

Glenn Gasser letter to Wisconsin friends re former prisoners

May 24 2023

Dear Wisconsin Friends,

It was encouraging to be with the other Wisconsin workers & our host family today. Nice to see each continuing in their calling with a deep care for the needs of each in this unsettled time.

It seems necessary to clarify the situation regarding former prisoners here in Wisconsin. To our knowledge the following men in the state have spent time in prison for sex crimes (some underage): Randy Schill, Howard Ferguson, & Price Turner III (all of Appleton) received the gospel while they were in prison. Troy Thompson (Oshkosh) & Enos Bontrager (Fond du Lac) were attending mtgs before their incarceration. Sometime after their release little Sun am & Wed eve groups were formed where there were no children (one mtg now has a family w/a 17 y.o. son). All in those mtgs know their past, have learned about & despise sexual abuse, but care for souls & willingly chose to meet with them. Professionals have advised that those who have a spiritual support group have a much higher success not repeating offence than those completely ostracized from society. If any effort could save one more child from tragedy (whether in our fellowship or not) it seems worth it. The past couple years the former prisoners Price & Howard have attended some of the gospel mtgs in Appleton, each with an individual professing man as a monitor (trained regarding CSA); they sat with them & were to stay with them until leaving the premises. This all was done with full knowledge of, approval of & under the guidance of their parole officer. Though we felt it was being done safely & legally, we have discontinued that & asked that they NOT attend gospel meeting, special mtg or convention (to our knowledge none of these 5 men have been at any special mtg or convention in Wisconsin since their release from prison). John Hahn (Crivitz) also received the gospel in prison (for an adult crime). He works a lot, but occasionally meets with a small group who all know his past. He has agreed not to attend Special Mtgs or Convention. They weren't to attend mtgs out of the area & the local friends knew, but I'm very sorry for any misunderstandings that have been caused by a lack of communication or consideration! If any Wisconsin friends have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact any of the workers here or myself.

We are continuing to pursue further education regarding CSA & a better understanding how to be a support for survivors of it. We realize we aren't trained counselors though and

encourage people to reach out for professional help. We are working on more information to share, as education seems to be one of our best defenses.

Please pray for us as we certainly want to do what is right in God's sight. We haven't always made all the right decisions but have desperately wanted to and tried to in the fear of God. Please Take Care!!

Your brothers, Eric & Glenn