

**TRANSCRIPT OF AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE PUBLIC READING OF A LETTER, ISSUED BY THE 'COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE RELIGION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES', OVER THE NEED TO COMPLY WITH CHILD PROTECTION LAWS, WHICH BECAME COMPULSORY FOR "RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS" FROM JULY 2008 ONWARDS IN THE STATE OF VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA**

NOTE: The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses were forced to comply with mandatory child protection laws after they and the Watch Tower Society were criminally charged on July 26, 2011, in the State of Victoria, Australia, in relation to over 3 years of wilful non-compliance with the law.

LETTER READER: ELDER CHRIS THOMPSON

LOCATION: TRARALGON KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

DATE: November 2011

"... [Introduction missing] ... children are protected from harm. We certainly share their concern for the welfare of children. In Victoria, laws have been implemented which require persons who have regular and direct contact with children to have their suitability for such activity checked by a government authority. This is known as a Working with Children Check.

"Unlike many religious organisations, congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses do not sponsor any activities that separate, or isolate, children from their parents. For example, we do not organise Sunday Schools, camps, excursions, religious instructions at schools, or any other activities for children.

"Nevertheless, an adult publisher may, as part of their own personal ministry, have regular contact with a minor, that is a person under 18 years of age who is not a family member, such as when conducting a regular Bible study. Such Bible study activity is part of a publisher's personal ministry ... I'll read that again, again ... Such Bible study activity is part of a per(?) ... publisher's personal ministry and the publisher is not a representative of the Borg ... (whistle) ... Sorry, I'll start that sentence again. Such Bible study activity is part of a publisher's personal ministry and the publisher is not a representative or a volunteer of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia.

"Nevertheless, the individual publisher may individually be required by Victorian law to obtain a Working with Children Check. Therefore, if you think that you need to apply for a Working with Children Check, because of your spiritual activities, please speak to the coordinator of the Body of Elders who will provide you with further information.

"It is a pleasure to be working with you in holding high Jehovah's great name in these momentous last days. We send you our warm Christian love and greetings.

"So brothers, the purpose of this letter is to serve as a reminder to all in the congregation of two facts; first of all, when we share in our field service we are not serving in the capacity of a volunteer or a representative of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. However, this is the second point, if we are in regular contact with a minor, someone under the age of 18, we may still be required by law to have a Working with Children Check. Therefore, if we find ourselves meeting that criteria could you please come and have a talk with myself, as per the direction in the letter there to speak to the coordinator of the Body of Elders, and I will provide you with further direction regarding that.

"Thank you for your attention brothers, we'll hand over to Brother Van Der Sluis who will be handling our part the 'Question Box'."