

Press Release

Cover Up Causes Concern

Last week Clive Allen Petrie was found guilty in Nelson of nine counts of indecently assaulting girls under 12 and one of inducing a girl under 12 to do an indecent act on him. The crimes occurred from the 1950s to the 1980s when Petrie was a member of the Exclusive Brethren Church. It is alleged that the Church were made aware of the sexual abuse but did not report the incidents to the authorities.

“This misguided protection of offenders for whatever reason is totally unacceptable “ says Alan Bell, Director of ECPAT Child Alert. “ protecting members of a church, a club, a family only endorses the offences and leaves the perpetrator free to commit further abuses. There is only one course of action when this sort of despicable behaviour is identified and that is to immediately report it to the Police.”

A church spokesperson issued a statement from Sydney claiming the church is opposed to any form of sexual abuse and that offenders should be taken to task.

Mr. Bell says “There is a larger issue here. The very places where children should be the safest can be the very place they get assaulted. Some of this is because offenders take advantage of positions of trust. There have been other cases where institutions such as schools, churches and clubs have chosen to avoid the publicity and fear of damaged reputations by trying to deal with offenders within their own structures. This overlooks the fact that there is a responsibility on all to report any illegal activities to the authorities and to give them the responsibility to act appropriately.”

ECPAT Child Alert is a New Zealand organization that aims to prevent the sexual exploitation of children. For further information refer www.eapat.org.nz

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