

Brian Williams,

As an ex-Jehovah's Witness I was delighted to see your video story re the sexual pedophile issue. Despite my former membership and admitted bias, I trust you'll find my comments below to be completely objective.

I have followed the history of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society for the last 53 years. It is not surprising that they quickly published a rebuttal of sorts on their web site. If you haven't yet seen it, I suggest that you take a peek. It's quite brief:
<http://www.jw-media.org/vnr/2122827332/717263.htm>

To save you a little time, what follows is a transcript of the video as provided on that site – words spoken into a camera by Dr. Gail Bethea-Jackson:

I don't think, 18 or 20 years ago, we knew much of anything about pedophiles. It wasn't really looked at as a criminal matter. We didn't publicize it as being an act that needed some criminal intervention, so to speak. We didn't look at it ... or it wasn't ... people didn't have the body of knowledge 18 or 20 years ago to say that this is something that will harm your child emotionally, if you don't address it. Parents didn't know the seriousness, 18 or 20 years ago, and the long-term effects. And as people document the work that they've done, some successes and their failures, that some of that early work did not get to the public. I mean, it was in some New England journal somewhere. But certainly it was in the process of being looked at and studied. That information was not released. We weren't taught that in school. I went to one of the most prestigious social-work schools, at that time, in the country and in all of my studying, we didn't have a course in child abuse.

Some items of contention that you may wish to explore about this rebuttal.

By subscribing to what this Dr. Bethea-Jackson says, it's as if Watchtower officials are trying to say to its membership:

- Pedophilia is something new
- It has recently become criminal
- Knowledge about it was minimal until 18 or 20 years ago (that is, from the time of that video production which must be no less than 5 years old). Try telling that to my son who was abused by a relative 30 years ago.
- We didn't know how serious it was.
- It was not even being studied by experts in their field.
- Experts, like her, were not taught the subject in school

I don't pretend expertise in her field but I find those inferences peculiar – almost uncanny! It wouldn't surprise me if those statements had been made from some 3rd world country witch doctor, or even from our own nation's professionals some 150 years ago.

Some items I would be interested in learning.

1. Does this Dr. Gail Bethea-Jackson represent the mainstream of her profession?
2. How many of her peers have the same views?
3. Is she truly a doctor with the credentials listed on that site?
4. Has her performance during her career been above reproach?
5. Under what circumstances did the Watchtower Society enlist Dr. Gail Bethea-Jackson.

6. Exactly when did Dr. Gail Bethea-Jackson sit in front of Watchtower Society cameras? Interestingly, this same video was a source of contention back in 2002 (5 years ago) inside the online forum **Jehovahs-Witness.com** (**JWD**, primary made up of ex-JW's). The video and the transcript are not dated so there's no telling exactly when the video was produced. There have been attempts to contact this doctor by members of the **JWD** forum but their calls were not returned.
7. Is she one of Jehovah's Witnesses now – or was she a member at the time of the video production?

Sincerely, Leonard R. Miller
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