

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Northern Ireland Origin

The history of the church is hidden from the members. Questions are quickly evaded, avoided or squelched. There are a few workers who will admit privately that William Irvine started the fellowship but some younger workers have never heard of him.

The newspaper in Eniskillen, Ireland, **The Impartial Reporter and Farmer's Journal** dating from 1903-1917 chronicles the origin. These news articles were eye-witness reports and great detail is given to doctrine and sermon notes. References are made to factions within the church, as well as emotional problems observed in the congregation. Some articles were written by members in defense of the workers. Due to so much demand to see those old newspapers, **The Impartial Reporter and Farmers Journal** news office has stopped allowing people to handle their original newspapers. Efforts are now being made to put those old copies on microfilm.

Personal letters and statements made by early workers also give information regarding the origin of the group in the late 1800's with William Irvine as the founder.

William Irvine broke away from the Faith Mission about 1897 preaching in Enniskillen, Ireland. His converts, young village people were attracted by his charisma, commitment and prophecies. They had extreme confidence in his allegorical view of scripture.

From all personal accounts, William Irvine had tremendous charisma 'til his dying day. Edward Cooney joined Irvine in his attacks against Christian churches, branding them as "Babylon." Irvine and Cooney's ideas, prejudices and methods attracted a few wherever they went. And, *a few is all they wanted*, because "*narrow is the way and few there be that find it.*" In America, their Scottish/Irish brogue and colloquialisms were intriguing even though their messages were confusing. The workers' commitment and strict regulations attracted people's

attention. The use of guilt, fear, and unusual application of scriptures attracted crowds. The mystique of a group that claimed to be the only True Church was compelling. The workers' metaphorical use of scripture drew people away from a literal understanding of the Bible. Some people accepted whatever the workers said without question because they sounded so sure of themselves, and because they appeared so selfless. Their sermons were full of retribution against everyone, especially Christians, people with money, education, nice clothing, Blacks, women and Jews. These prejudices struck a chord with certain people. The workers and those who followed them were positive that all that other Christian leaders and churches wanted was money. Their message held great appeal for people who didn't want to share their money or give their money for God's purposes.

A book titled **The Secret Sect** by Doug and Helen Parker, of Australia, is the account of the founding of William Irvine's church, his early ministry and doctrine. Doug had offered to go into the work, but soon learned from an outsider that the group had originated in the British Isles, rather than being of first century origin as he had been told. When he questioned John Hardie, the overseer in Australia, about the information, he met such unreasonable antagonism that he decided to do more inquiry on his own. He traveled extensively gathering information from ex-workers and ex-members from all over the world in order to make this information available to the public. Due to the fact that the book was privately published in Australia it is difficult to obtain copies. This has enabled the workers to continue the fictitious presentation of a New Testament origin. Most of the book covers the historical problems and only briefly explains some of the doctrinal heresies promoted by the workers. The doctrinal errors are the most serious problems of the church. The workers sometimes buy as many copies of the book as possible and burn them so that people cannot obtain them.

In England and Ireland most people are aware of the origin of this fellowship, even though it isn't discussed very often. Only in Asia, Africa, Europe, New Zealand, Australia and America have the workers tried to cover up the history of the church with various lies. It is a simple task to verify its background. In Ireland, even people who aren't members are familiar with its history because it made such interesting news for so many years. The village of Rathmolyon still feels the rift Irvine made in their neighborhood.

Court Cases

There were two court cases in the British Isles involving this church. One was regarding the law designed to prevent prostitution. It was a wage guaranty law for women stating that all English women must be paid a certain amount for any work that they did. William Irvine testified in court and lied, stating that all the sister workers were paid eight shillings per week for preaching the gospel. Yet, in meetings he accused people of being hirelings if they took wages for preaching the gospel. The friends and workers were aware of this lie but said nothing. (Lying is considered entirely permissible for the “good” of the church.) In contrast, Christians have been put to death for their faith rather than lie about what they believe.

The other court case occurred when some young people became workers against their parents’ wishes. This fellowship brought separation into Christian homes when the children disagreed with their parents over the doctrine and teachings of this church. One man was so enraged when his three daughters became workers that he accused Irvine and Cooney of white slavery and immoral conduct. Irvine sued him for slander and won the case. In doing so, the workers were required to state under oath the origin and founder of the church. They testified that William Irvine was the founder of the church. (It is possible that the father really knew of some immorality. Such things frequently happen within the church but people rarely believe it because the dress code makes them **appear** nonsexual and prudish.)

In 1979, George Walker claimed that the church was started by a “group” of people. Perhaps he wanted to avoid association with William Irvine because of Irvine’s reputation and false predictions. Does claiming that “a group started it” justify the lie about its first century apostolic origin? William Irvine wrote a letter in 1921 stating that he started the Jesus Way. The Faith Mission wrote several magazine articles stating that Irvine started it and other workers who followed him left written statements confirming his leadership. Many of Irvine’s relatives declare that he was the founder. Dozens of newspaper articles state that Irvine was the founder. Court records prove that several times under oath different workers stated that William Irvine was the founder. At that time they were proud of William Irvine. They had no reason to deny his leadership.

Six of the original nine workers who followed Irvine eventually left the fellowship and renounced it. Every person involved with the beginning has stated that Irvine originated the “Alpha Revelation” about Matthew 10, except George

Walker who tried to evade the issue by claiming it was a group who started it. George Walker the Carrolls and Willie Jamieson never renounced William Irvine's prejudices, prophecies or revelations. Instead, they continued to teach them.

Copy of letter written by William Irvine to another worker

August 17, 1921

My dear Bro.

Was glad to see your letter.

God made me the first head of the family. He did the calling by me, and now these past seven years he is doing the choosing, for many are called, few chosen.

It was so wonderful. Both in numbers who heard, the numbers who professed, the numbers of workers, the ground covered and the clearness of the truth as it is in Jesus. But the end of the Jesus Way is to choose his bride from among those who have had all these priviledges, and it's wonderful how few prove by their actions that they have been born of God, and made partakers of his nature, which expresses it in Love, Light and Light such as we see revealed in Jesus.

If you can understand Revelations 12, you can understand the whole conflict, which is going on in the Testimony.

The woman clothed with the sun, or the proof of God working in them, this is the bride or chosen, the moon under her feet; simply mean recognizing those who shine by the light gotten through others, without ever having been sealed of God. If you take away all that God taught both workers and saints through my lips and life, there is not much left. My presence used to make most of them very small, because they knew and I knew they were only repeating what they had heard with little evidence of God in them or with them. A crown of stars on her head I often wonder how people can be so blind to all that's been going on these past seven years, and the meaning of it all, when it was so clear and plain to me. But I don't anymore as I recognise God gives a crown of stars to the head of the bride. While the rejected of God seek to place a crown of thorns there. The woman cries travailing in pain and pained to be delivered. This is point of the whole conflict. The bringing forth of the man child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. As one of the witnesses of Revelations Eleven this is not far off, now, and will settle the whole controversy and put an end to all the claims of all those who set themselves up as apostles and prophets.

The dragon with seven heads is those who set themselves up as leaders of the testimony and use their horns of authority to hurt others and are claimed by men as leaders. Whose chief work is to resist and gainsay all that the woman or bride, see and say as if they could hinder God's purpose...This is enough to enable you to see the whole conflict and if you are part of the bride the Spirit will give you enough light to deliver you from the power of the greatest set of robbers in the world history, who thought they could rob me and those of what God had given them.

If you are a part of the dragon, nothing can help you. But the day when they will taste of the reward of their wickedness, then they will weep and wail and gnash their teeth, and the blind will

have proved, that following the blind leaders ends in the ditch.

Paul was the head which did the calling and was the head which did the choosing the seven years he was in jail. The stone which the builders rejected is always the one which God has chosen as the head of the corner. Those who fall on it or become with the rejected shall be broken or made to suffer. But those on whom it shall fall or who are guilty of they done and rejected, it shall grind him to powder, and as you see in the finish of all the Apostels and Prophets lives who were of God.

*Yet yours truly in him,
W.E. Irvine*

This letter is a good example of Irvine's use of the scripture in allegorical fashion; a practice that continues to this day. It emphasizes the characteristic reference to *the Spirit*. He declared himself as the founder of the "*Jesus Way*." He named Paul as the head of the church rather than Jesus. The letter displays his ignorance of scripture, doctrine, theology, illogical thought, grammar and spelling, common traits among the early workers and converts that many people ridiculed. The early workers scorned those who were educated. The letter reveals Irvine's enormous pride and scorn for others, even his followers. It reveals his belief that he was one of the prophets mentioned in Revelation 11: 3, his reason for going to Palestine. And it shows his anger towards those who had excommunicated him. He said they robbed him. They did rob him. They robbed him of his followers and his source of income. They also discredited him but they didn't discredit his theology. They said he lost his mind, became delusional, and had affairs with women. Some pretend to feel sorry for him because he lost his mind and yet they cast aspersions on anyone who questions his biblical views.

This letter, alone, should cause people to reconsider the theology of this church! His letters were saved and circulated among those who loved and followed him. Many of his letters are available on the internet. **<http://home.wwdb.org/resource/WmIIetIndex.htm#Collection>**

Irvine's parents were Christians but he wasn't interested in religion until age 30, when his sister died, at which time he developed a great interest in the hereafter. He made his first profession of faith in a Presbyterian mission. He began preaching at the age of 34, being trained and supported by the Govan Faith Mission. After a few years with the Govan Mission he claimed to have had a revelation that people were to follow Christ's instructions to the disciples in Matthew 10. He drew away some other people from that organization still

utilizing the same terminology and customs of the Govan Faith Mission, such as black hats, black stockings and thick heeled shoes for the women. Irvine's church went through a step by step evolution into what it is today. There are hundreds of historical documents to illustrate this. It is not true that this church is the same yesterday, today and forever, although that is what the workers like to claim.

Irvine's Gospel

Irvine's messages were not pastoral sermons or Christian evangelistic messages. They were tirades against things he didn't like. He used Biblical verses and metaphors as springboards into his ideas about religious reform. He called his services Gospel Meetings, but he didn't present the biblical gospel. He presented a new "gospel" of his own to capture followers in the "Jesus Way." He claimed that everyone who did not follow him was damned to hell. He said, "*The aristocracy of heaven are the people who dress the cheapest: and the finest linen and the silk handkerchief is the mark of the man who is going to hell.*" His sermons were full of prejudicial statements against the people, clothing and institutions he disliked.

Babylon

Irvine and Cooney accused Christianity of being "Babylon." Their use of the term 'Babylon' and scorn for Christian churches were based on their antagonism against the doctrines, traditions, charities, schools and buildings associated with Christianity. But what does scripture say about Babylon? Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Habakkuk tell why God hated Babylon. Babylon is in Iraq. God used the king and army of Babylon to punish Jerusalem for Israel's unbelief, disobedience and idolatry. But then God rebuked Babylon for claiming that their "gods" had enabled them to conquer the Jews. God rebuked Babylon's excessive cruelty to the Jews. The Lord said he hated Babylon for pride against God, for lying, for worshipping graven images, their enslavement of Israelites, their drunkenness, arrogance, self-gratification, witchcraft, divination, occultism, demon-worship, astrology, child sacrifice, prostitution, and stealing golden vessels from the Temple of the Lord. Isaiah 47, Jeremiah 50:29-51:64, Daniel 5.

God's condemnations of Babylon don't match Irvine and Cooney's objections to Christianity or education. God did not condemn faith in the Blood of Jesus Christ for salvation. God did not condemn the use of buildings for worship or teaching scripture. God did not condemn praise and worship of Himself. He

did not condemn scholarship or education. God did not condemn cleanliness and good grooming. He did not condemn women or Blacks or Jews. God did pronounce judgment against anyone who rejected His Son, but that was not a racial judgment. It was judgment against idolatry, something that all people are judged for. He did not condemn clothing, dancing, jewelry or cosmetics.

Babylon, south of Baghdad, is in Iraq, and is one of the most anti-Semitic, anti-Christian places on earth. The Islamic religion has been trying to eradicate Christians and Jews since Muhammad's time in 627AD. Enemies of Israel fit the description of Babylon, not Christianity. And, there has been speculation for centuries that Rome is linked with Babylon in the last days because Rome is built on seven hills and fits several (Revelation 17:9) descriptions prophesied about the woman and the beast. This is a real possibility because Roman Catholic Popes, cardinals, and bishops opposed public access to scripture and have murdered and burned millions of Christians and Jews (from the time of Constantine into the 20th century) who disagreed with their authority, conversions at the point of sword, infallibility of the Pope, worship of Mary, veneration of idols and saints, rules against marriage for priests and nuns, purgatory, worship and sale of false holy relics, false scripture, false doctrines, sale of indulgences, moral excesses and unscriptural teaching. Although linked in history Roman Catholicism and Christianity are not the same belief systems.

Irvine made a great deal out of Matthew 7:13. *“Wide is the gate leading to destruction and narrow is the gate that leads to life everlasting and few there be that find it.”* He rejected the salvation of every Christian on earth except those who followed him. So that really narrowed the way! Yet Revelation 7:9 describes a multitude that **no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language** before the throne, wearing white robes, worshipping God. The Lord can count the stars and the sand on the seashore, the hairs of our heads. Men have the capability to count enormous quantities, yet this huge number of people, beyond counting, illustrates that there will be more people saved than the few predicted by William Irvine and his followers. Jesus is the only Gate to heaven. All other religions are systems in which people try to get into heaven by their own merit. Yes, there are more people doomed to destruction than are going to heaven, but there are still infinitely more people in heaven than the piddling amount being reached by the workers who hide their message from the world. The workers' way to heaven is a religion of Irvine's rules. The Two by Two belief system is not biblical or Christian. The Two by Two belief

system is not a “Spirit filled” church at all, no matter how much they talk about Jesus, the Christ and the Spirit. They aren’t the same characters mentioned in scripture. Their definition of God isn’t biblical. They have made a God of their own choosing.

I John 2:9 says that anyone who claims, “*I am in the light*” but rejects another Christian is still in darkness. Anyone who loves other Christians is walking in the light and does not cause anyone to stumble.

When William Irvine and Eddie Cooney began opposing Christianity, they did not give good, specific scriptural reasons why they considered every other Christian in the world as hell bound. They did not say they disagreed with a specific church or specific pastors because of specific doctrinal reasons. They didn’t use scriptural logic to confront other churches because of baptism, doctrines, or moral issues. They didn’t differentiate between what other churches taught or types of church administrations. No! The reasons they gave were clothing, hair, beards, attractiveness, outward appearance, buildings, education, money, or financial support for the ministry. They condemned everyone who didn’t follow William Irvine and themselves. One man from a small town in Ireland pronounced every person in the world as hell bound because they weren’t following him and his “group.”

The original workers were young country people, easily influenced and proud of William Irvine and his revelation at first. After a few years, the fruit of his character became more obvious and an embarrassment. He was verbally abusive to them as well as to the public at large. He was selfish and took money from them. The few remaining workers tried to disassociate themselves from him by excommunicating him and refusing to acknowledge his existence. They claimed that their fellowship was the original church started by Jesus in Palestine. Some workers claimed that knowledge of the “Truth” had been underground because of persecution and did not come to light until 1897. This is another falsehood. There have always been many other churches existing alongside the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Anglican churches. The Hugonots, the Waldensians, the Anabaptists, the Hussites, the Calvinists, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, Quakers, the Church of Ireland, the Pilgrims, the Independent Bible Churches, the Puritans, the Congregationalists, the Amish, the Mennonites, the Dutch Reformers and countless others. They were martyred and persecuted by Roman Catholics even more than Jewish people were, but they didn’t hide until 1897 or 1950 or whenever it is that workers want to

admit the existence of their beliefs. It is simply not true that Irvine was carrying on an apostolic ministry from the beginning of the New Testament. The workers do not have any connections with any historical churches or apostolic origins. They originated with William Irvine's malicious and unscriptural attacks on Christians.

No Name Or Lots Of Names?

The first workers called themselves "Pilgrims" while working with the Govan Faith Mission preachers. They quickly acquired the nickname "Tramp Preachers" because they gave up all their money and belongings to preach "the gospel" and wore old clothing and brown underwear to draw attention to their poverty. They used bicycles for transportation in the beginning days. The Mormon Church also sends Mormon boys out two by two. Irvine copied more ideas from Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Catholics than he did from Christians.

Irvine and his followers also earned the name "Go-Preachers" because they would "go-preach" "two by two" (hence the nickname "Two By Two's") without money and "tramp" from place to place. The Catholics in the village of Rathmolyon called them the "White Mice." Many nonmembers called them "Cooneyites" after Edward Cooney who was one of the more eloquent members of the ministry. However, the church never used that name at any time. They told the workers and friends to tell others that "*we are not the Cooneyites and never have been*". By refusing to accept the name of any person it made it easier to excommunicate someone whenever they wanted and it kept them invisible in the community. They could preach and do whatever they wanted without being held accountable.

The group has always been secretive about their members, their workers' names, their home addresses, their meeting places and their beliefs. Their meetings are not open to the public, only by invitation. They sometimes put an advertisement in a newspaper for their transient gospel meetings, but they never list the location of their Sunday morning meetings or midweek meetings because strangers are not welcome. They don't want outsiders to know what they believe because their beliefs are an embarrassment to them. They are ashamed to let outsiders know what they believe because it sounds so arrogant. They can't hold an intelligent conversation about the Bible because they know

so little. They believe God doesn't love anyone but them. They think He has rejected Christians and Jews and they are the new spiritual Israel.

Redefined Vocabulary

Irvine objected to the doctrine and practice of tithing so he redefined the meaning of tithing: *“Tithes’ is to hear and obey; the Spiritual meaning of bringing the tithes to the storehouse or those who give God his own place and house in hearing and obeying, will find plenty.”* But is that the biblical definition of tithing? No. His definition doesn't make sense. “Tithes” means “a tenth.” Or, used as a verb, it means “to pay a tenth.” What do you think God felt about Irvine's change in a definition in order to avoid obedience in giving the firstfruits to the Lord? Read Malachi 3. *“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me! ...Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in My house....”* God says He will bring financial ruin to all those who rob Him. In the beginning Irvine expected all his converts to sell all and “go preach,” and they were to give him all the proceeds. The money was used to send Irvine and other “go-preachers” to other countries. Irvine thought that if they gave up everything that the ability to work miracles, “signs of the apostles” would be given them. But it never happened, so they rationalized a different approach towards prayer. They discouraged people from praying for natural help from God and instead said that God is only interested in our spiritual lives. The verses that said God would supply for the needs of His people were thought to apply to the workers only, not property owning believers. The scripture that says, *“Ask and you will receive,”* is ignored or spiritualized. Irvine robbed God so it is only fitting that his followers robbed Irvine.

Hirelings

What is a hireling? Who is the good shepherd? Irvine said, *“A hireling is one that wouldn't work, were it not for the pay.”* He considered himself a good shepherd and accused other Christian leaders of being hirelings, saying their only motive for preaching was money. Carefully read all the scriptures on this topic. John 10, Hebrews 13:20; Psalm 23. The hireling is *one who doesn't own the sheep and who flees when the wolf appears.* The Bible **doesn't** say, *one who receives pay for his services or one who is hired, or who wouldn't work unless he is paid.* A hireling is anyone other than God. No one else can protect or stay with the sheep. God alone owns the sheep. The scriptures are clear on that point. Scripture isn't referring to apostles, preachers or anyone else but Jesus Christ. Before He left

the earth, Jesus told Peter to “*Feed my lambs and feed my sheep.*” Jesus conquered death, satan and hell by laying down his life for the sheep. John 10:1-21 is a sermon about Jesus as the door and as the good shepherd. There is only one door and only one good shepherd. Jesus promised to never leave or forsake those who are His. Jesus is the one who helps us resist sin. Jesus is our Savior and Provider. Jesus is standing with us as our intercessor when we meet the Father. No one else can go through death with us. Jesus is the Voice that the sheep recognize.

Real Christian leaders don’t claim to be good shepherds who lay down their lives for the sheep, even when they do lay down their lives for the sheep. They know who the Good Shepherd is. The workers say, “*Sin is only atoned for by giving a life,*” inferring that giving their lives in the ministry continues the atoning work of Christ. Leo Stancliff said, “*There is not one verse in the Bible that says we are saved by the blood of Christ.*” Some workers have claimed that the workers are our only hope of salvation because they alone can confer the Spirit to others. But that isn’t what the Bible says. Leviticus 17:11 says, “*It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.*” I John 1:7 says, “*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*” Hebrews 9:22 “*...and without shedding of blood is no remission.*” Hebrews 10;10 “*we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*” The workers acknowledge that they aren’t important, that only Jesus is our Savior, but they still insist that people can’t receive the Savior except through them, so they contradict themselves all in one breath. They can’t have it both ways. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that saves, not their blood, not their lives. It was Jesus’ life that made His blood effective. It wasn’t His example life that saves. There is only One Way to God, through faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice. God gives the Holy Spirit directly to believers, not through the workers.

Irvine claimed to be a good shepherd because he preached without taking collections. He accused other pastors of being hirelings because they spent their lives working for the church and received payment from their parishioners. Irvine discouraged people from trusting in the sacrifice of Christ alone by saying that people also must follow and obey the workers. He also discouraged people from trusting that salvation is secure. Irvine discouraged people from trusting in the Word of God alone. Irvine said that people must hear a worker preach before they could be saved. He said it wasn’t enough to read God’s Word and pray to receive Jesus. The workers don’t believe that Jesus’ sacrifice is sufficient because they think that workers must give up all, laying down their lives for the

sheep. They think eternal life is as shaky as their approval rating. Irvine wanted people to renounce the Christian faith. He renounced all Christian doctrines and financial responsibilities for spreading the Word of God. He renounced friendship with other Christians and service to the body of Christ, service to orphans and widows, and help for people in cruel bondage to sin. He and his followers renounced the biblical Christian heritage, history, doctrines and theology. They didn't preach against sin. They renounced love and care for respectable pastors, evangelists and missionaries and their families who have given their lives to the study and teaching of God's Word. They renounced all those who spent their lives in word study, publishing concordances and Bible dictionaries, saying *"they were making merchandise of God's Word."* They renounced the use of buildings consecrated to the service of God. God called us to repent and renounce our sins, not repent and renounce Christianity and Christian people. **Irvine and his followers have taught people to disbelieve and disobey scripture.**

Their attacks against Christians, the wealthy, and the educated created quite a stir and lots of attention. Irvine's enemy was society, rather than sin. The Church of Ireland's congregation of Rathmolyon considers the "White Mice" hypocrites because Irvine's founding principle was povertyism and now his present day followers are the wealthiest, most ostentatious people in the village. And because they use the Church of Ireland's cemetery without regard for the cemetery rules.

At first they preached in Methodist buildings until the Methodists found out that the workers were attacking them and undermining faith in scripture. Then they were forced to move into the open air, in tents, portable buildings or rented buildings.

Irvine redefined the meaning of the word 'church': *"The true meaning of 'church' in the New Testament is those who have heard the Voice of God, thru His Servants, and will have nothing to do with the traditional forms of worship they have been brought up in from their childhood. Jesus and all the Prophets and Apostles were outside the whole religious world of their day, and I have been the same for 36 years, tho' brought up Presbyterian til I was 30."*

Oddly, his followers were impressed with the redefinition of words and didn't seem to object. In fact, they felt free to redefine anything they could think of. Irvine's definition of the word "gospel" was *"God in a man speaking."* The scriptural definition means "Good News of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus

Christ. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ.” Today the workers say, “*the Gospel is anything that the workers say.*” They have made the good news bad news.

In the beginning when they tested “the gospel meetings” it was a call to renounce all possessions to become preachers, not as it is today to become a member of the congregation. However, that changed after a few years. So the message of “the gospel” became a call to follow the workers in the Jesus Way, and provide places for the workers to stay as they preached “the gospel.” The meeting in the home was a later development. There are several testimonies telling of the pressure put on some people to leave their families and children and “*go preach.*”

When they tested “the gospel meetings,” they challenged people to follow the workers in the “Jesus Way.” It wasn’t a call to repent of sin and trust in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. People were to place their faith in the workers as the only true ministers and in the Way as the only true Church on earth. They also put pressure on people to leave their families and children and “go preach.” There are several testimonies to that fact.

In the August 12, 1909 article of the Impartial Reporter the account says William Irvine was critical of his own followers, calling them “*sham hypocrites*” because the workers were allowing the flesh to have too much influence among them. The article says that Irvine’s criticism seemed directed at Cooney, Bowles, Bill Carroll, Kelly and all the other workers. Irvine rejected anyone who didn’t meet his grubby standards. During the first decade of “The Tramps” Irvine arrogantly criticized his own followers for being too clean. No wonder they put him out of the fellowship and took over his leadership. After he was put out they cleaned themselves up a bit. Grooming procedures were definitely more of an issue with Irvine than sin. The men became normal but the women still had to look outlandish.

Most of the workers left the British Isles for America, Africa, Australia, and other parts of the world. They encountered many hardships as they went to places where no one knew them. After the break with Irvine and Cooney, those who left the British Isles led people to believe that the church had no known founder or origin. They said that the church was a continuation of the original **New Testament Ministry and Church**. They taught that salvation was only possible through the preaching of the Two by Two workers.

The beliefs established by Irvine and Cooney were never published for the public but were recorded in voluminous letters and sermon notes taken by mem-

bers and reporters who attended their meetings. Irvine used parts of certain verses to support his views but ignored the rest of the scripture that conflicted with his premises. Because Irvine never published his theology, Bible scholars weren't able to effectively point out his errors, so the church was more successful in deceiving the public. Pastors were unable to warn people against the twisted definitions and doctrines. This problem was compounded by divergent views among the workers and by the fact that the workers lie in order to lure people into their group and to protect themselves from criticism.

This is the worst part of their deceit. They draw people into their distinctly anti-Christian group, yet usually manage to avoid admitting that they don't believe any of the doctrines of Christianity. Many people assume that they believe the same things as other Christians except with a different form of ministry and meeting place. Inadvertently, Christians sometimes stumble into the fellowship and remain there for many years not realizing that the workers oppose biblical Christianity. The Christians among them give them a better reputation than they deserve. The more cunning older workers know how to deceive Christians with well worded answers whenever doctrinal questions are asked. The children of their followers are all held in by mind control, information control and family ties.

Mental problems in the group were mentioned in the **Impartial Reporter** during Irvine's first years. This is still a problem, with nervous breakdowns, obsessive/compulsive disorders, marital problems, severe depression and stress related health problems. Professional counselors could spend years studying what this variety of mind control and confusion does to people. It is quite possible that some of the mental disorders have demonic origin. One of the workers from Haiti had dreadful experiences with workers there. She was physically beaten every night by her companion and had to hide in order to survive.

The deceitful use of the Bible damages understanding of truth and reality and instills wrong views of God. They feel He is mean, dogmatic and unloving, even though they talk about how loving He is. They talk and talk about how happy they are, yet they appear miserable. The workers condition people to ignore their own intuition, emotions and wisdom. This puts a wedge between family members and close friends. The problem of perverted sexuality, the victimization of children and vulnerable women, especially those in poor family situations go unreported and uncorrected causing grief for generations. The mind control interferes with their sense of responsibility because they aren't allowed to make

their own decisions on simple things, yet they have to make decisions on big issues, without understanding what God says about those things. The workers intrude into their lives on a regular basis because they live with the people.

The workers always claim they have “the Spirit” whenever their beliefs or decisions are challenged with scripture. It is their excuse and defense in any situation. What does the Holy Spirit think about His Name being used as a smoke-screen? How does the Holy Spirit feel when they don’t honor Him as Creator God, but instead claim that He is an “it,” an energy force? Romans 1:20 says, *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”* II Corinthians 3:17 says, *“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”* The Bible is clear in many places that the Holy Spirit is God. Jesus warned people who didn’t respect the Holy Spirit. The workers claim to have “the Spirit of the Lord” but they don’t allow anyone liberty.

George Walker, William Carroll and Jack Carroll knew that all the workers had differing opinions about the scripture so they took it upon themselves to dictate what could be taught in meetings. This is still true, but hidden. Differing opinions are allowed as long as they aren’t mentioned. When pressured for answers, the workers will usually state, “Well, I believe....” or “Well, the scripture says....,” or “Well, I can only answer for myself.” Or they will quote a verse but they won’t explain the concept. They don’t like to give the actual doctrinal position of the church. The doctrinal position depends on the head worker of the field. The only things that matter to them are the Two by Two ministry and the meeting in the home and the belief that they are the only ones in the world with salvation. Instead of doctrines, the workers use clichés. Irvine’s clichés rule over scripture. When they read scripture that contradicts the clichés, they simply ignore the scripture.

After Irvine and Cooney were excommunicated, anyone who remained friendly towards them were excommunicated as well. There are still Cooneyites in Ireland and Australia to this day and living followers of William Irvine who circulate his old letters, but neither group has meetings, workers, or conventions anymore. Only the Two by Twos still carry on the traditions established by Irvine.

The people in all three groups look down on the other groups and will have nothing to do with each other, unless they think they can persuade them to their own side. The workers are quick to mock other churches for disagreements and splits yet their group has had disagreements and splits ever since their beginning. The only difference is that they don't admit the disagreements. They just excommunicate people and don't allow the situations to be acknowledged or discussed. There have been so many excommunications over disagreements that it would be impossible to count them.

Within the past few years Willis Propp has excommunicated a few hundred Canadians simply because they asked too many questions. The Carrolls, George Walker and John Hardie didn't have much use for each other either. There was an invisible barrier between the east coast and the west coast of the United States for many years. There is still a barrier between many of the headworkers' fields. But the friends are too naive to notice it. They love the fiction of unity.

Willie Jamieson

Originally, Irvine and Cooney had been greatly admired. Later, they were spurned by the very people who had idolized them. There were a few workers, such as Willie Jamieson and Alfred Magowan who continued to admire Irvine and would mention him in private conversations or even from the platform at times.

Willie Jamieson was able to get away with this infraction because he wasn't ever considered a threat to anyone's power base. Some people claim he imbibed in liquor, a habit acquired from the old country. He kept lemon drops to cover his breath. For a few years he was interred in a Japanese concentration camp, thus avoiding much of the excommunication problems going on among the workers and 'friends'. When he was released from prison he was hailed as a hero by the remaining Two by Twos. The other head workers did not like Cooney or Irvine's names even mentioned. They would actually say that they never heard of them even though there are old photographs of them standing next to Irvine and Cooney.

The Church Founded On Evasion Of Truth

The head workers in America implied that this church had no known beginning. They said, "*it is like the wheat seed, it is the "Truth" that has been here since the foundation of the world. It is the New Testament church founded by Jesus Christ and apostles.*"

The movement grew rapidly and spread worldwide, reaching the United States around 1903 and Hawaii by 1923. Today, the group has workers and followers in most countries of the world, including Iron Curtain countries.

Most of the Black workers are sent to the Caribbean. Irvine and the early workers looked down on Blacks and discouraged mixed meeting places even in Africa. Irvine wrote, *“The Negro is the seed of Ham, cursed for what he did to his father Noah after they came out of the Ark, so why should the seed of Japheth and Shem want to share that curse?”* The Mormons also looked down on Blacks for the same reason.

The workers said it is wrong to publish anything of a spiritual nature. However, they publish their own hymn book, titled “Hymns Old and New”. It is published by the R. L. Allan and Son publishing company in England. At first all their hymns were borrowed from other churches such as Methodist and the Anglican Church but now they have many that have been written by their own people. They have also rewritten some hymns from other churches. For some reason they have omitted the names of the authors of the hymns. One can only speculate on the reason for this practice. Perhaps it is because they have changed words in the old hymns and also because they don’t want people asking questions about the composers. Or they may be concerned about copyright laws.

At a New Zealand convention in 1986 an older brother worker stated the typical answer given to the question, “When did this church get started?”

“People ask us often times, “Where did this doctrine start?” It first came to us 60 years ago - I thought it started in Canada, because of one that brought the gospel to us was from Canada, and I thought it must have started up there - we had never heard of it before, and we inquired of him, “Where did you hear this?” “We heard it from someone that came from Ireland or Scotland.” We listened to that Gospel. “Where did it start?” It started in Heaven and we are thankful that this Truth came from Heaven that we have accepted today and it tells us, “Being made so much better than the angels He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they for unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?” The greatest thing we can have is to be His sons, and we have that privilege given to us by the Christ of God. Only as many as received Him gave He power to be the sons and daughters of God. That is something that we should value and appreciate more than anything else. We can be called the sons and daughters of God. No better name. And that is the name that He has given to us.”

That explanation is a perfect example of the way workers answer questions with clichés, half quoted scripture, lies and vagueness. **The workers have many explanations for their history.**

1. “Nobody knows how it started”
2. The information about Irvine is a “theory”
3. “Irvine received a revelation and then later lost out”
4. “Cooney started a cult around himself, and lost out”
5. “God started it before the foundation of the world”
6. “It was started by a group of men and women in Ireland”
7. “No human being started it”
8. “Irvine started it”
9. “Everyone has known about the origin all along”
10. “Irvine and Cooney never existed”
11. “It has existed underground since Adam and Eve”
12. “It has existed underground since Jesus chose the 12 disciples”
13. “Irvine started it but became delusional and had trouble with women”
14. “It is like a wheat seed, from the beginning”
15. It is the remnant of some elusive apostolic wanderers who survived persecution by hiding their beliefs and existence until 1897 or 1950 or ?

Irvine preferred roaming rather than responsibility, hence an itinerant ministry held great appeal. William Irvine left the Faith Mission established by John George Govan, taking with him other members and some customs and terminology established in the Faith Mission. He wanted people to follow **him**. He persuaded people to get rid of their financial resources and give the proceeds to him. He added rules of celibacy, poverty, threadbare dowdiness, and eventually “meetings in the home” as a requirement for salvation. He introduced mysticism, asceticism, Gnosticism, authoritarianism and exclusiveness. He tried to work miracles but failed. Chiropractic adjustment had come into vogue and some workers used it as a type of “laying on of hands.” That experiment was dropped rather quickly.

Held Hostage By A Lie

Most of the original workers followed Irvine against the will of their Christian parents. Some of them acknowledged that they had been saved before they ever

heard of the “Way” yet they promoted the idea that salvation could only come from their ministry. Irvine collected money from all the other workers at convention time and left them all to fend for themselves. He said the workers should be free to go wherever the Spirit led and to say whatever the Spirit spoke and if the Spirit was with them “It” would provide for their needs. Yet Irvine would excommunicate anyone who did not agree with him.

The main reason William Irvine must be kept hidden is because he is an apostate and a false prophet. God used Abraham’s descendants, Jewish people, as prophets and apostles to record scripture. William Irvine was not Jewish, he was Scotch/Irish. And, his remarks indicate he was prejudiced against Jews. Moreover, his revelations and interpretations of scripture were wrong. Deuteronomy 18:22 says, *“When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously.”* Just as Charles T. Russell, Ellen G. White and Joseph Smith twisted scriptural meanings and prophesied future events that never came true, William Irvine prophesied that Jesus was to appear within a short time and that he, (Irvine) was one of the two prophets who would be killed during the tribulation period. He spent his last 20 years in Palestine waiting for the event to take place. He did not “go crazy” as some have said. He continued to preach as he had in Ireland, except without a ‘companion.’ He eventually died of throat cancer. His obituary, written by an unprofessing news reporter expressed admiration for him. It was not the obituary someone would give of a crazy person. Irvine was able to convince many people to trust him completely and he died with a sizable bank account.

The present workers would have been excommunicated by Irvine. They are far too clean and civilized and own too many fine clothes. Some of them own word processing computers, and have personal bank accounts, a far cry from being penniless. Yet, they still preach his “gospel.”

The older workers know that they aren’t telling people the truth but they are dependent on this church system for economic survival. And they are blinded by Irvine’s lies. They must, at all costs, keep people from finding out what the Bible is really saying. They must at all costs, keep people away from Christians who understand the Bible. They must keep the friends and their children hostage to their lies, which they call “The Truth.” That is why they instill fear among the people against all outsiders.

The Workers' Doctrinal Statement

This is what the workers believe but do not publish.

- God created the world but His re-Creation is more important. We don't talk about creation because that is of the natural world.
- The word Trinity is not in the Bible. It is a Catholic doctrine.
- The Father is God.
- Jesus is not God. He is a human being who became divine.
- The Holy Spirit is not God. It is a power/force from God.
- Scripture isn't the Living Word until it is spoken by a worker.
- Trust in Jesus and His blood isn't enough for salvation. It takes more than that.
- We have no written rules, but the Standard from heaven lives among us. If people aren't willing for that standard then they have no part with us.
- The gospel is the New Testament ministry and the meeting in the home.
- Grace is God's help in time of need.
- We do not worship Jesus. He refused to be worshipped.
- Praise God and Hallelujah are empty words. True worship is obedience.
- We don't talk about sin, hell-fire and brimstone. We believe in a more positive message.
- We don't believe in original sin.
- Sin isn't as serious as false religion. Sin is from the flesh. False religion is from satan.
- Justification, sanctification means being separate from this world.
- Perseverance of the saints means being faithful in following the workers until death.
- Forgiveness is for the past, not the present or the future. One can lose out at any time.
- Workers must remain unmarried and go preach two by two, without a salary or a home.
- God takes care of the workers needs.
- God isn't interested in our natural lives or needs. He only answers prayers for spiritual needs.

- We view scripture from a spiritual standpoint, not in a natural sense.
- The return of Jesus isn't important to know about. We just need to be ready.
- Christ's blood doesn't cover the sins of anyone except those in fellowship with the workers.
- Salvation is through separation and self denial. One must die to the world as Jesus did.
- Fellowship meetings and communion must be held in worker approved homes.
- Baptism by immersion must be approved and conducted by God's true servants.
- Church buildings are not allowed, but convention buildings are permitted.
- No collections or tithing are required.
- We have no published doctrine or statement of faith. Our safety requires that our beliefs be kept secret.
- Attendance of all meetings is required. Convention attendance is required.
- We don't believe in charitable activities to widows and orphans. We don't want a loaves and fishes ministry.
- Wedding ceremonies are not conducted by the workers because Jesus didn't perform weddings.
- Premarital counseling and marital counseling are unnecessary because the Holy Spirit perfects us.
- We don't believe in Sunday school for children.
- Fellowship meetings and Bible studies are not open to the public.
- Our only doctrine and book is the Bible. We don't use books written by men!
- God will punish anyone who disagrees with the workers or who leaves the Truth.
- Weekly communion of bread and wine every Sunday morning.
- Divorce and remarriage is an unforgivable sin.
- We don't believe in seminaries. Jesus and his disciples were ignorant and uneducated. God despises the wise and prudent.
- If you want Christ you must believe in the workers. The workers are the only source of the Spirit.

- People will be attracted to God's only True Way by the beauty of His people.
- No one can lead anyone to Christ except a worker.

The foregoing statements are taken from conversations and meeting notes. The administration of the workers is just as interesting.

The Worker's Administration

- All decisions are secret.
- All bank accounts are unacknowledged, unreported and income is untaxed.
- Selective recruitment process rather than public evangelism is the norm.
- Jesus is the Door to the Father, the workers are the Door to Jesus.
- Truth isn't the issue. Right or wrong isn't the issue. Scripture isn't the issue. Being counted worthy by the workers is what matters. One is either in or out. No questions allowed.
- Sin is hidden by a pious appearance. The example appearance is all that matters.
- Homosexuality, adultery, child abuse, alcoholism and pedophilia are ignored and protected by the system.
- Ex-workers are left penniless, jobless and homeless.
- Workers rule and come between husbands and wives, parents and children and between friends.
- The workers' loyalty to the head worker is rewarded with attention, privileges and trips.
- Anyone who objects to the workers' decisions or questions their doctrine will be excommunicated.
- The head workers control all money and don't share it equitably.
- The workers are hired, organized, monitored and fired by the Head workers.
- Workers are not educated in scripture by anyone. They must study and figure it out by themselves.

- Women's clothing and hairstyles must be unattractive. It is a large part of the group's identity and the means of enforcing and monitoring the mind control.
- Submission to the workers and attitude are monitored in the weekly testimonies and by asking questions of friends and family.
- Approval depends on appearance and submissive attitude.
- Information control is the most important feature of the group.
- Anti-Christian and anti-society attitude prevails over all the people.
- Special vocabulary, redefined words and euphemisms protect the group's belief system from discovery.
- Workers who are caught in a sexual offense are sent to another field or take a year to rest.