

RESOLUTION OF THE 2018 JW PROTEST, LONDON

To All Jehovah's Witnesses attending the London 'Be Courageous'! convention

This resolution is sponsored by the 2018 London JW Protest committee (unincorporated), being Lara Kaput, Louise Goode, Jessica Moon, and Neil Gardner.

Resolved, by those here gathered in support of the 2018 JW Protest in London, as held outside the Jehovah's Witnesses 'Be Courageous'! convention, and respectfully and peacefully declared to you, that:

1. **We Send** our warm love, greetings, and fellowship to all honest hearted Jehovah's Witnesses who attended the 'Be Courageous'! convention in London on the weekends of the 11th and 12th and the 18th and 19th of August 2018. We thank you for your understanding that our protest was primarily to draw attention to child abuse issues and child protection issues within Jehovah's Witnesses. We recognise those among you who contacted us privately to thank us and express that they wished they could stand with us publicly. We also appreciate those among the attendees who took the time to speak to us, read our banner messages, or who chose to take photos of us, or photos with us.
2. **We Assure** you that we are not 'mentally diseased' but are primarily stumbled, faded, former, or ex members of the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses. Some of us were never members but are instead loved ones and supporters of those who were.
3. **We Draw** your attention to the fact that *apostate* is defined in the Oxford dictionary as 'a person who renounces a religious or political belief or principle.' We remind you that the word *apostate* does not appear in the Christian Greek Scriptures of the Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation of the Holy Bible* (2013 edition).
4. **We Refuse** to practice shunning or to show 'no natural affection' to our family members. We desire that all be treated with dignity and respect as equal humans regardless of their current or former faith, gender, or their lawful lifestyle choices.
5. **We Abhor** the 'two witness rule' within the context of congregational child sexual abuse. We detest the practice of coercive shunning forced upon family and friends, including child abuse victims who may have actually been denied Scriptural justice. We renounce unreservedly those harmful corporate policies and practises of the Watch Tower Society.
6. **We Encourage** Jehovah's Witnesses living in London and across Britain to 'Be Courageous'! and examine the documented evidence concerning the practices of the Watch Tower Society. We urge everyone to consider the official findings of the recent Australian *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, many of which were highlighted on our colourful displays and signs during the protest. The critical findings were:
 - Within the Australian Jehovah's Witness community of only 68000 members there were just over '1800 victims of child sexual abuse'; and
 - Records obtained by the Royal Commission, under subpoena from Watchtower Australia, identified 1006 alleged perpetrators of child sexual abuse associated with congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses across Australia; and
 - Zero child sexual abuse incidents or allegations were reported by elders or by Watchtower Australia to law enforcement authorities despite no Scriptural principle preventing such reporting.
7. **We Implore** the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses to stand up and bear witness by acknowledging the pain and suffering of these known abused children and all child sexual abuse victims within the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide, by, in the first instance:

- a) Recognising that the allegations concerning the prevalence of child sexual abuse within the Jehovah’s Witness congregations are not ‘apostate-driven lies’ but are the testimony of the child victims themselves; and
 - b) Accepting responsibility for the collective failures of former leaders of Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the Watch Tower Society, to adequately address child sexual abuse and child protection issues; and
 - c) Having the strength and faith needed to believe that if you apologise and say sorry your apology will contribute towards healing the pain.
8. **We Ask** the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses to adopt the following practical and reasonable recommendations found in the Final Report as published by the Australian *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* in relation to Case Study 29 (“The response of Jehovah’s Witnesses and Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia Ltd to allegations of child sexual abuse”):
- a) “The Jehovah’s Witness organisation should abandon its application of the two-witness rule in cases involving complaints of child sexual abuse” (Recommendation 16.27); and
 - b) “The Jehovah’s Witness organisation should revise its policies so that women are involved in processes related to investigating and determining allegations of child sexual abuse.” (Recommendation 16.28) This could be as simple as having elders scripturally deal with the *sin* while, for example, qualified sisters provide practical assistance to female child abuse victims to report the *crime* to law enforcement authorities; and
 - c) “The Jehovah’s Witness organisation should no longer require its members to shun those who disassociate from the organisation in cases where the reason for disassociation is related to a person being a victim of child sexual abuse.” (Recommendation 16.29)
9. **We Thank** the ‘Be Courageous’! Jehovah’s Witness convention committee for accepting our peaceful presence, and we thank ExCeL London for providing us with security and a location on their property, adjacent to the main entrance, for the 2018 JW Protest in London.
10. **We Invite** the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses to ‘Be Courageous’! and ‘Say Sorry’! to all child abuse victims from within the Jehovah’s Witnesses, past and present, some of whom are here today adopting this resolution, so that they and us may heal as we still hurt.

Mover: Lara Kaput

Seconders: Louise Goode, Jessica Moon, and Neil Gardner

Date: Saturday 18th August 2018

Links

www.SaySorry.org

<https://jwcommunitypodcast.simplecast.fm/>

www.facebook.com/JWProtest

www.JWFacts.com

www.watchtowerdocuments.org

www.JWSupportFoundation.org

www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/case-studies/case-study-29-jehovahs-witnesses

www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/case-studies/case-study-54-institutional-review-jehovahs-witnesses

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/recommendations>