be helpful to offer to accompany the victim or the offender on their initial visit to a certified counselor.

(8) If a police report is filed, the family can apply for help with expenses through the California Victim Witness program. If their request is approved, the state of California will pay for counseling sessions for the victim and each member of the victim’s family plus other services and reimbursement for certain costs related to the incident, to the extent to which they are not otherwise covered by insurance.

More information is available online at www.boc.ca.gov or by contacting

California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board
Victim Compensation Program
P.O. Box 3036
Sacramento CA 95812-3036

(9) People who fall into the broad category of “clergy” can receive information of criminal conduct from a person of their congregation which could be legally classified as “penitential communication” and the failure of the clergy member to report this can be legally excused. There is quite a bit of grey area here and room for private interpretation. If an offender brings information about himself/herself to us in a spirit that we deem to be truly repentant, this would be the most clear cut category of “penitential communication.” On the other hand, if a victim brings information to us but doesn’t want it to go any further for reasons that seem valid to us, this could also be classified as this type of communication. If either a victim or an offender asks you to be completely confidential, it would be well to press the point that you would really prefer to discuss it with a very confidential fellow-worker or fellow workers. You may be in a position where you would say, “I cannot keep this completely confidential and still have a clear conscience before God.” That is something you would need to weigh up prayerfully, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Your decision may be influenced by the age of the victim as well. You may be more inclined to respect the plea for confidentiality from a 16-17 year old and less inclined to respect the plea for confidentiality from a 5-10 year old.

(10) Proverbs II: 14 “In the multitude of counselors there is safety.” There is an element of safety involved in a small group of people evaluating any such case. At the same time, it is very important that these matters (along with many others) be handled in a wise and confidential manner so that sensitive matters are not spread indiscriminately among people who do not need to know. We would soon lose the trust of the Lord’s people if we are not wise in this area.

(11) If information comes to us from a third party (neither the victim nor the offender), there is still an obligation (legally and morally) to follow through if there is “reasonable suspicion” that the abuse has occurred.

(12) As workers, we are trusted with our friend’s homes, children, spouses, cars, financial gifts, etc. It is a serious and damaging betrayal of trust if our conduct inflicts the kind of damage described in this paper on any person and family. We also need to recognize that parents may have apprehensions regarding their children being with workers – particularly, in a one on one situation. We should be sensitive to “appearances” and sensitive to the particular apprehensions that some parents may have. Of course, there are other areas of betrayal of trust that can be equally damaging. We need to live within safe parameters. We want to preserve our consecration as workers and the testimony of this ministry.