

RADIO SPOT # 13

NEW CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENT FOR CLERGY

This is Attorney Timothy W. Denney for Christians and the Law. In December of 2002, a new Michigan law took effect that now requires members of the clergy to report child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect it. The law's definition of child abuse is broad, and includes abuse by parents, guardians, teachers and certain other categories of individuals. Members of the clergy must verbally report the abuse to the State Police immediately and file a written report within 72 hours. Not following this law, even inadvertently, can have serious consequences. Clergy who fail to report child abuse when required to do so can be charged with a crime. Clergy who make good faith child abuse reports are given immunity from civil liability. Clergy are not required to report child abuse disclosed in certain confidential counseling sessions. Members of the clergy will need to give careful consideration to understanding the sobering obligations imposed by this new law.

If you would like a free written outline explaining this new law in more detail, please call me, Timothy Denney, at (877) 256-1758.