

Supplement S (d)-303, Yerington Cong. NV #1 \* [Circuit Overseer Report to Watchtower home office]  
Dated: 1/7 – 12/97 [date of Circuit Overseer visit] \*[ ] notes

4. Concerning the matter regarding Brother Dan Fitzwater (now at Lovelock, NV; see his letters dated 12/6/96 and 3/14/94).[This indicates there were previous letters about Fitzwater molesting children] He has been accused of child molesting but he denies it. Many friends complain that the elders are not doing enough as far as handling the Fitzwater case. Some of these ones including entire families have threatened to never come back to the congregation. Yerington is a small town and any news spreads fast. Many townspeople know concerning this alleged case of child abuse. Some prominent persons in Yerington keep asking the elders if this situation has been resolved and if the wrongdoer has been dealt with.

This ordeal has given Jehovah's Witnesses a bad reputation and may be bringing reproach on God's name. Recently, two sisters visiting Yerington from another area noticed posted on the town bulletin board the new tract #34 with the words, "FOR INFORMATION ON CHILD MOLESTATION-CONTACT DAN FITZWATER IN BOTH SPANISH AND ENGLISH KINGDOM HALL OF JW'S, YERINGTON, NV 89447." The elders have this tract on file.

There are 17 girls that have accused Dan Fitzwater of child molesting. Five of these girls are in Yerington, the rest from other states. The ones that are local are the following: Tina X. Mandy X. Annette X. Danielle X. and Dawn X. (put inside a foster home). Richard X. (Tina's dad) and his family have decided to not come to meetings since he feels the elders are doing nothing. He is taking this matter to court before the statute of limitations runs out (it has nearly expired).

Some time ago (when Brother Fitzwater had already left the Yerington Congregation), Brother Richard X. asked Brother David D. Callaham (PO) to accompany him to Dan Fitzwater's daughter X. in order to question her as to whether Dan Fitzwater had molested her. Brother Callaham agreed to go. I was mentioned however at our elders meeting that it would be prudent if an investigative committee was set up by the body [of elders] instead of having of having Brother X. who is not a servant be involved in that "investigation."

Tina X. (12 years old) attempted to commit suicide and was later sent to a rehabilitation home. The X's have hired attorneys to press charges and sue Dan Fitzwater for over \$40,000 that it cost him to help his daughter under rehabilitation. Tina X. accuses Dan Fitzwater of molesting her while she was being babysitted by Dan and his wife when the X's were out of town.

Tina X. wrote me a letter asking four questions: "1. Is the Lovelock congregation going to disfellowship Dan?... (If [so] he doesn't know) ...2. So then basically if you don't, then you're tempting to let him hurt other people?... (if you are) ...3. Why did you let him run, he was in Fallon, then he moved to Lovelock?..... (Amy).....4. Why don't you just disfellowship him now?..... Sincerely, Tina."

I suggested that an investigative committee be formed and to meet with Brother Dan Fitzwater from Lovelock. Yerington has not fully communicated with the Lovelock elders, but things seem to be improving.

This case is severely damaging the spirit of the congregation; a major part of the congregation being affected. There are at least 12 publishers (all regular and active) plus 5 inactive publishers who are complaining that elders are not resolving this matter and not punishing Dan Fitzwater. They just will not let go of this matter despite encouragement and special needs talks given. Hopefully the friends will leave matters in Jehovah's hands (Pr.16:3) and "show a waiting attitude for him." (La. 3:24)

It is discomforting to mention such disappointing news. We pray that Jehovah through his powerful holy spirit will resolve these issues in his own time so that peace may be restored here in the Yerington congregation. Thank you Brothers.

Unitedly serving Jehovah, your Brother,  
Michael S. Emllio NV #1