

# Shedding The Cloak Of What I Thought

(This is a post from Main Chat from [Stephen Clark](#). I asked if I could post it so it does not get lost. Used by permission.)

Hello, I have been quietly reading your posts since my daughter suggested that I should join and have a look. My first impression is that you people are finding a wonderful way to encourage and help each other through this period of turmoil and that is a refreshing thing to see.

I am a 62 yr old father of 4 girls, gr father of 8, private investigator who was born into a family that has been part of this fellowship since shortly after it's inception. My great grandfather hosted one of the first conventions in Canada and my family still lives on 2 conv grounds. Uncle, brother, niece and cousins are active in the ministry and countless relatives are still in the fellowship. I was a part of this fellowship for close to 50 yrs but was deemed "unworthy to participate in this fellowship" by overseer and henchman several years ago.

Fortunately, this action spurred me to look deeper into my soul and when I looked there, I found 50 years of Pharisee life lurking under the devout, "we are the only true children of God" facade that I had been living. So, a journey began, and I can't thank that overseer enough for his twisted view of Christianity..... it forced me out from under a horrible cloud of nuanced, unwritten, man made directives and orders and social manipulation and allowed me to see that we are all led by the Spirit of Jesus, if we just follow Him and only Him. I am so glad to be free to just let Jesus lead me.

Having said all of this, I still appreciate the wonderful years that I had, worshipping and studying with some wonderful Godly people in homes where many shared their deepest parts of their souls and encouraged me. The fellowship of this group cannot be matched by any other group that I know of.

BUT..... my p.i. background causes me to deal in facts, not emotions and therefore, I began to investigate why there has always been CSA and SA lurking under the surface in this group..... I remember lying in bed and hearing my grandparents discussing some of this with my parents many many years ago.

Why was Irvine, Cooney and many more workers very publicly excommunicated in the early years for apparently simply having a difference of opinion... why was Edgar Massey so publicly ex-communicated and yet all those CSA perpetrators were quietly covered up and even if they had to be removed, the official version was usually that their health was failing, the standard one when I was young was "their nerves", only to find out in later years that it was their "hormones".

After much searching and consideration, I believe the culprit is called "human nature." The saying, "Absolute power corrupts, absolutely" comes into play with this group right from the day that Mr. Irvine decided to start his own group in a very similar way to the current fellowship group that he was preaching in.

As soon as you form a communal group, religious or not, if the leader(s) is/are not answerable to any other human, then as soon as a corrupt human becomes one of the leaders, the whole basket of apples is spoiled and it appears that this happened quicker in this group than it may have even happened in the Catholic church. Were it not for social media and some workers, parents with some backbone, this may well have continued for years to come and it may still continue if those "leaders" are successful in making a token gesture of reform, smoothing it over as an anomaly and successfully burying it all once again in the name of "godliness and forgiveness."

In my opinion, the problem is similar to the problem of the Catholic church and others. Someone formed a group, made themselves the leader of the group and made no way for them or any other human to have checks and balances, in the event that a "corrupt" human might find their way into a leadership position. As long as the "leader(s)" are truly Godly and are truly being directed by God, then there is no problem but if you look at the perpetrators of CSA/SA and other abuses, there is a

pattern..... most of them are very gifted, convincing speakers, have grown the confidence of the followers by their smooth, humble, contrite spirit (and their hell fire sermons about sin) and many have been brought into leadership roles because even the leader(s) who chose them are convinced. Many of them were committing these horrific abuses during and after those "wonderful" hell fire sermons. However, once one of these gets into a senior leadership role, they are free to not only abuse at will, but they are also influential in promoting other like minded tyrants who, like themselves are smooth as silk.

There is no way for the people to have any influence in these matters because the leaders have convinced the people that they are superior, they are closer to God because they give their life to preach the Gospel and therefore they are the authority. An example of this is Alberta, where many elders and families who spoke up about financial and other abuses and improprieties by the overseer and his henchmen were summarily excommunicated and any worker who even visited them were struck from the workers list. As a follower, I heard from the workers, that these elders and others had got a wrong spirit and were trying to cause troubles in the "Way", so for several years, I believed that to be true, why??.... because the workers told me that. Only later did I find out the truth of the matter but, still, I was told to "let God deal with it. We are God's only true family and He will sort it all out in His own time."

I truly feel that there is merit in having a fellowship like this.... it is the most enjoyable, encouraging, welcoming type of sharing and worship that I have ever experienced but there MUST be some safeguards against tyranny from those who ultimately put their own vulgar desires paramount to the health, welfare and safety of those who participate in the fellowship.

Again, in my opinion, the founding of this fellowship was flawed because it was started by someone who felt that their appointment of other leaders would always be correct, that they would never select an actor. Since the premise is that the leader(s) answer to God, if an actor gets into a leadership position, they are not being led by God. There are only 2 powers outside of this realm that we answer to or are led by and if it is not God.... then there is only one other alternative and thus the house of cards falls. If said leader(s) try to cover and bury such abuses, try to dismiss or

diminish the victim or spread or allow to be spread, false information, then they too are not being led by God, ... so, who do you think is leading them?

The collective guidance by the Spirit that Jesus promised to send to guide us is far greater and far more apt to be manifested by Godly people as a whole than it is by one or two people who claim to have a corner on spirituality because of their vocation or calling.

I know that there will be those who will say that I am doubting the power of God to guide His people and to select those who will lead them but that only holds true IF those who are leading are truly godly and current events as well as history will show that this is not always true, especially when there is no one except a few men to decide who preaches where, which preacher gets how much to live on, what the doctrine will be, who will wear what, etc...

I remember the scoffing of workers, parents, etc., at the doctrines of the JW, Mennonites, Amish, Hutterites, et al, yet, to them, all the unwritten doctrines of the 2x2 group seemed so logical and just like the other groups, a verse could be found to support their view.

I am reminded that Jesus promised to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit to guide us,... perhaps we should take advantage of what is offered to us instead of relying on a group of people who have elevated themselves to a role of leadership due to their vocation or calling. The unfortunate part of this is that many of the people in this fellowship tend to be the ones who do the elevation of these people through their "worker worship" and fawning, gushing testimonies. Jesus sent the ministry out to preach the good news to ALL nations and bring them to Him, not to oversee the flock, not to police the flock, not to be elevated in authority over the flock, but TO BRING THEM TO HIM. Now,... carry on preaching the good news to the nations and let Jesus' Spirit do what it was intended to do.

I even see some who are asking permission or advice from workers or suggesting asking the worker(s) for their thoughts on these matters right here on this group chat. These people are not elevated above anyone and do not have any better access to the Holy Spirit that was promised than you have. Pray earnestly, discuss it with those in your little group, each of you has access to this same wonderful avenue of eternal wisdom and your little group can help each other through the trials of life, just like those in the beginning times did.

One of the easiest ways to lose your true focus on the Will of God is to abdicate responsibility for your salvation to another person. Consider the advice from those in your little group that you feel spiritually confident in but always pray and learn to be still and take charge of your own salvation. If you are honest with yourself and God, you will never go astray from his Will.

To finish off my first and hopefully only, post on a group chat, I believe that this is possibly the best, most encouraging fellowship that I have observed, but until something is put in place where the Godly spiritual guidance that so many of you Godly people have, can be channeled to ensure that there is an oversight of both the finances and leadership of this fellowship, this history will only repeat itself again and again.

I have chosen consciously, to leave my personal story out of this chat because, while it identifies very closely with some of the happenings, it is far less important than the need to establish oversight of these mortal human beings so that, should an actor or perpetrator be put in a place of leadership, there is a group to weed it out rather than cover it up and dismiss it. No financial oversight + no doctrinal oversight + no safety oversight = eventual corruption when left to a few mortal men.

I am sorry for having taken so much space on your chat, but I feel that all of the semantics, like length of hair, sitting or standing, single or married workers, etc. are not going to solve the problems at hand. You have much much more serious things to work out and leaving it to the workers to solve for you is akin to asking the wolf to carry the wounded lamb home so you can care for it. There are many many well

intended and good workers in this fellowship, but very few of them are in any place to effect any change so long as they are in fear of being "taken off the list" by those who claim to be in authority over them. Remember, there are quite a few of them in my family, so I know how it works!

I know that there will be those who disagree with my thoughts and that is what this is all about.... just a few thoughts to try to help out a little. What happens with all of this is of no consequence to me personally, but I pray that each of you will be able to take, even the revelations and encouragement that you have received from these chats and go forward into a deeper relationship with your Saviour. It took some very dark times for me to learn the patience of waiting on the Lord but in the end, it actually helped to shed the cloak of what I thought was Christianity and brought me ever so much nearer to my Saviour.

Bless you all.