

Hodgie Holgersen arrested in VA, now removed from meetings

Dear Friends,

We are sorry for the sorrow and distress this will likely cause but feel it is necessary to share with you. One of the Virginia friends, Hodgie Holgersen, was recently arrested and charged with taking indecent liberties with a child. He is currently out on bail awaiting trial, and by court order is not permitted to attend any of our meetings.

We were also recently contacted by an advocate for a woman who reported having been molested by Hodgie years ago in another state when she was a child. They were aware of Hodgie's recent arrest and were concerned that he might still be in meetings with children. We want to make it clear that, regardless of legal requirements, there will be no future arrangement for Hodgie to be in meetings without conferring with ALL of our friends in the area where he would attend.

It is strongly recommended by health care professionals that anyone charged with a sexual crime within a group or community be openly identified for the sake of children within that group. Pending Hodgie's trial, our purpose in sending this letter is to prioritize the welfare of our brothers and sisters, and especially the children among us, and to encourage open communication about such things.

Sharing this prior to a verdict is not something we find easy to do, especially when we consider our own need for God's mercy. However, we have learned that cases involving child sexual abuse must be handled differently. The effects on children who experience sexual abuse are devastating and long-lasting. We have come to understand that failure to communicate openly about things like this can cause ongoing trauma for past victims. It can also make victims feel fearful about reporting their experiences.

We trust that everyone will understand that we do not encourage a hateful spirit toward Hodgie. Our hope and belief are that honesty before God and the cleansing blood of Jesus will enable us all to stand before God and be accepted in the day of judgment. When we witness someone facing severe consequences in this life, we're moved to seek the Lord's help to save us all from the eternal consequences of sin.

With care,

The VA/MD/DE/NC Workers