



MEDIA ADVISORY

Response and Clarification re: Jason Smoker
September 4, 2009

Members of the Media:

On Friday, August 28, 2009, Jefferson County authorities arrested Jason Smoker, an employee of Red Rocks Baptist Church, charging him with Neglect of an at-Risk Victim.

For more than 60 years, Red Rocks Baptist Church has had a rich history deeply rooted in this community as we have sought to spread the gospel and train men and women to walk according to Biblical Truth. We have been active participants in helping our neighbors through our preschool program, school food drives, and our Addiction-Recovery Program, just to name a few. To that end, we have employed gifted men and women to lead this ministry.

Therefore, it is our position that the actions of Jason Smoker, which occurred in August of 2008 against a church member who has developmental disabilities, were completely unacceptable and do not reflect the Christian character espoused by Red Rocks Baptist Church.

Because we considered this to be a serious act against a fellow church member, we consulted with an attorney at the time to determine if this was an incident that should be reported to the Jefferson County District Attorney's office. We were advised that this was not a reportable offense because the church member who was assaulted was over the age of 18 at the time of the incident. Therefore, we followed our internal policies and took swift action against Jason Smoker, including severe reprimand, changes in duties and job status, and a lengthy disciplinary process.

Recently, this matter was brought to the attention of the District Attorney's office, and a determination was made that charges should be filed. We have been and will continue to be fully cooperative with the investigation.

Certain media reports have suggested that Pastor Ben Klaus of our church had knowledge of the complained-of events before they occurred. However, such reports are incorrect. The information to correct this misimpression has been communicated to and received by the Jefferson County District's Attorney's office. Additionally, widespread media coverage has indicated these actions were done to a child; this also is incorrect. Although the investigation is being handled by the Crimes Against Children's Unit, the person involved was at the time of the incident an adult.

The person upon whom this act was perpetrated is kind and gentle, and he continued to volunteer his time at the church until very recently. We deeply regret the incident.

Mr. Smoker is no longer employed by Red Rocks Baptist Church.

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