

Sunday School Class at Church

by Sharon Hargreaves

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Earlier this year the adult Sunday school classes at church had a series on cults, Christian cults, false teachers and teachings. I was asked if I would conduct a class on the Two by Twos since the pastor didn't know much about them. I followed the same outline Pastor Shaun used with emphasis on **Origins, Teachings and Leadership** as compared to the Scripture; mine includes much of my own experience and how it affected real life for myself and others. There are many definitions of a cult but I prefer the one given by Pastor David Legge from Ireland: "A cult is a group of people gathered around someone's misinterpretation of Scripture." The following document is a compilation of the notes and thoughts presented to the class.

Introduction

I would like to thank Pastor Shaun and the Chapel for this opportunity to share something of what I was persuaded of for most of my life. I was 14 years old when I gave my heart to the Lord; age 21 when I left all to join this group of 'workers' to preach the 'gospel'; age 29 I went to the Philippines where I spent 14 years and learned two languages fairly well. At age 50, after an accumulation of bad experiences, my physical and mental health was on the brink of disaster; I voluntarily left 'the Two by Two ministry' to begin 'the rest of my life'. I felt spiritually bankrupt, terribly frustrated and hindered in any real attempt to reach out to 'the lost'. Fellow workers seemed empty and lazy in their evangelical efforts and the enthusiasm I once had was squelched with criticisms and I was told I was not "*fitting in to my older companions*". In this class I will attempt to follow the same outline of **Origins, Teachings and Leadership**, however I will include more of the experience aspect and how these beliefs affected mine and some others personal lives.

Terminology

There are many terms we used which I should first clarify at the beginning so you can understand my lingo! **Workers** are the unmarried preachers; both brother workers and sister workers who go out in pairs; two men or two women to a specific community. **The Work** refers to their method of ministry. The word **Missionary** is often used for workers when others asked what we did and was mostly used when I was overseas. **Companions** refer to the pairs of workers. **Field** is the designated areas where companions are sent. These fields have very strict boundaries. **Workers' Lists** are changed yearly at convention time and show the workers who their new companion will be and where their field or area of labor. **Friends** or **Saints** are the congregation or laity. An **open home** is a home of professing friends which will receive workers or be willing for a meeting. A **divided home** is one in which one of the spouses is not professing. The **Truth** is what the friends and workers privately call their fellowship but they claim that their church has no name or say it is non-denominational. **Profess** refers to when you stand to your feet in a gospel or convention meeting to make your choice to follow; **professing** you are a follower. **Conventions** are regional annual gatherings of four days held worldwide. Conventions are being conducted around the world almost every week of the year. Wherever possible and as much as possible they are held on the farms or lands of the friends. **Preps** refer to the preparation time for these conventions. Preps may last many weeks for a convention of 4 days. Workers travel the globe to attend these gatherings. A rented facility is used for convention if no private land is available. **Special Meetings** are the annual one day group meetings held in many towns and cities. **Gospel meeting** are the meetings held by workers to invite **outsiders** or **visitors**. All the friends are expected to attend and travel many miles to do so. **Fellowship meetings** are the Sunday morning meetings held in a home of the friends. They are usually about an hour long, four hymns are sung; professing people give individual short prayers and testimonies which are mostly on the topics of purpose and desire to be faithful. No musical instrument is used! Those who have been baptized may take the **Emblems** or **Communion**. One piece of **regular bread** is passed around on a plate and each individual breaks off a small piece; **one cup of grape juice** is passed around the circle and each drinks from the same cup. **Bible studies** are the midweek home meetings where the subject may be a theme or a whole book, chapter by chapter each week. **Testimonies** express desire to be faithful, willing and obedient rather than trying to understand what the chapter actually means.

As we will see later, much of the terminology came from the **Faith Mission**.

Their Central Theme

As Two by Twos we heard over and over that **Jesus came to establish a 'Ministry'** and that **'The two foundations of God's Way is the preacher without a home and the meeting in the home.'** It is critical to mention this first here and emphasize it because **this is the baseline of every other belief** in this group and we will explore these factors as we go along. This belief was the basis of my own understanding also.

The Two by Two group has undergone a great deal of evolving and in many ways it still is. When collective expectations govern so much behavior the result is an evolving set of rules. You never get one rule down pat until it morphs or changes. And one is never quite sure what is acceptable or not. These morphing rules never produce true unity or peace but instead produce collective criticism and

comparison among other followers according to how or how not we perceive one is keeping in step with the rules. These collective expectations supersede or disallow the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. The **WORD** of God is the only reliable source to understand the mind of God and the Holy Spirit is given to believers to empower them to live. **Truth is the only thing that never changes.**

My 'preparation' for the Two by Two ministry did not include anything like Bible School. In fact, and to my discredit, I had not even read my Bible through entirely. Selling all, leaving your job and living with the bare minimum of material things was seen as following the example of the 12 and seventy disciples. A suitcase with meager contents was your only possession. During the summer of 1961 prior to leaving home I began to feel a panic about whatever I would speak about in meetings. I would often rush home from work during lunch hour and spend some time typing out convention notes from older workers. I hoped this would give me some knowledge I could use! For many years such notes were considered as authentic as the Bible itself. This so called effort of study was totally useless for any future use anyway. When I joined my first companion in September of '61 the first order of requirements was about a new wardrobe!

For many years sister workers were required to wear a hat while preaching. It was said to be necessary in order to be respectful to "church people" who might attend our meetings. (They wore hats to church, and as a token of respect, so must we.) It always seemed odd to have this peculiar respect for "church people" since we had rejected everything else that church people believed or did. After joining my first companion we spent a whole day shopping for a "suitable worker hat, shoes and preaching dress." That day was a nightmare I will never forget. This 'standard' called for a willingness I had not really counted on or perceived as necessary. Anyway, I began to learn some things were 'vital' and I certainly took on a more matronly outward appearance! **The subtle work of group identity and personality was beginning to be superimposed onto my own personality.**

This uniformity and behavior is engrained through the process of time as nearly all your life is engaged within the group. After going into the work, all previous ties with your non professing family, friends and workmates are left behind. Actually for workers, who live almost all of their lives with the friends, one must live life as a 'guest.' **This lifestyle as a constant 'special visitor' status can result in a sense of elite entitlement or it can rob you of your sense of personal responsibility, self respect and abilities.** Some workers become very intrusive into every aspect of how people run their lives, marriages, business, raise their children, etc. Much advice has been given causing deep hurts, poor judgment and bad decisions. However, workers approval and/or disapproval govern many friends far more than seeking counsel from Scripture. Since workers are perceived to represent God Himself, the friends often feel great pressure to obey them.

The friends who have 'open homes' and receive workers may experience their part as either privilege or burden, highly favored or incredibly imposed upon. Having an open home is preached as a very important sacrifice with great promise of God's reward!! The friends give their very best and often beyond their real means. Some workers would be easy to have around; others demand special food and special treatment. The weekly meeting in the home is really a heavy burden for many – come hell or high-water ~ "gotta get the meeting room ready!" It often interferes with travel plans and other things people want to do. It was often said that the dust brought in on the shoes would be like 'gold dust' for eternity!! And somewhat behind the scenes between workers, there was often argument, criticism and discipline. Rather than get a much needed rest it could be anything but. Not all companions are companionable. It can be a silent power struggle. A guest room may be small and the older companion will get first choice of personal space. When you are younger you give in quickly but there is a type of damage done by subtle belittling and violation of personal space. This can hardly be explained but only understood if you have lived it.

An ex-worker, a dear friend of mine, described one older companion who continually criticized everything she said, or didn't say; what she wore, what color she wore, what she did, or didn't do. She demanded nearly all the money my friend received be given over to her. She told her how to drive, even though she herself could not drive. This older worker was very austere, demanding and unreasonable. When my friend was faced with a third year with her, my friend got on a bus and went home. The companion and older brother worker did all they could to persuade my friend to return which she eventually did. My friend then endured two more years after which it was planned for her to go to a foreign and very poor country. [She thought this might be because she already spoke one of the languages used there.] Once there she was so overwhelmed with the poverty and condition of the people that she felt they could not attempt to help people spiritually until they tried to help them with basics of food and material help. James 2:14-17 **"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works...If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not the things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?"** She appealed to the brother worker in charge of the workers in that country, explaining how she felt and asked for some financial assistance. **He swore at her and told her "to mind her own damn business!!!"** He told her in no uncertain terms that workers are not there to help the poor but to preach the gospel only! She was so shocked because up until then she had thought that he was a nice kind old man! An older sister worker in the same country lived a lavish lifestyle in very nice living quarters in the midst of the people who were very poor! She treated her native companion as a personal slave who served her. She did not hide the fact that she 'hated these people!' The native companion did all the laundry, cleaning, marketing and cooking, etc. The older sister criticized everything and if the cooking didn't suit her she would even spit out the food on her plate! (This is only the tip of the iceberg of this story!) For my friend it was unconscionable to remain, and decided she wanted nothing more to do with the whole thing, and returned to Canada. [She is now happily married; she and her husband are no longer part of the meetings but thankfully are now true Christians.]

Not all experiences are this severe but far too many have suffered intolerable, abnormal, immoral attitudes and objectionable behaviors at the hands of their companions. I can say that one year especially, my experience was similar in some ways to this friend of whom I speak. These things should never happen in the name of Christ. Sometimes when I speak of some of these things I have been called 'bitter' or 'angry.' I am not motivated by any 'anger or bitterness' but I cannot deny the fact that many, many people have been hurt desperately. When these hurts and pain occur in the name of God, Christianity and religion it is **unconscionable and dishonest** to refuse to admit and face reality. Far too many are so hurt they end up in confusion, blame God and abandon any effort to know the True God. This is another tragedy. Often the hurt and pain and unresolved abuses that cause people to leave are not spoken of or not believed if they do speak of them. If these 'offended' people don't go to another church it is seen as proof that what they left **was** the ONE TRUE WAY and they ignorantly muse "they were just unwilling" or "never did fit in anyway" or "just didn't get it"; no matter how ugly their suffering may have been. One lady endured attending a home meeting for years where the elder was very abusive to his wife. A non professing person remarked, "I could not keep going and listening to someone like that!" The professing relative defended by saying, "My Mom is bigger than that!" Meaning that 'enduring' the situation had precedence over correcting the problems!! There is no virtue in condoning wrong and failing to confront it is dishonest and unscriptural and destructive. The superficial becomes so important that you cannot understand what real sin is. You are conditioned to accept, minimize and rationalize real abuse that should never be condoned or allowed; but if a lady came to meeting in slacks, it would soon be corrected! It is imperative to see that God is not the author of such inconsistency. We must **never blame God for what happened to us**. If the devil can get us to 'blame God for our experiences' he will have won a huge victory and we may never seek the True God. The devil tried to trap Job with such a twist when his wife said – "curse God and die!" But in all his troubles "Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly!"

One way thinking creates a huge fear and can impede trusting again. It takes time, prayer and careful study and sometimes counseling to repair damages. We must take up the search for the True God, but we must search with an open Bible in hand!! 1 John 4:1-3 **Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is the spirit of Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world**". There is a saying 'don't throw out the baby with the bathwater!'

Clearly the most important spiritual test of all is what people believe about Jesus. Do they teach Jesus was fully God and fully man. To deny his divinity or his humanity is to consider Him less than Saviour.

Personally I have had to admit, repent and take responsibility for stepping into something I didn't really fully understand in the first place.

Each of us must stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is a Standard we'll be judged by but it is not of man's making. It is with grave concern that we must consider the destiny of our eternal soul. We must never underestimate the devastating effects of false teaching. I hasten to add that there are many, such as the good friend I speak of, who have been rescued by God's mercy and are now experiencing deliverance, great Joy and true Liberty in Christ and are useful in places of real service with God's rich blessing. God truly is no man's debtor, but getting free is a process, and takes earnest effort. For some it is a long and costly journey. Praise God, He is able when we come to Him with all our brokenness.

As a worker you may think yourself free and itinerant to go anywhere, anytime with anyone, but in reality all movements are controlled in an abnormal way. The system creates bondage in the 'servant/saint' relationship; the friends need the workers for 'salvation' and the workers need the friends for their 'livelihood.' Being a worker, of course, is believed to be the most important and greatest sacrifice with promise of the greatest reward!

Quote from older worker ~ Jack Carroll: "The harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few. The best and most noble place in this life is the harvest field."

[Spokane WA Special Meeting 12/11/1949] This belief has been taught by many, as long as I can recall. Their 'ministry' is the all important thing to them!

This intrusive lifestyle of constant dependence on others and continuous change damages not only physical health, but the emotional well being also suffers a great deal. Moving from house to house you are continually arranging where you can move next. This is very time consuming and the unnatural asking for the next place to stay destroys self worth and normal well being. Some have suffered complete emotional breakdowns.

The intrusion of group personality and identity is a subtle process which eventually engulfs every part of one's spontaneity, emotions, convictions, talents and skill; from whatever background, farm boy or girl, doctor, nurse, teacher or business person all merge into a blend of so called "unity." One is not encouraged to think or speak much of talents or skills left behind. Group approval is a very powerful force. **This strange conformity is not at all true unity.**

“Willingness and fitting in” is preached as essential to pleasing God. Your true identity, logic and emotions become twisted and suppressed and eventually every part of your mind is given over through this ‘fitting in’ to a complicated self effort for approval. This emphasis on the ‘outward person’ so pervades your perception of what’s right that you are unable to believe those unlike you could be godly. Women’s clothing, hair styles, mens short hair, no TV’s, no movies, no dancing, jewelry, cosmetics, are just some of the things that fall into this category. ‘Standards’ with great emphasis on outward appearance and outward things is an ingenuity of Satan to impair the conscience regarding real matters of the heart, moral absolutes, honesty, integrity etc. The conscience motivated by the superficial and the trivial deadens the importance of the inward man before God. If just enough people can conform to man’s ‘standards’ and be used for ‘examples’ it keeps the whole group grasping for improvement to conform to these things. The real sin of this is that we may regard real Christians as unsaved; it reminds me of those who charged Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub. It was in this context that Jesus warned of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. It is not only contemptuous to judge another not saved when they don’t follow our ‘standards’ but we may well be guilty of a very serious sin. We must exercise great caution in this matter.

Man made ‘rules and standards’ so easily create a public life and personal life in great opposition to each other. This can be extremely destructive and crazy making.The ‘real you’ dare not appear in public and the ‘superficial you’ gives voice to the frustration of continued failure to measure up. Your measure of the important becomes dependant on what ‘looks right’ in the groups concerns. Admittedly there is often some good logic in some ‘standards’. But we must let the writings of Scripture define them and let Jesus perfection always remind us our heart is deceitful above all things...we can’t even know it. Perhaps we should ask; “Is what is being asked of me Biblical, cultural, or are they even normal?” Most outward demands can be performed without God in the picture at all.

Romans 12:1-2 **“I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”** A believer is given the Mind of Christ, without which we cannot be transformed, and it is sufficient and trustworthy to guide us into the things that matter in a Christian’s life. There is no duplicity in the life of a true Christian.

What ‘looks right’ on the surface can effectively minimize and superficially hide gross sins. Satan is a master of manipulating conscience away from the authority of God and Scripture.

Satan began this manipulation in the Garden by creating doubt in the authority of God and twisting what God said. This was the beginning of complicating the simplicity of obeying what God alone says. The supplanting of group approval formulas is so associated with ‘salvation’ itself that you will endure this irrationality and imagine you are doing it for your salvations sake and enduring for Jesus’ sake.

God’s Law in contrast is terribly serious and demanding. God’s Law is meant to teach us that His expectations can never be met on our own merits or achievements. James 2:10, **“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” Thus our total need of God’s intervention through Christ who alone perfectly fulfilled all the righteous demands of His Law.”** We are all sinners, equal at the foot of the Cross of Christ. Not one of us has ever perfectly obeyed God’s Law. His Law is meant to teach us that perfection is only found in Christ’s perfect obedience. Romans 10:4 **“For Christ is the end (fulfillment, outcome, result) of the law for righteousness to every one who believes.** 1 Corinthians 1:30, **“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that according as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”** A sinner is one who misses the mark. The word sinner comes from archery, when an arrow misses the mark – the person was called a sinner. Miss it by an inch or a mile, missing with your very best attempt, you were still a sinner! We are all sinners having missed the perfection of Christ, almost or altogether, we have missed the mark! 2 Corinthians 5:21 **“For He (God) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we may become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

The Apostle Paul clearly understood the source of hope for all sinners. Philippians 3:9 **“and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”**

Some people misunderstand **“God’s Grace”** and even use words like **“cheap grace”** contending that people will falsely trust in grace and forgiveness as a license to sin. Nothing can be further from the truth. Some workers will refer to Paul’s words: **“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”** thinking that Paul meant people must work for salvation. But if we look at what Paul wrote in Philippians 2:12, **“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”**

Scripture is clear: believers **do not work for salvation**, but having received it through Grace, by faith in Christ alone; the work we do and the life we live is **out of the gift of Salvation**; Eternal reward comes out of this personal application. **God alone will be glorified.** Obviously obedience and willingness are by no means negated but comes out of rejoicing in what Christ has done for us. We live in obedience to Him out of our joy. When strange conformities to outward “standards” and expectations are imposed on people it will result in

judging ourselves by one another, feeling either total defeat or self righteous. Neither will qualify us for acceptance before God, **but mankind never seem to exhaust their own terms, ideas and methods to make themselves appear “worthy”**. The true gospel shows us our impossible, fallen, sinful state in the first Adam, and then how Christ, the last Adam has bridged the gap. Scripture must be examined in a logical and methodical way with Christ as truly central and then the answers will come.

Exodus 2:23 describes my situation at that point in life after 28 years, **“and the children of Israel groaned by reason of the bondage, and they cried out, and their cry came up to God by reason of the bondage, And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”**

After leaving the work, it took me some time to discover that more was wrong than simply my personal ‘bad experiences’ or even an accumulation of other people’s ‘bad experiences’ which were glibly rationalized with an often repeated little cliché: **“The people aren’t perfect but ‘the Way’ is perfect!”** **When any system of belief becomes ‘the Way’ instead of Jesus alone being the Way, the ‘bad experiences’ are rarely recognized for being caused by the false way (false doctrine) ~ but rather the individuals are condemned for being imperfect!** In Matthew 15:9 Jesus said, **“in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”**

I am now very aware of ways God intervened, overruled, and answered prayers, all protecting me from other directions that could have diverted me from the path to true Liberty in Christ Jesus. Since leaving the work I have learned of many prayers on my behalf and can look back at the Gracious Hand of God who has gently led and protected me and more than that has brought me into His Salvation by Grace Alone in Christ Jesus alone and I have discovered the true Joy of Salvation.

I have an inkling of understanding of how Saul of Tarsus must have felt when God shined a blinding light on him on his path of pursuit against real Truth; God intervened with light and voice from heaven Acts 9:3.....**“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”** And he said, **“Who ARE you Lord?”** and the Lord said, **“I am Jesus whom you ARE persecuting; it is hard for you to kick against the goads.”**

I’m sure the trembling and astonishment Saul experienced is something many of us can identify with to some extent. When a person is brought to a dead end from whatever one believed to be the Only Truth and find it not according to Scripture – it is a crossroads in life’s journey that demands a lot of time, prayer and desperate research, and above all **honesty!** Little wonder Saul needed to spend some time in the desert. It is possible to be very sincere – but sincerely wrong!! Paul could look back on his experience in 1Timothy 1:12-13 **“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief”.**

God’s intervention when we are on an opposing course to His Will sometimes takes on very severe and shocking blockades. He must stop us in our tracks. We know Scripture shows Saul was God’s chosen vessel, but I would suggest that very possibly the prayers of his own kinsmen – or countrymen were part of the orchestra in God’s Great Symphony to bring him to repentance and spiritual sight.

Romans 16:7 “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before me.” Don’t you think these people were praying for Saul? Perhaps the lesson for us is **never underestimate the power of prayer; prayer has moved God to open many a prison door, physical and spiritual.**

My prayer is that these Sunday school classes would be much more than an intellectual exercise, but a motivator to an effectual and **specific prayer** because of a better understanding; a motivator to **personal Bible study** so that we do know what is Truth and what we believe. Pastor Shaun has encouraged this over and over and we all need to continually pray for all Pastors who desire to keep grounded in God’s Word.

Have you ever sat down and written on paper what you believe?

Do you really know who God is?

Do you really know what you believe?

Can you define what the true Gospel is?

Do you really know the Jesus Christ of the Bible?

Study until you have learned the basics of doctrines well enough that you see their significance to your faith and real life.

Today I don’t expect that I can help you to be crystal clear about what Two by Twos believe in a few minutes, but I hope it will give you a little more understanding than you have. I have been working on sorting this out for quite a few years now, put in hundreds of hours of Bible study, and still have much more to learn. I believe one real hindrance through the years of my experience was the lack of real expository Bible teaching and methodical approach to studying the Scriptures. **I simply accepted what others told me as truth without serious thinking or research.** Frequently I had serious questions about many Scriptures especially Genesis 3 and really what happened in the Garden. No clear answer ever came through messages I heard and we were not encouraged to ask many questions either.

When a particular belief produces a 'one-way mindset' -- ***"I have the only truth and all others are outside of it"*** the red flags should fly and we **should begin to investigate!!** For years I simply could not acknowledge spirituality in anyone outside of what I believed. This caused huge divisions and deep hurts in my relationship to my family and many others. This did trouble me but seemed part of the sacrifice of life as a worker. I thought, "They just didn't understand!!" Self righteousness is not always easy to detect in oneself!

I will refer again to Pastor David Legge from Ireland who, in his discourses on cults, gives this description of a 'cult': ***"A 'cult' is a group of people gathered around someone's misinterpretation of the Bible."*** (www.preachtheword.com) I like that quote because I have to admit that when previously I heard the word "cult" I would think of extremist radical beliefs that had even resulted in mass suicides or mass murder... following the dictates of a mad leader ... some cults are indeed radical and obviously immoral or violent and do not come under the heading of 'Christian Cults'.

No Name

In spite of the fact that this group exists all over the world very few people know it exists because it refuses to acknowledge a name for itself. **The No Name Church, The Church With No Name, The Pilgrims, The Testimony, The No Sectors, The Go-Preachers, The Cooneyites, The Irvinites, Reidites, The Carrollites, The Testimony, The Fellowship. The Christian Conventions, The New Testament Church, The Christian Church of Australia, The Christian Church of New Zealand, The Friends, The Black Stockings, The Secret Sect, White Mice, The Tramps, The Dippers, The Jesus Way** are a few of the names which have been associated with this group. It was first registered in England in 1914 under the name of **The Testimony of Jesus** which coincided with **World War 1** and had to do with registering as Conscientious Objectors.

The Church with No Name or the Two by Twos **dishonestly and self righteously is called by insiders as 'THE TRUTH' or 'THE WAY.'** If it truly has no name, then they should not be calling it anything at all. It is one of the "one way" groups which alone claims to be the Way of Salvation. The Bible records Jesus is the Way, The Truth, The Life, The Door, The Good Shepherd, The Light, The True Vine, etc. Let us not redefine Him and try to make some method or ministry foundational or the means of dispensing what Christ shed His blood to accomplish on the behalf of sinners.

Who are these people that many have never heard of? If you have, you perhaps have a neighbor who holds this belief, or someone you work with. Generally you have found they are 'nice' people; you perhaps say 'good Christian people, but they are just a small group, who choose to meet in homes rather than build a church building. You have perhaps tried to have spiritual discussions with them and have met mostly with little or no reply and no spiritual dialogue. They appear very much a fringe group as far as numbers go, or in fact, to many, obscure altogether.

Workers may put a small ad in the newspaper – or come to your door inviting you to 'Gospel Meetings', giving you a small invitation card that would say something like:

"You are invited to attend a series of Udenominational Gospel Services." The time and place will be given; it might also read "No collections" or "No Literature" and then there will be two names at the bottom: two men or two women. If they come, they will not come with a well scripted formula, books or pamphlets like the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Mormons. Instead, they claim only the King James Version of the Bible. Though they claim the Bible only their interpretations are formed and defined upon the formula of belief they see as all important. What they call 'the two foundations of God's Way , the homeless preacher and the home meetings" influences all their interpretations and understanding of the Bible.

This Church absolutely claims it's 'origins' from the New Testament Church; claims to be the only true Way; claims apostolic succession, beginning on the shores of Galilee. Referring back to the list of names they have been called it is rather notable that men's names mentioned are all the names of their early leaders and other names are associated with particular behaviors which can be historically traced and proven to have begun in 1897, in Nenagh, County Tipperary, Southern Ireland. Many behaviours and expectations have changed and are still evolving. I have seen plenty of changes myself since my childhood and many things once considered 'the standard' and taboo are now acceptable.

To understand the Origins, History and Leadership we need to look first at the Faith Mission.

The Faith Mission was founded in 1886. It's chief organizer and promoter was John George Govan with the purpose to evangelize rural Scotland. It is an orthodox, independent evangelistic movement, not a denomination. Faith Mission workers depend on God for guidance, wisdom and material needs; are itinerant, preach in pairs, hold conventions, special and union meetings, stay in converts' homes and make no appeals for money. They use the terms: professing, workers, missions, companion, fields, the work, harvest field, conventions, special meetings, and elders etc. It is safe to say that The Faith Mission was born in the fires of revival and spiritual awakening. The early years of the mission's history are marked by numerous and significant revivals, that literally shook the villages of Great Britain and Ireland.

It is a well respected missionary outreach functioning to this day. William Irvine, Ed Cooney, John Long and others came onto History at the peak of this strong religious revival in the British Isles.

January 7, 1893 a man by the name of William Irvine, attributed his own conversion to Christ, in a revival campaign held in Motherwell, Scotland by Reverend John Mc Neil, a Presbyterian. McNeil was a well known evangelist associated with the Dwight L. Moody campaign.

June 14, 1895 William Irvine became a worker/pilgrim with the Faith Mission. In 1897 the Faith Mission sent William Irvine to pioneer their work in southern Ireland. Reportedly while reading Matthew 10: William was struck with a thought: **“What if Jesus intended for His instructions to the 12 Apostles in Matthew 10 to be followed by all preachers for all times?”**

Let's read Matthew 10: verse 1, and verses 5-10. **“And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction. Jesus instructed them, Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying: give without pay. Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.”**

By 1897 William Irvine met John Long, a Methodist colporteur (a peddler of devotional literature) and together they held their first mission independent of Faith Mission, in Nenagh, County Tipperary, Southern Ireland. **For the next three years, Irvine accepted Faith Mission funds, hospitality and facilities while he worked out his own theology, method and following.** By 1901 Irvine's formal ties were broken with the Faith Mission to work independently.

He claimed that he wanted to get back to Biblical basics and taught that all ministers must follow Jesus' instructions to the Apostles in Matthew 10: leaving their homes, families, property and responsibilities and going out to preach two-by-two.

While getting back to the Bible was a good purpose it was here that many Scriptures were misunderstood, spiritualized and taken out of their context and misapplied by not understanding or ignoring the dispensations and not using consistent literal interpretations of Scripture~ what was important was substituted with what is not important. **The temporary, geographically specific and time limited mission and message to the Jews only and not to the Gentiles, became a pattern they have used parts of and applied to the present.** I emphasize 'parts of' because they **do** go to the Gentiles, and **don't** heal the sick, lame or lepers nor do they raise the dead! They 'spiritualize' those things and say they are like our 'spiritual sicknesses and spiritual condition today!' This is where consistent, literal interpretation of Scripture is of great importance. We must only 'spiritualize' something if Jesus did. If He said it was a parable, then it was; if He said 'like unto' then that is how it should be understood. Otherwise the literal meaning is accurate.

Irvine copied the majority of the Faith Mission methods and traditions; used their terminology and dress code, duplicated their portable meeting halls and living quarters (batches), conventions, black stockings, hats and court shoes for women. And then he **claimed he had restored “God's only true way”**. He persuaded his followers to believe that by going two by two they were being faithful to scripture. They declared **that Christ came to establish a Ministry**; as opposed to the fact He came as the Last Adam to be our Substitute, to fully satisfy the wrath of a Just God against all sin. Christ alone was **able** to pay our sin debt.

When Irvine's formal ties were broken with the Faith Mission in 1901, he took with him George Walker, Edward Cooney, Jack Carroll and Irvine Weir. George Walker and Jack Carroll later became Overseers in the Eastern and Western USA respectively. [Jack Carroll died in 1957 and George Walker in 1981.] When Irvine broke from the Faith Mission he brought with him much of their methods, terminology and traditions, but he did not bring with him the Biblically sound doctrines of the Faith Mission. This was the **beginning** of his virulent attack **against all Christendom.**

In 1904 William Irvine announced the “Living Witness Doctrine” believing that “The Jesus Way” was a restoration of God's scriptural pattern for ministers, **that theirs was the only true New Testament Ministry and that salvation is gained only through hearing the preaching of a 2x2 worker, in such a ministry. He began to believe that all others were wrong!**

Later in 1912, Irvine began to announce a series of new unsettling ideas. By 1914 he stated that it had been revealed to him that the Age of Grace would end in August and following that time no additional salvation would be granted. A theological split occurred between Irvine and the other workers. Irvine and about 400 followers were excommunicated in 1914. They formed a new sect know as the “Little Ones” “Friends” or “the Message people”.

Irvine's role in the beginnings has been deliberately covered up over the years. After Irvine was excommunicated, Edward Cooney, then threatened the authority of the overseers. **Cooney had been a follower since Irvine broke with the Faith Mission and saw himself as the rightful overseer.** Also, Cooney didn't like being hampered with having a companion. He preferred preaching by himself.

And Cooney believed it had been a grave mistake to adopt the “living witness” doctrine in 1903-04. He stated that both he and Irvine had been committed to Christ prior to the birth of the movement.

The Overseers, hoping to silence Cooney’s threat persuaded him to travel abroad. While in Australia Cooney called attention to the little regarded message from Matthew 10 and Luke 9 to **“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out devils”**. When an attempt to heal a sick lady failed miserably, the older workers found Cooney’s non compliance intolerable and he was excommunicated in 1928.

On October 12, 1928 a meeting was held in Lurgan, Ireland to finalize justification for Cooney’s dismissal. The agreement drawn up stated :

- 1. No worker would teach or preach anything contrary to what the worker, in whose field he was laboring believed without his permission.**
- 2. If a worker decided to preach anything which the workers as a whole did not agree with, he was to go to a part where the workers had never been in order to do so.**

These rules are still very much in force today. Workers and most professing people know that they must have the head worker’s approval for what is said and done within their fields. Worker approval is the deciding factor. Worker approval is altogether important in every aspect of what is done and not done.

It is of note that that written agreement makes no mention of the Word of God as authority but rather exclusively showed worker approval as the authority over other workers and teachings. **To this day many problems or disagreements are not really properly resolved but the “problem” worker is sent to another field, state, province or country.** These maneuvers are largely secretive and certainly often a cover for sin rather than call for public repentance. It is not only destructive to the individual but superficially removes responsibility from leadership. **In particular, in cases of abuse** it minimizes the sin, hides the sinner, hinders admittance, repentance, cleansing, forgiveness and restoration. The victim may suffer for years, unheard and uncared for. And it puts hundreds of other people in jeopardy of being abused in the same way.

Again the cliché may be rehearsed, **“Well, we know the people aren’t perfect but the Way is perfect.”** I am reminded that Jesus said in Matthew 5:48, **“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.”** When we realize God’s Law shows us the moral character of God, it lifts a target so impossible, we must see and admit that the only Righteousness we can claim is His imputed Righteousness to the Believer in Christ alone as they receive it through the exercise of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ alone.

We will be judged by the perfection in Christ, **not something we obtain by self denial, personal worthiness, or “following as best we can”** which causes extreme weariness and frustration of never obtaining worthiness or perfection. We read in Romans 4 regarding the Righteousness of Christ – referring to Abraham whose belief in God was accounted to him for righteousness – likewise for us as in verse 24 ... **“the righteousness of Christ shall be imputed to us who believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered up for our offences and was raised again for our justification.”**

This righteousness is **never** something we do, but what we receive – **God alone will have the glory.**

Yes, it is true the people aren’t perfect but **‘the Way’ is Jesus alone** and **never** a system of administering a means of self effort to attain acceptance with God. Some of the sweetest words of scripture are Romans 4:5-6 **“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works.”** Jesus Himself said, **“This is the work of God that you believe on Him whom He has sent.”** John 6:29. All men have faith of some kind, believe something, even an atheist believes something. It is the **object of our faith** that gives credibility and meaning to our spirituality. Christ in His perfection must be the object of our faith.

Origins and Beliefs

Since Workers do not keep or publicly admit a system of documentation of their own, their history and teachings have been successfully obscured, denied or misrepresented. The origin, history and beliefs have been successfully hidden from most; until in these recent years it has been revealed on – **Praise God**, the internet. Authentic documentation has been collected from members’ own personal notes and workers’ sermons over the years. For many years all workers’ sermons were passed around eagerly but in more recent times of improved communications and exposure of their beliefs, such notes have been destroyed as much as possible. Notes now are more often a collection they title **“Gems;”** worker quotations that are, most often clichés, sayings, and not biblical. For example: **“Faith is like a periscope in the submarine, showing us the unseen things above.”**

Not surprisingly, “the friends” in Ireland seem to have known and understood the history quite well in comparison to Canada, the US and other countries. Workers spread out from Ireland to many countries in the very early 1900s. We now know from written documentation over the years that the names William Irvine and Edward Cooney were not to be mentioned – period!! Subsequently by default, few in this land ever heard of them and if we did it was said “*They lost out*” or “*went wrong*”! Presently, if anyone asks about their history, they will claim that “*It isn’t important because we do not believe in keeping genealogies,*” and the subject is quickly changed.

In spite of the fact that these people exist all over the world, very few people know anything about them because they keep their beliefs hidden from outsiders. **They keep their beliefs so well hidden that you could be a blood relative or a close next door neighbor; you could ask them again and again what they believe and never get a straight answer.**

Ireland has been a country fastidious in record keeping, so there are contemporary newspaper articles, the archives of **The Impartial Reporter and Farmers Journal** of Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, and **archives of the Faith Mission**, which all bear witness to the historical beginnings of **what is claimed to have had ‘no earthly beginning’ but they claim began in Heaven!!** There are also many personal letters, diaries, autobiographies, and eye witness reports. One of my companions, a lady from Ireland once declared to some of us around a dinner table, “**The Truth started in Ireland, you know!!**” I still remember how indignant I felt thinking, ‘Oh, you Irish think you started everything!’ However, she spoke the truth I could not then receive because of the assurance I had from other workers who had declared that the Fellowship had originated from the Holy Land itself! I could not even think to challenge her to explain what she meant!

The workers totally deny any human author or leader. I have heard many workers say, “**If you can show me “this way” was started by a man, I will stop preaching tomorrow.**” (Many of the people who say this actually KNOW it was started by a man.) From time to time many of us would discuss whether our fellowship actually came from apostolic succession. I felt it didn’t really matter. **It only mattered whether we were doing what the Bible really taught and I thought we were!** When people don’t understand the Bible they don’t know that the Bible is not being obeyed. The workers misunderstand the Bible because their central theme and authority is the ministry without the home and the meeting in the home, rather than the Person and Work of Christ.

The workers have no Statement of Faith, claiming to “*believe no books but the Bible.*” They flatly discount all Bible Schools and see Seminary training as unscriptural; citing **Acts 19:18-19** “**Many of them also which used curious (magical) arts brought their books together and burned them before all men:**” One cannot equate these books of witch craft and magic to Christian books and Christian bible study!!

Jack Carroll said; “God’s word must be lived. It can’t be captured on paper. The letter killeth”.

Some workers have also said, “The Word of God is *not living until spoken by a worker!*” It is hard to believe anyone could take such words upon their lips! While God desires we live according to the Word, it is ludicrous (to put it mildly) to say “it can’t be captured on paper”. The Bible is the record of God’s Word, will and purpose and God chose to have it written on Scrolls/PAPER!! How backwards could our view of the Scripture be? Jesus Himself said the Scriptures testified of Himself! We are all so familiar with Paul’s words in 2 Timothy 3:15-17 **..”And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which ARE ABLE to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”.** Clearly, the Scriptures are **alive** and have power to work in the believer...Man does not make the written word living: The Living Word has the power to give Life to the believer!! Hebrews 4:12 **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**

2 Peter 1:21 **”for the prophecy never came by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”.** The twist given in Mr. Carroll’s statement might not be understood by everyone, but it is another random statement, in this case to discount ‘higher learning’ such as Theological Bible study. Since they see their ‘ministry’ as essential, and the means for salvation and even the interpretation of the Bible, they say things outside of orthodoxy and look for verses to ‘back up their belief! We must also be cautious of this notion of ‘backing something up with Scripture’ ---we can make the Bible say most anything. Out of context becomes a pretext. We need doctrine to come OUT OF Scripture not “backed up by scriptures”.

These workers with no formal training in the Bible, Theology, Evangelism, Apologetics (Defense of the Faith), Eschatology (Study of End Times), or Christian Doctrines, do not care how we got the Bible or admit the names of Christians who have been martyred for translating or teaching the Bible. **There have even been some friends who actually thought the workers wrote the Bible!** In contrast, a 2x2 friend of mine told me that her mother said that we couldn’t really trust the Bible because some of the translators were drunkards who worked for King James.

Church Buildings and Convention Farms

Workers do not believe in the buildings called churches.

Conventions are held once a year in every region where Two by Twos are found. Conventions are going on almost every week of the year around the world. Most of them are on the farms or property owned by members of the group. In the last few decades more and more elaborate structures have been erected on farms of professing people for their annual conventions, **held for only four or eight days out of the year**. The reason given for bigger buildings and upgrades is that the government requires these structures to be insured and built according to building codes, safety and health regulations. Noticeably, in many cases, the senior workers are given special consideration with private quarters. Enormous amounts of money have been poured into these and weeks and weeks of time have been spent by workers and friends to build these structures which are used only once a year. There has been much controversy among the workers over this matter. The friends may have opinions but they are not usually consulted, even though they are expected to contribute time and money to the process. **The final decisions come from the Head workers and often particular friends involved have suffered incredible hurt and financial loss due to decisions they have disagreed with but have had great pressure to accept.** These “negotiations” are privately held, largely unknown and not understood by the general congregation. The long held virtues of simplicity and so called absence of financial burdens that supposedly set the workers apart from all church groups has become **not so simple** and certainly has become a big burden but accepted as part of the changing times. Times do change and the things that change are the things that are man made in the first place and not part of essential doctrine. There has been much controversy over these matters. **For a group who declares church buildings and church property to be unbiblical and sometimes referred to as “Synagogues of Satan;” one has to wonder how they have any peace about these matters?** To compensate for higher taxes incurred by these larger buildings some of the convention buildings have been rented out for off season storage of RV’s, motor homes and boats, etc. in this way claiming tax write off.

Missions

Their mission work is a series of “gospel meetings”, sometimes advertised and sometimes not. They call themselves ‘missionaries’ but their ‘mission work’ does not engage in outreach programs of evangelism, building schools or hospitals. They don’t care for orphaned children or dig water wells; and have no programs in the way of aid to disaster victims, etc. They argue that such missions only bring “*bread and butter disciples*” and that other missionaries do those things to gain converts. No attention is paid to what Jesus did or said about caring for the poor or feeding the hungry.

They claim that when Jesus said, “**The poor you will have with you always**” he meant that you weren’t supposed to be concerned about the poor. Sometimes, professing people have wanted to help the poor and other professing friends in disaster areas. When asked about helping victims of disasters, etc. the workers in charge will say “**There are other organizations which look after those things!**” The exceptions to these attitudes and/or outreach are on a personal and limited level – not a common practice of the workers as a whole, although in most cases such help is only for their own people. Poor people among the friends are sometimes shunned.

Time for Gospel meetings or their “mission work” and shepherding the flock in their fields becomes very limited because so much time and money is spent on workers travels to Special Meetings and Conventions around the world. Some older brother workers are rarely in their own field at all. Their name may appear on a workers list for a particular field or city but they may not actually spend much time there at all. The cost of sending workers to other countries for Conventions is enormous, is a kind of reward system but supposed to be helpful for worldwide unity. Sometimes an older brother from another country will crack the whip of ‘disciplines’ that the local workers will evade. I recall an older brother from New Zealand who carried on about ‘gold watches’ ~ many changed the color of their watches for a time afterward!!

Money

The money issue is huge, not well understood by friends or even by many workers. It is altogether a system without open, public or congregational accountability. Workers for many years were thought of as above reproach and trustworthy. This has led to blind trust which is not to the credit of the followers. After I left the work some of my own family asked me, “**How are the workers supported anyway?**”

Workers report no income and pay no income tax. They claim to be homeless, unsalaried, almost always unmarried, are separated from all normal times, roots and responsibilities in any one place, claiming to “**go in faith**”—with “no guaranteed support”. They own no land, cars, or homes, do not take up collections. The method of monetary support is not spoken of very often and new people have to learn by accident. Some never learn.

They speak of “**freewill offerings**” citing “**not letting your right hand know what the left hand does.**” They claim “the hiring” in John 10:12 is a salaried preacher, preaching for money and not for the good of the sheep. Money is generally given privately, hand to hand, after a gospel meeting, during a home visit, or by correspondence. There is no doubt a preacher of the gospel needs money like anyone else. However, accountability, openness and equality should never be in question. There is much variation from worker to worker and from place to place. Many have way too much and some suffer great lack. It is very demeaning to be in need, especially when you know

your companion has plenty. The workers believe that if a worker is obediently submissive and has enough faith that God will supply all his or her needs, the inference makes the workers who lack feel as if they don't have enough faith. Some older workers keep most of the money for themselves, making the younger workers and the sister workers grovel when it is time to pay convention bills for groceries, building supplies, gasoline, rentals or utilities. One young brother was told to buy tools and supplies for convention preps but was given no money for the purchase or even for the gas to get to the store. The assumption was made that he was supposed to come up with the money some way, on his own. This kind of thing has happened to many other young workers who lacked sufficient funds. Some workers have suffered hunger and ill health with no compassion or care from their companions or the friends.

Scripture clearly says that the laborer is worthy of his hire. The friends and all the workers ought to know what is happening to the money that is given. Jesus and Paul both said much more about money than the friends and workers acknowledge. The Apostle Paul commended the Christians in Philippi in Philippians 4:15-19. Monetary giving is a fruit that abounds as **“a sweet smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”** Paul said he had learned to be content, being full or hungry, abounding or suffering need. Paul also worked for a living, when he was able, making tents, as he preached, and used his own money to help the poor and to fund his mission trips. Scripture shows giving to God and to the needy was an integral part of the Jewish community, also a very important part of the Christian life and one way to lay up treasure in heaven. It was obviously done in an open manner because this commendation Paul gave them has been recorded in Scripture for all Christians to obey. It was not done in secret or in partiality.

Workers will not accept money from outsiders yet they will accept their hospitality, as well as reduced or free health and dental care from non professing doctors and dentists. Sometimes money is refused from professing people if they have a TV, smoke or have a drinking habit. While a Christian should live a clean and healthy lifestyle, receiving or refusing money should not be used as a tool of power, control or discipline. This kind of action leads to hypocrisy because some people will simply hide their televisions and lead double lives. This is destructive to the soul because the private sin and deceit may have a surface cover in public but a destructive effect in the heart. It is not the outside that condemns us but what is in the heart. The Word of God is sufficient, clear, beneficial, balanced and able to correct and change us. The Holy Spirit is given to empower and enable the Christian to live a life worthy of God's approval. Paul wrote to Timothy with this very message. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** We need not think our manipulations can compete with the Word of God and have a good outcome! This is why Jesus warned against the commandments of men; they all saw the result of the leaven of hypocrisy in the Pharisees.

Some of the workers claim that instructions in Scripture about 'the poor' is in reference to themselves and they ignore the rest of the Bible's instruction on money altogether. Other workers have preached that the early Church only gave food and lodging to the apostles and evangelists. This is not true. Paul instructed the churches in Galatia and Corinth to give money on the **first day** of every week for the needs of the poor. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 **“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do you. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”** Paul wanted the money to be collected ahead of time, not just while he was there. The money was carried by a team of leaders to the needy so that it would arrive safely and honestly so there would be no misunderstandings or accusations. Jesus said **“The poor you will have with you always.”** As long as there are poor people, doesn't this infer that money should be collected every Sunday to help them? When one member of the Body of Christ suffers or rejoices, the other members share the suffering and rejoicing. True Christianity brings unity and harmony between the natural and the spiritual life. The one cannot be isolated from the other. Gnosticism built on Greek philosophy, taught that matter was evil and the spirit was good. This promoted a dualism which promoted a clear separation between the material and spiritual world. Gnostics felt it didn't matter how they lived in the body, because the flesh was evil. True Christianity must permeate every aspect of our lives and make us whole from the inside out.

Baptism

Workers believe in baptism by immersion, following a profession. They view it as *“signifying death, burial and resurrection.”* They believe *“the candidate, the method and the minister must be “right” in order for the baptism to be right.”* *The right minister of course means it had to be a worker.* In my youth no meetings or talks were given on baptism but talks were given in later years usually **after** an evening meeting at convention, **the day before a baptism.** Candidates for baptism were encouraged to talk *“privately to the worker you knew best.”*

Most qualifications have to do with outward appearance or willingness. When I wanted to be baptized at age 16 the first comment from the sister worker I spoke with was; *“Well, you are still curling your hair!”* I had never been told that curling my hair was unacceptable! And that sister worker had naturally curly hair!?? I was however, baptized and did my best to go back to straight, straggly and hard to manage hair – uncurled! Putting your hair up in a bun was the standard for all women but that is not followed now by many of the young people. For the better of course!! How you do your hair is quite unrelated to one's heart before God!!! Sometimes before being baptized, a man would be given a haircut by a worker! I guess his was too long! If young people have a *“worldly”* boyfriend or girlfriend they will be refused. *“Worldly,”* of course, would include a Christian from an *“organized religion.”* *“No television”* was *“the standard”* for many years! Now many people have televisions or have one hidden. Good attendance at Sunday meetings and Wednesday Bible Studies is a must in

order to be baptized. Some workers refuse to baptize younger children and others claim they should be adults over 21. Some are refused with no explanation at all. Those who have had a previous 'religious experience' or have been part of a denomination may wait much longer to be baptized as they usually ask too many doctrinal questions which many workers refuse to discuss.

Basic Doctrines

They deny the nature of the Triune Godhead. They do not teach the Deity of Christ and the Person of the Holy Spirit. They claim that the Father alone is God; that Jesus is just a man and the Holy Spirit is an energy or force. They will say Jesus was 'divine' but they do not grasp that He was fully God and fully man. They believe Jesus became perfect through sufferings and therefore He is our example to follow by self denial in order to be saved. **People must deny self and suffer in order to be saved.** Salvation is by asceticism not by faith. They do not understand the fall of man, the first Adam and subsequently the Last Adam in Christ and the all Sufficiency of the Cross, and the fulfillment of perfect Righteousness by Christ ~ which is imputed to the true believer by repentance toward God and Faith in Christ Jesus alone. To do what Jesus did, He had to be the God-man. Simply said, the virgin birth or better said, virgin conception was the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit affirming His Deity; through the virgin birth full deity and full humanity were united in one person and the virgin conception also made possible Christ's humanity without inherited sin.

Some workers claim **the Doctrine of Grace** to be "a scary doctrine." Some workers think it is worse than scary. However, when asked, they will say that they "believe in the Grace of God." I heard on many occasions, that 'grace is like the grease that makes the wheels turn easily!!!! Or like oil on troubled waters!

They claim to be following "Christ's example," as a homeless, poor, preacher of the gospel, but have no real Biblical understanding of the sin that separated all mankind from God and that in the first instance Jesus died for His Father. Only Jesus could fully satisfy the wrath of a Just God against all sin. It was God's wrath upon sin that required perfection. Grace is what has been done for us in and through Christ; a gift we cannot buy or merit but can only receive by faith in Christ Jesus alone. All of Scripture attests to this essential fact.

They have often rightly been accused of not believing in the Blood... They will say they "believe in the Blood," but that people must first believe in their way of 'ministry' and their 'home meetings' and then they might be worthy of the Blood. **They don't believe the sacrifice of Christ's Blood is trustworthy....it can be lost at any time if one doesn't obey the workers.**

The workers have often said that they can know whether a person is saved or not by his attitude towards the workers.

Another quote from older worker Jack Carroll: [Manhattan MT Convention 10/4/45] REF #162

"For the spirit and attitude you assume toward those that have made themselves poor, homeless, and strangers for the gospel's sake will ultimately determine where you will be in eternity."

Matthew 25:32-46 is quoted with this twist also. The Scriptures here refer to the final judgment. Jesus said verse 40: **'inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me:** The workers see themselves as 'the least of these my brethren', so how they are treated determines your eternal destiny!!

They often use 1 John 1:7, **"But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son, cleanses us from all sin."** The word connecting these two statements is **"AND"** not then; it is not a conditional word. This verse is given a 'twist' and the word 'fellowship', of course they see as their 'fellowship'.

This effectively elevates a ministry as more important than the completion of Christ's work on the behalf of the believer in Christ alone. Personally, as long as I can remember we were taught with many clichés; **Mr. Carroll's favorite: and still the basic!** **"The two foundations of God's Way are the Preacher without a home and the meeting in the Home."** **"God doesn't dwell in temples made with hands."** **[A bit silly actually because I think houses are made with hands?]**

Those of us who are a little older well remember Jack Carroll's teaching regarding the temptations of Jesus. [This older and senior brother was in charge of the workers all down the Western Coast of USA and Canada for many years and was looked to as authority and notes of his sermons spread far and wide were treated as authoritative.]

Please turn to Matthew 4

1. Verse 3: **Satan said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."** Don't depend on God, depend on yourself. **Jesus answered, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."**

2. Verse 5: ***Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He shall give his angels charge over you...." Are you really the Son of God? I dare you to... Jesus said to him, "It is written again, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God."***

3. Verse 8: ***The devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." Worship me and I will give you everything. Luke's gospel adds "for this has been delivered to me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you Satan, for it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve."***

The reason I mention briefly these verses is that Mr. Carroll taught us that "these temptations were the preparation for Jesus to establish His ministry." It would almost be easy to see how this interpretation could be given since Matthew 4:17 records: ***"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."*** However, if we now return to Genesis 3 it is recorded, ***"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which God had made"***...then Satan began with his temptations by twisting the scriptures challenging God's provision, authority, seeking to be worshiped as God, etc. but Satan is a liar, a deceiver, a destroyer. Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan's scripture twisting lies which caused them to doubt and disobey God. This resulted in 'the fall' or man being separated spiritually from God.

When we look at the book of Romans, in particular, we see clearly that through our first parents' disobedience, sin was visited on all mankind. Romans 5:18, ***"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous."***

It is clear to see that where mankind sinned in the beginning Jesus had to overcome those same temptations to be victorious where the first Adam failed. Where Adam 'fell' or disobeyed, Jesus had to be completely victorious. Satan was on hand to destroy if possible, the only One who could restore a fallen and broken world. Satan attacks God's authority, God's identity, God's provision, God's power, glory, goodness, God's position and rightful worship.

Those temptations were not simply to prepare Jesus to establish some ministry. Jesus alone was the Perfect Overcomer and He alone could reverse the power of the curse and separation in the Garden due to man's disobedience. In every aspect where Adam (and we, in Adam) failed Jesus has been Victorious. Hebrews 4:15, ***speaking of our Great High Priest, Jesus, 'was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin.'*** There was much more comprehensive reason for Jesus' victories in those temptations than 'establishing a ministry'.

I believe in the mind of Mr. Carroll, and the others, the ministry and the format in Matthew 10 became central, therefore explaining these temptations of Jesus as ***"preparation for establishing a ministry"*** rather than seeing them as part of the Work Jesus came to do as our Substitute; they think God established the ministry (their ministry) as the real reason Jesus came.

When Jesus prayed His victory prayer in John 17 and said, ***"I have finished the work which You have given Me to do"***, He was not referring to some format, method or ministry. He came for a far greater Work than our minds can comprehend. Jesus, the sinless One, the Last Adam, fulfilled all righteousness, took our sin, offered to God the only Sacrifice God would or could receive in payment for all sin. Jesus was the only sacrifice God could accept that could reverse the curse for those who will repent and believe in Him. Sinners who shelter under Christ's blood are justified.

If we keep Jesus in our focus and central, the scriptures will easily interpret themselves. If we have some format and idea of our own, and then look for verses that appear to support that particular idea, then we arrive in confusion.

The Meeting in the Home

In spite of the fact that this group exists all over the world very little is known about these people because their meetings in the home keep them hidden from the public. Now the Bible, of course, speaks of ***"the church that is in your house"*** Romans 16:5, ***"Likewise greet the church that is in their house"*** Again in 1 Cor. 16:9 ***"Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house....."***

Col. 4:15 ***"Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church which is in his house"*** Paul writing to ***"Philemon, and his wife Apphia, and to the church in his house."***

We were told many times that the word "church" is mentioned 112 or 113 times in the New Testament and never once means a building...**We were led to believe that Christian people believe their building was the Church.**

It is exclusively believed by the Two by Twos that the **only place worship meetings and the communion can be, is in a home**; citing the upper room where Jesus had the disciples prepare the Passover before his Crucifixion. Also they refer to the Passover in the Old Testament in Exodus... where the blood was sprinkled on the doorposts of their **homes**...Exodus 12:13 **“And, the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”**

This whole subject could take hours to discuss, but simply put, **the BLOOD, not their houses, provided the shelter from their sins and the death angel**. The blood of the sacrificial lambs was a shadow of the real Lamb of God, when Jesus in Person would come in due time. They will say that the life is more important than the blood; that without the life you can't have the blood. In such a twist they are misunderstanding the whole lesson. Of course by Jesus perfect life **He** fulfilled all righteousness. But **His** was the only 'worthy' life God could accept to pay the penalty for sin. Scripture says **He was spotless and without blemish!** And indeed believers do have fellowship with other believers as we partake of Christ. However what the workers are really saying is we must follow His example to be worthy of the Blood. They emphasize that Israel was feeding on the Lamb in their houses, therefore that made them worthy of the blood. Our best 'following' will never be sufficient to make us worthy; if so Jesus died in vain. We can 'follow' till the cows come home and never be spotless and without blemish!! Our fallen nature in Adam makes that impossible. Cleansing and forgiveness can only come as we **obey in believing and receiving His perfect Sacrifice as our Substitute**. The perfection of Jesus life and death is never something we can attain to make ourselves worthy by our following, our work, our merits, our efforts. This does not disengage us from being guided by His life or fellowship with others. The workers though do not actually use Jesus life for their 'standards'. They have their own set of 'do's and 'don'ts' that are quite at odds with Scripture, and certainly not found in Jesus 'example'.

This erroneous emphasis on the home could be similar to one having an incorrect view of the emblems themselves, which are a token of the remission of sins through believing in the Blood: Neither the home, a building, or the emblems themselves have power to save. Only the Finished work of Christ whom the emblems represent can save us. It is vital to keep the emphasis on the Person and work of Christ and His vicarious sacrifice.

Furthermore, with their teaching, it is not simply that house meetings are treated as essential to salvation – it is that **they reject, forbid, and disdain all church buildings** (as well as all people who meet such buildings) citing that God does not dwell in temples made with hands and that the breaking of bread only took place in a home. **The place of worship to them is more important than Who it is we must worship**. The church building isn't for God, it is for the people to have a place big enough and quiet enough to learn and worship together with a community of believers.

Church buildings, the clergy, a salaried preacher, have been so spoken against that when one comes to seek out a church after leaving the Two by Twos, it can be a very fearful experience. One exercises a lot of caution when reaching out again and this is not always understood by those who have not had such a broken experience. That's why these classes are so good to help us understand other peoples experience so we can pray and reach out with understanding.

Method of Ministry

I want to look more specifically at their main theme, their basic doctrine, which everything centers around. Their method of 'ministry' they see as so central. They are persuaded the instructions to the 12 disciples in Matthew 10 is critical and for all time.

Let's look a bit at Matthew 10: Jesus sent the disciples on a specific mission, to a specific people, **(the Jews)** and just as specifically, **(Not to the Gentiles)** with miraculous signs accompanying them. **The content of the message of the 12 and 70** was "The kingdom of heaven is at hand": Mt.10:7; Mk.1:14-15. **“Messiah is here.** Indeed it was then "at hand" in the Person of Jesus Christ. Most of the Jews as a nation rejected Jesus as The Messiah. The message of the 12 and 70 contained nothing concerning Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Scripture teaches that in this present Church age dispensation God has turned to the Gentiles.

It is very important for us to recognize that, in fact, the format for the 12 and 70 was not a command after Pentecost and through this Church Age of Grace. The Gospel itself is a 'new message' as Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 15:3 which pastor Shaun recently quoted **“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”**

In the Acts of the Apostles documenting the birth and growth of the Church we find that those who carried the Gospel were often alone, or sometimes in larger groups even to eight people. In fact there is notable history of the nature of the growth of the Church recorded at the time of great persecution against the church: Acts 8: 1 **“Now Saul was consenting to his (Stephen's) death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were ALL SCATTERED throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. Vs. 4: Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere PREACHING THE WORD.”**

These new believers once settled and comfortable in Jerusalem became the first ambassadors for Christ and the Gospel outreach as persecution thrust them out from their comfort zone. They were not sent out 'two and two' like the twelve and seventy. God doesn't box Himself in or limit Himself to some method or format of our making. If ever there was a time when such a format, if critical to salvation, should have been followed it would have been in those days! **It was in fact ordinary believers, not the apostles, empowered by the now indwelling Holy Spirit who were spreading the gospel and leading people to faith in Christ due to persecution in so many places. All Christians are commanded from God to share the gospel and the scripture, not just full time pastors.**

Theological training and Bible school was not even on the horizon of thought; systematically learning the Bible is viewed as false and of the Pharisees. The workers refer to the Pharisee's observation of the disciples that they were 'unlearned and ignorant men' and also cite Matthew 11, where Jesus thanked His Father for hiding these things **"from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes."** They believe the wise and prudent is a description of Christian clergymen, the theological scholar and anyone who goes to Bible School.

Most of us who became workers felt we had 'volunteered'. But the volunteering was certainly orchestrated by a great deal of pressure from messages that the 'ministry' was taught to be the 'highest calling' and marriage was second best. "Offering" to become a worker was the last voluntary thing we did. Our lives were no longer our own. We were governed by collective expectations, the opinions of our companions or the head workers, not the Holy Spirit and scripture. Most workers have very little personal liberty or appetite for carefully studying the scripture.

Rather than any formal training or biblical understanding the usual requirement was simply having the 'approval' of those workers who knew you best. Willing to go "anywhere, anytime with anyone" and the choice was for life, backed by the often rehearsed message; **"No one – having put their hand to the plow, and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven."**

Most of their teaching is done in this way, a verse here and there out of context, anecdotes and clichés that serve to promote their perceived necessity of this method of 'ministry'. Public Gospel meetings do not follow a systematic study of the Bible, or a literal understanding of words. Instead, they "spiritualize" scriptures which are obviously intended to be literal. They do not have a dispensational overview of Scripture. **Their real indoctrination came through the home visits until people finally "get the revelation that these workers are the only True Servants and this is the only True Church."** Many people simply cave in to the workers' authority and don't ever truly comprehend what they have accepted. They admire the workers for being single and believe that proves they are holy and worthy of respect.

Workers often say, "We don't need knowledge, we need revelation." They mean they don't need Biblical knowledge. The workers believe that their messages come by the *"leading of the spirit"* instead of logical and systematic Bible study. This so called *leading of the spirit* doesn't lead further than one's own personal knowledge, yet it is trusted equally as though it were the authority of the Word of God. This opens the way to many erroneous ways, strange applications and supposed meanings of the Scriptures. The important 'revelation' they want people to get is that their ministry and workers are the Only True Way.

Requirements for the Two by Two Ministry

There are no written rules for acceptance into the "work". There aren't even conversations to determine whether you have read the whole Bible or understand it. It is a matter of being certain you have given up everything, no bank account, have sold all your possessions and *"burned all your bridges."* Being willing to go anywhere, anytime with anyone divests the individual of one's own mind and thinking, questioning or reasoning. Of course being unmarried and having cut all such notions of a marital relationship is a given. It is the criteria though no one ever signs an agreement regarding these things, the strength of your personal belief and the belief of the group is extremely strong. The letter I received from the Head Worker saying that there was "a place for me in the Harvest Field" simply said the older sister worker who had been in our area said that I had a good testimony.

We often said; **"Mine is not to reason why, mine is but to do or die!"** When I think back on this **it was an ingenious cliché really!** We were incorrectly referencing Alfred Lord Tennyson's famous poem: **Charge of the Light Brigade:**

The exact words are: "Forward, the Light Brigade!" Was there a man dismay'd? Not tho' the soldier knew Someone had blundered:

Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die: Into the valley of Death Rode the six hundred.

During the Crimean War 600 cavalry (light brigade) were ordered a direct attack on a prepared artillery position of the Russians. The disastrous charge became famous for stupidity of the charge and order and also the bravery and loyalty of the British troops.

As workers there were many times we were loyal and brave in executing orders of no sense. The sad part is, we were like the six hundred and charged on at the request of others and we imagined obedience was essential for our spiritual warfare and salvation.

The workers believe the older companion will teach the younger and quote Jesus when he called His disciples **"follow me and I will make you become fishers of men"**. In other words, learning from an older companion was a life long lesson of becoming a 'fisher of men' learning as you followed along.

Any thinking person should know that no 'companion' could be compared to the disciples who walked with Jesus! He was the WORD made flesh and in Him is ALL the knowledge anyone would ever need. His promise before He returned to His Father was that he would send the Holy Spirit to indwell the believer and the Holy Spirit will lead into all Truth.

We did not follow a systematic study of the Scriptures, nor a consistent literal application; much was conveniently 'spiritualized'. It was not a verse by verse or book by book in context. We didn't know Hebrew or Greek, and certainly we did not have an overview of Scriptures or even the history of how the Bible has been translated, or by whom and certainly we had no idea that men were martyred for the Word of God. We didn't know Jewish history or Christian history. We had no understanding of theology or Christian doctrines. **Our circle of understanding was so small it was easy to put ourselves in the center....we thought we were the center.**

The status, credibility and authority one has while faithfully keeping their place in the ministry or as a professing member is soon lost if one leaves. There can be everything from shunning to malicious gossip against a person. You may become a sort of 'non persona'. Leaving the work when older is almost impossible due to being ill prepared to fit in again to the real world of making a living and in many cases health is so compromised one would be unable. Leaving the meetings altogether you are now anathema, to be avoided at all costs. The simple way of keeping others from asking you questions, the warning remarks need only be made, **"He (or she) doesn't believe in the workers anymore."** **You are said to have lost out, lost your vision, are bitter or unwilling and perhaps never did 'have it anyway!'** Attending a church is solid proof of all previous suppositions.

Workers Meetings

Having given this subject quite a bit of thought I find it almost impossible to convey the subtle oppressive and collective conditioning these gatherings achieved or at least attempted to. This is clear to me now from the vantage point of having comparison. When you have no basis for comparison you are locked into making everything seem okay even if it doesn't feel good and doesn't make sense. When all other religions and methods are 'wrong' in your understanding you make your best effort to comply with whatever is deemed right in your sphere called 'truth'. It can't seem to enter your mind you could be deceived! That something serious is wrong with the system that is causing these personal difficulties isn't the first thing that enters your mind.

Yearly during the convention season there will be a 'workers meeting'. These are exclusive for the workers. The absolute exclusion of all the laity, elders, deacons, friends, has no basis whatsoever in the Bible. This fact alone is alarming. We were often asked by the friends; "What goes on in a worker's meeting anyway; do they talk about money there?" [The friends often grasp for some hope that somewhere, somehow the money issue is publicly discussed.]

Every worker will attend one or maybe two workers meetings in a season. This is a very solemn assembly. The format of the meeting is quite similar to other meetings. One or two hymns are sung, prayer and word of testimony and one last hymn. In this meeting a number of older brothers sit in a row at the front and the others in a group facing them. Each person is expected to have at least a one line prayer and very **brief** 'testimony' (word of purpose). Usually the brothers seated at the front will speak last and that in hierarchical order of junior to the most senior speaking last! And believe me, each knows exactly where they 'fit in', in this ranking according to your number of years in the work.

For many this gathering is excruciatingly painful....if you have had a hard previous year and are faced with a less than desirable new companion or field being 'willing' can be a huge challenge and frightening prospect. It is not a meeting that addresses Scriptural teaching or even real issues. The collective listening to others' very brief expressions of fresh willingness to deny oneself, thankfulness for the **special privilege** as a worker, emphasizing the significance and **importance** of the work, expression of desires and hopes to go forth again in spite of difficulties; all have their collective effect on the individual to bring about conformity and commitment. Both prayer and testimonies are very **short**. Briefness is important 'so everyone can have a part'. These meetings are almost always after the new workers list has come out. For many the new list spells being faced with a very difficult companion or being sent to some field or area for 'demotion reasons' or even to areas with difficult living conditions and in some cases those with health issues could be far from medical care. -- I have known many who have shed many tears of anguish trying to find the 'willingness' to face a new year. Many may have been corrected, chastised, belittled, wrongly accused and blamed, criticized, and privately given some 'ultimatums to shape up'. For such the workers meeting presents an added sharp and agonizing experience. You are very aware that what is looked for in your **brief** prayer and testimony is your word of fresh willingness, admission of failure, desire to 'fit in' and to do much better.

The worker's meeting does not allow any openness of public opportunity to express any real issues of concern! The briefness of your verbal prayer and testimony enables the **suppression of your real feelings**, smoothing over unresolved hurts, denying normal logic and the rationale of any normal sense or reasoning that you might possibly still have. The overall effect of the group voice of new willingness etc. indeed can effect your personal compliance. You may feel again refortified and united even if superficially, and above all, if anything was wrong it **must have been your own fault**; not any fault of the "Way itself". After all, 'the way is perfect!!' I would hesitate to suggest that any worker goes to a workers meeting feeling good about themselves. Your feeling afterward could vary a great deal depending on your particular situation beforehand and how well you were able to be 'rejuvenated' or 'rededicated' by the whole process. The real fact is you become **more and more hardened** over the years, become less and less able to comprehend real life and have any correct evaluation of either spiritual or natural matters.

I remember well my first testimony in a workers meeting. It was a verse of a hymn we had: ***Who saves his life, or cross would shun
Loses ten thousand, holding one; And he who fain his life would spare, Keeps from the multitude their share. Oh, who can hear
the needy cry and yet refuse in love to die?*** I was very genuine and truly felt sparing my life would be eternal loss for someone. There is some good sentiment in this hymn but as I look back on the words now, it was more about me than about my Saviour and about what He could do.

The contrast of Joy I find these days in my Salvation with Christ in the center, is so superior to the desperations and disappointments of those 28 years as a worker.

Forbidding to Marry

In the very early years there were a few pairs of married workers. I knew a few of them. The practice now is that workers be single **and must remain unmarried for life**. The 'sacrifice' to become a worker, leaving all hopes of married life etc. does set workers up as 'superior' and 'admirable' but actually for the *wrong reasons* and the admiration and respect they receive certainly detracts from Christ, the Only One who truly deserves our affection, trust, obedience and worship. If workers want to marry they must leave the 'work'. This too is a difficult thing as this choice is definitely regarded as second best. They speak of John Mark who 'left the work', and Demas who had forsaken Paul loving this present world. These examples of course caused a fear of "losing out," "failing" and "not being faithful to the end." This kind of fear is deeply rooted and has a terrible hold on keeping people in a place where health, physical and emotional and peace of mind are greatly compromised or destroyed, for the sake and expense of "being faithful to the end." It can create extreme guilt and turmoil in the minds of those who must leave the work for whatever reason.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to some Scriptures on this matter and quote some Bible commentators. I strongly encourage all to do their own study on this issue. I believe that the following Scriptures will make it clear why worker's *sacrifice is for the wrong reason*.

1 Timothy 4: 1-6 *Now the Spirit EXPRESSLY says (other translations say – explicitly – clearly – manifestly – expressly declares - that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own consciences seared with a hot iron. Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the Truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. These were not simply suggestions but warnings from God the Holy Spirit, (another Scripture that affirms the Person of the Holy Spirit) – in order to know things of the future, the HOLY SPIRIT HAD TO BE GOD.....*

In the setting of this letter Paul wrote to Timothy, Paul had just finished declaring the **MYSTERY OF GODLINESS** 1Tim.3:16 "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory." God's written concise witness to the heart of the gospel, the divinity, humanity and complete work of Christ.

Now Paul is warning about the **MYSTERY OF INIQUITY or FALSE TEACHINGS.**

The Parallel Bible Commentary says:

1 Timothy 4:1-6

3) He sets down two types of this false doctrine, that is, the law of single life and the difference of meats.

4) He proves that he justly called such doctrines devilish, first, because the teachers of them make laws of things which are not their own: for have they created the meats?

5) Secondly, because they overthrow with their decrees the reason why they were created by God, that is, that we should use them.

6) Thirdly, because by this means they rob God of His Glory, Who will be honored in the use of them. And here with this, the apostle declares that we must use the liberality of God solemnly, and with a good conscience.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on:

1 Timothy 4:1-6 "False teachers forbid as evil what God has allowed and command as a duty what He has left indifferent. We find exercise for watchfulness and self-denial, in attending to the requirements of God's law, without being tasked to imaginary duties, which reject what he has allowed. But nothing justifies an intemperate or improper use of things; and nothing will be good to us, unless we seek by prayer for the Lord's blessing upon it."

The Coffman Commentary on:

1 Timothy 4:1-6

Verse 3 “Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth.

“Forbidding to marry is Gnostic. This heads the list of characteristics of the great apostasy that shall seduce and mislead the Church of God.” “The command to abstain from meats and marriage is based upon the supposed evil of natural life and matter; (this is an indication) of the impious doctrine of some of the great Gnostic schools in those early day creeping into the churches. The Jewish sects of the Essenes had already taught abstinence from marriage was meritorious.”

Titus 1:6 says that a Church leader or elder was required to be the ***“husband of one wife.”*** Apostles were permitted to take their wives with them on mission tours, 1 Corinthians 9:5. Forbidding to marry is wholly opposed to Scripture which says that ***“marriage is honorable in all,”*** Hebrews 13:2.

Though the workers do not live in a cloister or monastic isolated system, forbidding them to marry is a method of isolation from all normal life, a form of control and separation from reality and normal family ties. When human affections and emotions are suppressed abnormally, it opens to many kinds of abuses. Forbidding to marry is unnatural, unbiblical, unholy, unspiritual and uncalled for. Workers are seen as pure, above reproach and trustworthy. They are looked up to and admired beyond all normal value. Their pictures are on every piano and wall. We now know that many abused this trust over and over. Some abuses go back many years. Some are nothing less than horror stories. Many still languish with unresolved issues of assault on their person by those whom they trusted. The statute of limitations makes some issues impossible to resolve in the courts. Thankfully through open internet access a safety net has been provided for some dialogue and some perpetrators are finally being forced into public admittance. The itinerant method makes it easier for abusers to escape justice. The biggest problem is getting older workers especially to admit these problems, be open about listening and acknowledging them. One must understand that the only sins forgiven are those we admit and confess.

I love 1 John :1:8-10 ***“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”***

It is important for us to see that Christ addressed the wrath of God against sin. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. Christ’s sacrifice turned away the wrath of God by satisfying God’s just demands. We do not appeal to God’s mercy when we confess our sins, but rather His Justice. We can only be forgiven through confessing and appealing to the One who died in our place. On this basis only, God cannot deny us. But God cannot do anything for us unless we confess and acknowledge our Advocate with the Father. These truths should give us every confidence and courage to let go of hidden things, be honest, admit and confess our sins and let Him Justify and Free us.

‘One way churches’ have strength and control by fear because one’s only hope of salvation is connected to their view of “faithfulness,” which in our case meant remaining faithful to the workers and the group. Leaving is seen and often felt as abandoning your relationship with God. Your security and eternal hope is tied up in the group and faithfulness to its changing collective expectations rather than the security God intends for the believer in Christ. Leaving the ministry has the added sense of guilt and failure toward others! This sense of guilt and fear has a very strong power --however, a power based in wicked and false authority. The devil loves false guilt; he grinds deep into your soul with this tactic. You may be ostracized, shunned, avoided, lied about or perhaps just ignored. You will be said to have “lost out”..... “have a bad spirit”....“unwilling, lost your vision, found the poison on the internet,” etc. It may also be suggested that you “never had it in the first place” or “you never did just quite fit in”. In my experience some word went around that I had mental troubles, and others did say “you never did just quite fit in”. Well, I had mental troubles alright, but only the kind of mental anguish that is born out of trying to live in a way that God never intended in the first place. My 28 years attempt to ‘fit in’ nearly took all my health.

Some workers have suffered to the extent of being disinherited by their families. Leaving the work, or leaving the group, no matter the circumstance, is breaking ties with the only social circle you have ever known. You may want to keep their friendship but this usually doesn’t happen due to the attitude of the group mind set toward the one who leaves. Leaving the work when you are older is almost formidable without training for any normal job. Making a living for some would not even be possible. Making new friends is not always easy and when one has been so let down, misguided and lied to, it is not easy to learn to trust again and often people like myself, for a long time are very wary of others’ motives.

When a person seeks a Church family we are often very skeptical and suspect about participating within the church family. It is a great joy to find there are avenues of service that bring great joy and pleasure. Bible study and prayer groups have been a great joy for me to find and share in. There is so much to learn from other believers as we share this journey together. It is so important that a church has an open and public and Biblical way of addressing disciplines, problems and all functions in the church. If we will just follow the Bible’s

teachings in all of these things we can be fairly sure of a safe place to worship together. My love for the Scriptures now is so different than before and I am delighted to have found so many to share this with.

Conclusion

I encourage every person to take personal responsibility to understand the Scriptures. Make the effort to methodically and systematically study them. Scripture indeed interprets itself. Our personal and living relationship with God must not be fettered with legalisms and manmade rules which contradict the simplicity of Christ. We need to be equipped as Peter admonished in 1 Peter 3:15 ***“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”***

1 John 4:1-3 ***“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.”*** Test the spirits by the Word of God.

The devil can be thwarted: James 4:7 ***“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”***

*****How do we resist him?** 1 Peter 5:8 ***“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him steadfast in the Faith.”*** This is not our personal little faith we exercise, but the sum total of the Bible’s teaching, The Word of God! The devil has no power over the answer from God’s Word. Memorize and be able to quote scriptures which counter false doctrine, twisted scripture and rebuke Satan’s lies. Contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Websites:

www.tellingthetruth.info

This site gives authentic historical documentation of the origins, and evolving of the movement from the late 1800’s to this present day. There are many other helpful links on this site such as the [Faith Mission](#) etc.

www.2x2church.com; The Church Without a Name by Kathleen Lewis

A book written by an ex member who was born and raised in the movement

www.preachtheword.com

Pastor David Legge from Ireland: search: Cooneyites on this site:

[Also an excellent source of expository Bible teachings.]

By Sharon Hargreaves September, 2010
