

Alberta Division

Divisions in Two by Two Church

Alberta Canada Purging

Revised May 22, 2023

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*We realize that the fact that we are servants of God, or even very responsible servants of God, doesn't make us infallible. However, something that is very much a part of being a child of God is to respect those who are over us in the Lord, to pray for them, to obey them, to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. **Their judgement may not always be right, but it is always right for us to respect that judgement and to work with it in the best way that we possibly can ... Whether the decision is right or wrong, the right thing for all of us is to respect it because of those who have made the judgement ... because of where it has come from and to work with it no matter what our own thoughts might be on the subject.***

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The Alberta Ex-communications of 1999

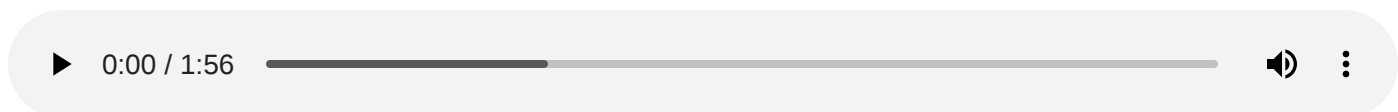
Workers involved or present for excommunications and the removal of meetings in Alberta were: Willis Propp, Merlin Howlett, Jim Knipe, Gwen Fipke, Don Shenton, Thelma Galbraith, Scott McChesney, Heather Darley, Sharon Dorey, Richard Knight, Kevin Cowan, Marian Crawford, and Sharon Hoercherl. This represented 30% of the Alberta staff, all/most operating under the direction of Alberta Overseer Willis Propp.

The workers instructed elders not to permit certain members to attend the meetings held in their homes. As a result of this worker directive, twelve Elders gave up their meetings rather than comply with this dictate. Read more below: [The Alberta Ex-communications of 1999](#)

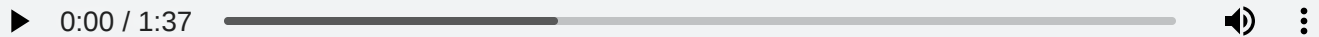
Listen to Recordings of Ex-communications

Excommunication of Dale & Marlene Jordan ~ Tapes 1-4

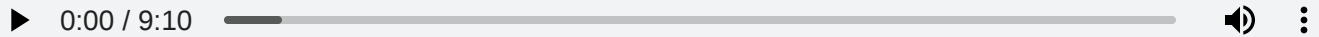
Tape 1 of 7



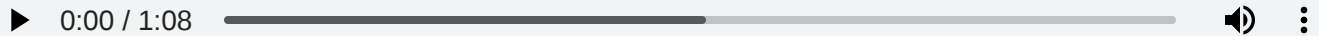
Tape 2 of 7



Tape 3 of 7

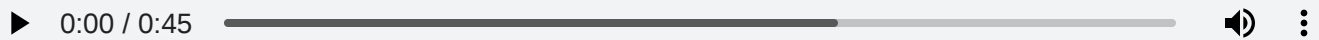


Tape 4 of 7

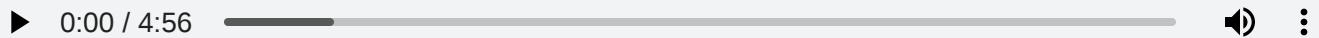


Excommunication of Fred & Verna Alder ~ Tapes 5-7

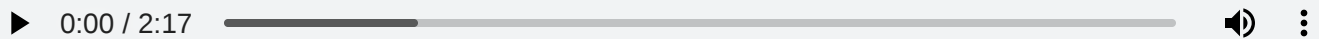
Tape 5 of 7



Tape 6 of 7



Tape 7 of 7



Events Preceding the 1999 Alberta, Canada Ex-communications By Don Galloway

I have been asked for years to prepare an account of the events that preceded the excommunication in Alberta in 1999 – to explain what were the issues that resulted in the action being taken. I have put together a bit of an explanation which I hope will clarify some of the issues.

A number of people have wondered about what were the events and issues that preceded the excommunications in Alberta in 1999. I will attempt to explain what was happening at the time, based on my recollections as well as notes, letters, and various documents that I have kept. As I'm sure you could imagine, there were many different issues, and there is probably no single issue that was the key one. It was really an accumulation of incidents and concerns, and the manner in which the ministry dealt with them (or, in most cases, refused to deal with them). As most of us are aware, the ministry does not take kindly to being questioned about their actions or being expected to be accountable to anyone, and I guess that was what resulted in the ministry having to take drastic action if they were to maintain the control and position that they were accustomed to having. I am sure I will miss some of the issues – and if I do miss anything that someone else feels should be brought out, please feel free to provide any additional input.

I'm sure that we all had certain expectations when we were 'professing', based on a number of 'basic truths' that we learned in the group. But, during the period beginning about 1995, a number of issues came to light that caused many to question why some of the actions of the ministry seemed to not be in line with the 'basic truths' that they taught. To fully appreciate the concerns that some of the Friends had during this period, it is necessary to review some of the things that we had all been taught as basic doctrines or truths in this group that calls itself "the Truth".

Some of these "basic truths" as we understood them in the group were:

1. The group took no name, and we were frequently reminded that taking a name was one of the marks of a "false church".
2. The ministry received no wages and went out completely in faith with no assurance as to where their daily provision would come from. And, again, any church that had a ministry that had an assured income was definitely a "false church".
3. The workers were "God's anointed". This would seem to imply that their conduct should be above reproach, and that they should receive unquestioning respect and obedience – at least, that was the attitude they certainly portrayed.
4. The workers gave up all their worldly possessions when they went into the ministry and we heard many times that to do otherwise

was just another mark of a “false religion”.

These were just a few of the key ingredients of this way we called “the Truth”. They had been instilled in us since our childhood. It wasn’t until it became evident that some of these ‘basic truths’ were not being adhered to by high profile workers that some of the Friends began to get concerned and started to take a closer look at what was going on. Of course, we know now that so much of what we were taught in that group was not sound doctrine, and this includes those ‘basic truths’ listed above. But, when we were in “the Truth”, these teachings were very well ingrained and were just the way we believed things should be.

Some of the events that occurred that caused us to have concerns and to start looking into things a bit more deeply were the following:

1. The way money was handled had always been a bit of a mystery – but we generally went along trusting that the ministry was upright, caring and honest, and would always do what was in the best interests of ‘the Kingdom’ and of the Friends. However, in the last half of the 1990s a couple cases came up where the ministry had received substantial amounts of money under very questionable circumstances. But even though concerns were raised, there was no attempt or apparent interest by the Alberta ministry to make things right. There was even a meeting with all of the other overseers from Western Canada and USA to discuss these concerns, as well as numerous others. Some of these overseers indicated that in their jurisdiction if there were ever concerns about the circumstances under which money had been acquired by the ministry they would, without hesitation, just give it back to the family. This was definitely not the case in Alberta. We now know there have been many other cases where there were questionable dealings regarding money which they have managed to keep covered up “for the sake of the Kingdom”.

2. About this same time (maybe a bit earlier), Willis Propp made a concerted effort to get all of the senior workers (those over 65 years old) to make sure they submitted their applications to receive the Old Age Security pension from the government. Up until this time, we had always understood that the workers did not take pensions because of their practice of not accepting money from anyone who wasn’t ‘professing’. At this point in time, there were a number of workers who were well up into their 70s and 80s, and had never collected anything. And, the government was allowing anyone who hadn’t been receiving the pension to apply for retroactive payout for previous years that they had not collected (to a maximum of 5 years, I believe). So, in some cases these amounts were substantial – in the \$15-20,000 range if I remember correctly. Apparently, Propp’s expectation was that the money that came in from this was to go to the fund that he administered. This caused considerable concern and distress in some families where they had an elderly relative who had been in the work but was going to be needing to go into a facility for the elderly, and who should have had the money available to pay for at least part of the resulting costs – but Willis had designated that it be turned over to him (presumably for the furtherance of ‘the gospel’).

3. It became known that some Alberta workers had been involved in improper sexual conduct, and that the ministry’s method of dealing with it was to do everything possible to keep it under wraps “for the sake of the Kingdom” – and at most, move the offending worker to some other part of the province or country, but certainly NOT advise anyone why they had been moved or that they needed to watch out for this worker. We have now come to realize that this has been going on all through the years and in all parts of the world. But at that time, it came as a stunning realization that “Hey, the workers are not the perfect beings they make themselves out to be, and certainly aren’t being directed by God in all they say and do”.

4. And, related to the above point, concerns began to be raised that Alberta was becoming a ‘dumping ground’ for workers who had to be moved from other jurisdictions because of their ‘indiscretions’. Of course, we now realize this has been their method of dealing with workers with problems all through the years and in all parts of the world. But, at that time, it was just another realization that “the Truth” was not as squeaky clean as we had been brainwashed into believing it was.

5. In about 1996, it was discovered that Willis Propp had incorporated the group in Alberta. I suppose most people are now aware of that situation. He had the group registered with the Alberta government as “The Alberta Society of Christian Assemblies”. The reason that this was done has never been satisfactorily explained. Propp claimed it was to provide cover for a worker who was at risk of being thrown out of Hungary if she didn’t come up with a group to sponsor her. However, as it turned out, it was never used for that purpose, but the registration was left in place and was finally dissolved only after it was exposed. A lot of unanswered questions there!!

6. It was also learned that some workers in foreign countries were receiving monthly stipends from Propp. This seemed to go against what they always taught about going out totally in faith ‘without purse or scrip’ and their never-ending criticism of “those false churches that had a paid ministry”.

7. Someone ran across something that suggested that Willis Propp had a bank account in the name of “F. Willis Propp Enterprises”. He denied it but refused to give authorization for anyone to check it out. In a letter he wrote at the time, he stated (and this is a direct quote from his letter), “Upon consulting with the Lawyer, he immediately said that whatever you do, do not sign such a release. It would be global and it would immediately go to the Press, also that there was no time limit on it and it could be held over my head for the rest of my life”. This seems like a strange response if there really was not a bank account in the first place.

8. It was learned that Willis Propp had a credit card with a credit limit of \$20,000 (and it had been even higher previously). This seems to be contradictory to what we had understood was meant by their claim “to be going out in faith”.

9. It was learned that Willis Propp owned mineral rights on property – which seems contradictory to what we had always heard about the workers “giving up everything to go out in the harvest field”.

10. The extent to which the workers would resort to outright lies and coverups to evade answering questions about any of the concerns was another eye-opener. And, this was occurring in a group that called itself ‘The Truth’.

So, these were a few of the issues that all seemed to surface at about the same time – and there are others. But they were issues that raised doubts about the integrity of the ministry. I can’t even be sure which issue would have been first – it was probably a different one for each person. But, overall, it became obvious that the workers were not abiding by those ‘basic truths’ that we had been taught all our lives. It was clear that:

- money was very highly regarded and sought after;
- the workers (some of them, anyway) were not going out penniless and in total faith as we had been taught they did;
- they hadn’t given up all ‘for the sake of the gospel’;
- their behaviour in some cases was far from what we would have expected from ones who claimed they were led and directed by God;
- they would take a name if it was to their advantage – and if they could get away without it being discovered.

I should stress that not all workers are guilty of these things – some are very fine people (although very brainwashed and misguided). But, the really scary and disappointing thing was that even though many may not have agreed with what was being done by their leader(s), they, with very few exceptions, declared their full support for them. With very few exceptions, there was a total lack of backbone or readiness to stand for what was right. In one instance, I was discussing some of the concerns with a senior sister worker (Dorothy Tessman), and I asked her what she would do if she became aware that something Willis Propp wanted them to do or believe was completely contradictory to what we had always been taught. Her response “Well, I’m just a sister worker. I would just keep in my place”. This seemed to be the general attitude – you must not rock the boat or make waves – and you must go along with whatever the senior workers demand of you, regardless of whether it was right or wrong.

The workers, as we all know, have not been accustomed to answering questions or being accountable in any way, so to be expected to explain why any of these things had happened didn’t do great things for harmony between the workers and the ‘inquisitive’ Friends. The workers’ approach to dealing with questions they didn’t want to answer would be to initially listen to the question, and advise that they would look into it, and that it was now in the workers’ hands so we no longer needed to be concerned. Of course, they never took any action to get to the bottom of any of the concerns or to do anything about them, and they would imply that we were overstepping our bounds if we ever again brought the matter up. Generally, I suppose this approach had worked quite well for them over the years but in the situation that had developed in Alberta, there were enough people with enough concerns that they were not prepared to just drop the issue because the workers said so. As you can imagine, it started to get ‘tense’ pretty quickly as soon as questions began to be asked to the workers regarding any of the above issues.

I can perhaps use our own situation as an example. We had been trying to get answers from the workers in our field that year (we were ‘blessed’ to have Willis Propp and Merlin Howlett) regarding why the money issues and the incorporation had been handled the way they were. Willis generally made himself quite unavailable for any discussion, but Merlin was always up to the challenge. As we would ask questions, we would be provided with an evasive answer, a diversion, or an outright lie. They are experts in diverting a discussion off track if it isn’t going the way they want it to.

So, after each of our ‘discussions’, we would go away and do some more checking and in almost all cases we would find out that the answers we had been given were not correct. So, we would call Merlin and ask him to come back because we would like to discuss some of his previous answers with us. Then we would get the response “Oh, you must have misunderstood me” – again, another of their devious tactics. And as we would raise more questions, he would rise up from his chair, shake his finger at us and inform us (in a quite loud and threatening manner) that “You better watch your step. You are driving a wedge between you and the workers”. So, things were not on good grounds for a number of months leading up to our excommunication. And I’m sure that most of the others who were eventually excommunicated experienced similar things.

An interesting observation we made during that time period was the change in the general theme that we heard in workers’ sermons. In earlier years we would often hear that we should stand up for what was right, even if we were the only ones doing it, etc, etc. We’d hear quotes such as “Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose true, and dare to make it known”, or “If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything”. We suddenly noticed that the focus had shifted to being forgiving of a brother’s sins, keeping in your place, minding our own business, not rocking the boat, keeping our brother’s sins covered, etc, etc. Certainly there is a place for those thoughts, alright, but not as a means of covering up serious, ongoing concerns. They were obviously trying to shut

down any discussion of serious issues, and to make it sound like it was scriptural to do so, and that raising concerns was an unscriptural thing to do.

Anyway, in the period leading up to the excommunications, it would seem that the ministry (well, Willis Propp and the other key decision-makers, anyway) had decided they had to get things under control. Since they had no intention of actually doing anything to remedy the problems, and they couldn't squelch the discussion by talking and threats, it would seem they felt the only solution would be to eliminate those who they saw as being the problems. We know that they find it very difficult (almost impossible, it seems) to admit they have made a mistake or to reverse any bad decision they have made or action they have committed. It seems that for them the only way to 'solve' a problem is to eliminate those who are not willing to go along with their attempts to whitewash the situation.

In the case of Keith and Mabel Veitch, they had been talking to the workers in their field about one of the money issues, and the senior worker had lied to them about the situation. When they challenged her on the lying issue and informed her that **workers who lied were not welcome in their home**, the worker advised them that lying had nothing to do with doctrine and was therefore not a valid reason to deny a worker the right to come into their home. And, if she was not allowed in their home, then they could not have a meeting. So, that was one of the issues that sparked the removal of the first meeting. Of course, the rest is history – the Veitches decided to continue to have a meeting if anyone wished to attend, and those who subsequently did attend were excommunicated and thus began the chain reaction that resulted in a number of meetings being removed from homes, and about 20 people being excommunicated.

At the time of the excommunications, 8 meetings were removed (actually, 1 of these was taken about 4 months earlier because the elder had said that Willis wasn't welcome to stay overnight in his house because of his lack of honesty in answering questions). Of these, 5 were Wednesday night meetings, 2 were Sunday, and 1 was Union meeting. In the period immediately after the excommunications (and extending for a couple years), at least 16 more elders gave up their meetings rather than be seen as supporting the workers in their actions. Of these, 7 were Wednesday, 8 were Sunday meetings, and 1 was a Union meeting – and about half of those elders have also left the Two by Two system. This makes a total of at least 24 meetings that were closed in a period of about 2 years.

I should point out that the concerns at that time had very little to do with doctrine. We were convinced that what the workers were preaching was right – or if we weren't totally convinced of that fact, we assumed it was just our own lack of understanding that was the problem. We have now come to understand just how far off track the workers' doctrine really is, but that was not an issue for us at that time.

I hope this answers some of the questions, although I am sure there are still some unanswered ones. There are numerous other incidents, as well, that contributed to the total loss of trust and confidence in the workers and their system. And, as noted earlier, others who went through the experience may have observed and experienced other issues that convinced them that things were not the way they should be and that they could no longer support a ministry and a system that behaved the way this one did.

The Alberta Excommunications of 1999 Sequence of Events Numerous friends were removed from meetings. Eight meetings were shut down

This document is an attempt to explain the sequence of events that occurred in 1999 when the workers in Alberta proceeded to excommunicate a number of friends and to remove meetings from a number of homes. No attempt will be made in this document to explain the substantial number of other issues that have been concerns over the several years prior — things that have been done by the ministry that are unscriptural, immoral, unethical, and even verging on being illegal (and not only in Alberta, Canada but other places as well). It is these issues and concerns (and the manner in which they have been largely ignored or 'swept under the carpet') which created the sad state of affairs that led up to the excommunications. A number of friends had tried diligently and persistently over a period of almost three years to discuss concerns with the ministry, including all of the overseers in western Canada and the U.S. West Coast.

It would appear that this diligence and persistence was not really appreciated by the ministry and overseers, and, thus, it would appear that they were quite prepared to proceed with the removal from the fellowship of a number of those who they deemed to be 'trouble causers' or 'dissenters'. (It should be noted, again, that practically none of these earlier concerns have been dealt with and additional concerns continue to arise. It would seem that the whole situation could have been resolved at least two years ago if certain ones in the ministry had shown any willingness to admit to the friends that they had made some mistakes, had shown any repentance, and had begun to work with those who had been wronged to correct the wrongs which had been committed. Instead the ministry has done everything they could to cover up the wrongdoing, to squelch questions and concerns, and to discredit (by lies, insinuations, and innuendo) anyone who has refused to let concerns again get swept under the carpet.

First of all, here is a brief summary of what has occurred. There were about 25-30 people excommunicated in 1999, and meetings

have been removed from 8 homes by the ministry. Most of this occurred in the May-June time period. Since then, about 14 other elders have opted to give up their meetings rather than be put in a place of supporting the ministry in barring friends from attending meetings in their homes. All the excommunications in Alberta would, no doubt, have been done with the approval and at the direction of the overseer, Willis Propp.

Before we get into the detail, perhaps a very brief outline of the events would make it easier to keep everything in perspective since it does tend to get confusing when a large number of names and events, accompanied by some level of detail, are presented. In summary form, then, here is the sequence of events:

Keith and Mabel Veitch were advised by the worker in their field that they could no longer have a meeting in their home.

They could not agree with this decision and decided to keep an open home for anyone who wished to come there for fellowship.

Many friends supported them in their decision and several from different parts of Alberta DID attend the first 'worker-unsanctioned' meeting. These friends included Margaret and Ervin Oakes, John and Elizabeth Seminiuk, John and Shirli O'Dell, Jim and Elizabeth Holt, and Hazel Herzog.

Within the next few days, the ministry contacted the Seminiuks, O'Dells and Holts and advised them they were no longer part of the fellowship and would not be allowed to go to any fellowship meetings.

Many other elders in Alberta felt that the actions of the ministry were unscriptural, unwarranted and harsh, and that they could, therefore, not support the ministry in the actions they were taking.

The next Sunday, the O'Dells (John & Shirli) went to meeting at Dale and Marlene Jordan's home. The Jordan's were subsequently excommunicated.

The following Wednesday, the Jordans went to meeting at Don and Maureen Parson's home. The Parson's were then excommunicated.

The following Sunday, the Holts attended meeting at Don and Myrna Galloway's home, and a few days later the Galloways were excommunicated.

About 2 weeks later, the O'Dells (John & Shirli) attended meeting at Fred and Verna Alders. The Alders were subsequently excommunicated.

A few weeks later, another of the friends, Fern Lindquist, was excommunicated because she wanted to (and did) attend meetings with some of the excommunicated friends in order to be a help and encouragement to them.

In November 1999, Willis Propp excommunicated four couples, and the children of Dale & Marlene Jordan, because they had attended meetings in their parent's home.

As noted earlier, a number of other elders subsequently opted to give up their meetings rather than be put in the position of having to support the ministry by denying anyone the right to come to their homes for meeting.

Now, to get on with the more detailed explanation of what transpired :

In March and April of 1999, an Elder and his wife (Keith and Mabel Veitch of Evansburg, Alberta) discussed some of their concerns with the Workers in their area (Thelma Galbraith). Rather than admit that the Alberta Overseer, Willis Propp, was wrong, **Thelma lied about some of the money issues** so that some Friends would appear to be in the wrong. When the Veitches had finally concluded that there was no point in talking to Thelma any more, they wrote her a letter (on April 12, 1999) in which they summarized a few of the doctrinal issues they had been attempting to discuss, and quoted several scriptures in support of their views. They concluded their letter with the following statement:

We cannot accept the doctrine you presented to us and therefore refer to 2nd John, Verses 9,10 & 11 and based on that scripture trust that you will respect our decision to **close our home to any in a ministry that finds lies along with false doctrine** an acceptable commodity to present to the churches. 1st John 2:21 assures us we have the right purpose and verse 27 gives us the qualifications to uphold that purpose.

Subsequently, Thelma and her companion met with Veitches and the other Sunday morning meeting elder and his wife (Ken and Berniece O'Dell) of Evansburg, along with another older couple (Jim and Elizabeth Holt who were both 86 years old at that time). Rather than indicate any regret for lying or distorting doctrine, she advised them that lying has nothing to do with doctrine and was,

therefore, not any basis to deny the workers the right to come to their home. (Doesn't it seem strange, then, that the way is referred to as 'the Truth'?) She then informed them that if they (the workers) were not welcome, then Keith and Mabel could no longer have meeting in their home. (Incidentally, in the excerpt from their letter, which was quoted above, Veitch's stated that **it was those who bring lies or false doctrine who were not welcome**. From her reaction, then, it would appear that Thelma considered herself to fall into that group!). The Holts did not support Thelma's action, while the other couple (the other elder and his wife, Ken and Berniece O'Dell), not wanting to go against the authority of the ministry, gave Thelma their support.

The following Sunday was the first Sunday in May, and Veitch's had had Union meeting in their home for a number of years. Since they felt that the reason for their meeting being taken was not right, they decided to proceed as usual by having a meeting in their home for anyone who wished to attend on May 2. Of course, Thelma had already advised everyone to go elsewhere. As noted above, the Holts did not feel that Thelma's actions were justified so they advised her that they would like to go to Veitch's at least this one time, to see how it felt. They were convinced that if they went and found a wrong spirit there, then they would be satisfied that Thelma's action was correct and would gladly abide by her decision, but until they could prove it, they could not go along with her decision.

She told them that if they went to that meeting, even the one time, that they would have to suffer the consequences. They are a very spunky old couple and don't get easily threatened, so they went to Veitch's for meeting as planned. Several other couples from various parts of Alberta also went because they were supportive of the stand that Veitch's had taken.

There were 11 people at that meeting – 5 professing couples and a lady who had become so disheartened with things in Alberta that she had not gone to meeting for over a year (on this Sunday, she attended but did not take part). The word soon got around to the workers (no one tried to hide the fact that they had been there, or denied it if they were asked) that there had been a meeting and who attended. That is when the ministry got the wheels in motion (or got the knives sharpened, or however one wants to describe it). Thelma phoned the Holts about 10:00 p.m. Sunday (May 2), and woke them up from their sleep (Keep in mind that this was an 86 year old couple that she was dealing with, and Mr. Holt had been dealing with heart, and other health, problems for some time). She informed them that they were no longer part of this fellowship and would not be allowed to attend meetings anywhere in Alberta. That action alone tells us a lot about the degree of compassion and concern that the workers have for the friends. Unfortunately, this type of behavior is more the norm than the exception. In one of the conversations that Holts had with Thelma, Mr. Holt asked her, "So, it's YOUR way, or the highway?", to which she answered "That's right!".

Two of the other couples (John and Shirli O'Dell, and John and Elizabeth Seminiuk) were given the same treatment over the next few days. The Seminiuks also had meeting in their home, so their excommunication included the taking of their meeting. This was carried out by Richard Knight by a phone call. The O'Dells were excommunicated (this was done over the phone by Gwen Fipke) – they had had their meeting taken a few weeks earlier (by Jim Knipe) because they had decided to no longer allow the workers in their home because of the false doctrine they were presenting, but they had not been excommunicated at that time.

The Oakes had previously had meeting in their home until Willis Propp 'removed it' early in 1998 because they had told him he was not welcome to stay in their home because of the things he had been saying, i.e. the doctrine he had been preaching. They told him he could come to their home for meeting but was not welcome to stay overnight. Willis used that as his justification to remove their meeting. Willis then assigned Oakes to go to another meeting and they continued to attend for almost a year. (However, at the court case in January 1999 at Edmonton Alberta, the statements that Willis made on the witness stand regarding the reasons for him removing their meeting were so deceitful that they decided to discontinue totally rather than appear to be a part of the same thing that Willis stood for.) They were never contacted by any worker (or their Sunday or Wednesday meeting elders) inquiring as to why they quit attending at that time. And, no workers have contacted them regarding their 'indiscretion' in attending the unsanctioned meeting at Veitch's – presumably they had already been 'written off' because they quit going to meetings earlier on.

The following Sunday (May 9), John and Shirli O'Dell attended meeting at Dale and Marlene Jordans' in Calgary. Phil Dekker the elder at the home where O'Dells normally met had advised them they were no longer welcome at his meeting so Jordans told them they were welcome to attend their meeting. Subsequently, on May 12th, the Jordans received a phone call from Jim Knipe (with Gwen Fipke supporting him on another phone) at which time he took their meeting and advised them they were not allowed to go to meetings anywhere in the WORLD. (Jim's conduct in this phone call was especially repulsive. Jordans taped most of the conversation and it reflects the total lack of reasonableness, decency, or compassion that has become so characteristic of many in the Alberta ministry. A friend from Ontario, who listened to it, was horrified – he said it sounded exactly like he would have imagined scenes from the Spanish Inquisition).

[It should be noted that the manner in which the workers conduct one of these 'executions', is rather deceitful. It is no doubt intended to be done in such a manner that they can say they gave the elders a choice and a chance to mend their ways. But what they basically do is give the ultimatum, "Are you prepared to support the Alberta ministry in all of their decisions regarding removal of meetings and removing people from the fellowship? Yes or No?" If one were willing to knuckle under and give them unconditional support, then, presumably, they would not follow through with their execution, but none of the elders have had to think very long before letting them know that there is no way they could support the ministry and the kinds of things they have been doing.]

That evening, Wednesday, May 12th, Jordans went to meeting at the home of Don and Maureen Parsons who felt strongly that theirs, too, was an 'open home' and they would not turn anyone away (they are in their 70's and had had Wed. night meeting for years). Jim

Knipe subsequently visited the Parsons the following Tuesday (May 18th). [Interestingly, when Jim, accompanied by Kevin Cowan, arrived, the first thing he wanted to know was: 1) "Is there anyone in the bedroom?" (which adjoins the room where they would be visiting), and 2) "Are you tape recording this?", to which the answer was "No" to both questions.] He then proceeded with his excommunication routine and ended up advising them that they could no longer attend meetings anywhere in Alberta, and that they would no longer have meeting in their home.

About May 13th, the Holts came into Edmonton to spend a few days with their son, Walter. On Saturday (May 15), he called his elder (Bob Sharp) to let him know he would be at meeting the next day (Walter has a job that requires him to work some Sundays so had arranged with Bob that he would let him know when he 'was' coming, rather than the usual notification if one was going to be missing.) Bob told him they would look forward to having him. Then he told Bob that his parents were visiting him and wished to come along as well. Bob advised him that they would be very happy to see them. Walter then told him that his parents had been excommunicated. Upon hearing this, Bob decided he had better talk to the workers. He called Walter back in an hour or so, and advised him that his parents were not welcome to attend his place for meeting (and this is a couple that Bob Sharp has known for 40 years, or more).

Don and Myrna Galloway had heard about the excommunications that had been going on and could in no way support the actions that the ministry had taken. They had assured Walter earlier that they had an 'open home', and if there were any problems for his parents to go to Sharps', then they could consider they were more than welcome to attend their meeting. Upon learning from Bob Sharp that they were not welcome there, Walter called to confirm that the offer still held, which was definitely the case, so they went to Galloways for meeting on May 16th.

On Wednesday May 19, Galloways got a call from Jim Knipe. This came as no surprise – they had been expecting it, but just didn't know when it would happen. Jim Knipe advised them that he wanted to have a visit with them regarding their meeting. It was arranged that he would come after the bible study that evening. When Jim (accompanied by Scott McChesney) got there, he asked Galloways if they had had the Holts at their meeting on Sunday to which they replied that they had, and that they had had a lovely meeting. He demanded to know whether they were aware of the fact that Holts were not to be allowed into fellowship meetings. When Jim Knipe was asked if he could explain why that might be, his response was (in these exact words), "That, Don, is none of your business!" He quoted the same thing two or three more times in the 'visit'.

In the course of the visit, they advised Galloways of a number of things that indicate the power that the ministry deem themselves to have: e.g. the ministry is the foundation of the gospel; that friends/elders have no right to question them; that friends must accept, without question, whatever the ministry demands of them; that friends must respect 'the order' (there has been much preached (or alluded to) about 'keeping in your place' and respecting 'the order' during the last couple years); and that elders could have control over who they invited into their homes any other time, but the ministry, and only the ministry, had control over who could come into their homes for meetings.

When Jim Knipe finally asked his question, Galloways advised the workers that they had an open home and that they could never live with their consciences if they refused to admit someone like the Holts to their meeting, and that they, therefore, could not give their unconditional support to the ministry for the actions they were taking. At this point, Jim advised them *"Well, then, you folks are no longer a part of this fellowship, and Scott will make arrangements for the people who meet here to go elsewhere."* Jim Knipe was asked if he was planning to pose the same question to ALL the elders in Alberta since it didn't seem fair that they would take this action against only certain ones, when it is suspected that at least half of the elders would make the same choice if they knew the facts. Jim Knipe replied that they had no intention whatsoever to do such a thing.

When Scott subsequently talked to Galloways' daughter and son-in-law to advise them what meeting they were being re-assigned to, he told her that if they (or anyone else) attended the meeting at her folks' place, then they would not be allowed back into a 'regular' meeting – in other words, they, too, would be excommunicated. He, and other workers as well, have given the same warning to others, including the two children of one man who is now going to the meeting at Galloways'.

About June 5-6, the O'Dells (John & Shirli) were invited to spend the weekend at Fred and Verna Alders' place in Lethbridge, and they were welcomed to attend the Sunday meeting in Alders' home. Jim Knipe, backed up by Don Shenton, subsequently phoned Alders and advised them that since they had allowed the O'Dells to attend their meeting, they were "no longer a part of this fellowship" and there would no longer be a meeting in their home. Of course, as in the other instances, the question that Fred was asked was whether he would support the ministry in the actions they were taking, and when the answer was a definite 'No', the workers again used that as the rationale to take the actions that they did.

A bit later in the summer, Fern Lindquist (a recently-widowed friend – and an ex-worker) felt she wanted to try to be a help and comfort to some that had been kicked out of the fellowship (or as she worded it, she "felt moved to be her brother's keeper"). She spoke to the workers in her 'fields' to let them know her concerns and her plans. (Two fields were involved because she attended Wednesday night meetings in the Innisfail area and Sunday meetings in Red Deer). She indicated that she was planning to go to Jordans' meeting in Calgary on Sundays, and to her regular meeting on Wednesdays, and that she expected she may want to go

back to her regular Sunday meeting when winter arrived since she did not relish the thought of the drive to Calgary when the road conditions might not be so good. The workers (Marian Crawford and Sharon Hoecherl, being the senior ones) warned her that she would not be allowed to do this – i.e. if she went to Jordans' then she could not go to any of the regular 'sanctioned' meetings, and that she HAD to make a choice. Fern refused to commit to such a demand. The following Sunday she went to meeting at Jordans. The next Wednesday, she went to the home where the regular meeting was held and was met on the driveway by the elder Larry Layden and was told that she was not welcome.

In November 1999, Dale and Marlene Jordan were planning to be in Rimbey to visit Marlene's mother, and they called her elder (Earl Eadie) regarding attending his Sunday morning meeting. They were initially welcomed by the elder but he subsequently contacted Willis Propp and was advised that he must not allow them in his meeting. Earl then called Dale and Marlene and told them that they were not welcome in his home. Jordans then inquired as to whether their three daughters and their husbands and their son would be allowed to attend if they happened to be in the area to visit their grandmother. Earl advised Dale and Marlene that their children would also not be welcome. This elder was obviously not acting on his own conviction but was willing to do the 'dirty work' for Willis Propp. The three young couples and a son were excommunicated because they had, on previous occasions, attended the 'unsanctioned' meetings at their parents' home.

One of Jordan's daughters and her husband were subsequently also told by an elder in Edmonton (Keith Williston) that they were not welcome in his home for Sunday meeting. Cheryl Lumley, a sister worker in Williston's field, later called them in B.C. to make sure they were clear on their 'excommunicated status' in Alberta. It is interesting to note that Willis Propp (the Alberta overseer) has assumed the authority to excommunicate from fellowship in Alberta some who are not even Alberta residents – and even though they were still in 'good standing' in the fellowship in their home province of British Columbia.

(In Alberta the friends have been subtly bombarded with doctrine that has taken a strange twist, i.e. giving the ministry more place/ power/ authority/ honor than would seem to be scriptural, and it has become very clear that going against the ministry can be 'injurious to your health'. They have also seen a ministry that has no qualms whatsoever about lying (or grossly distorting the facts) to make themselves look good and to smear anyone who raises concerns or asks questions that they don't want to answer. Perhaps there are some who would not intentionally spread lies, but if they are told something by someone higher up in the 'hierarchy', it seems that they accept it as fact and spread it around, even though it is a blatant lie.)

It is interesting to note how the workers are dealing with questions regarding those who have been kicked out. In many cases, they are spreading the word that these elders have CHOSEN to leave. By stretching the truth to the limit, perhaps you could say that, but it is a real stretch. One of the elders wrote to his niece who is in the work in Alberta and attempted to get through to her that they are not being very truthful when they say it was their "CHOICE" – but are instead being very deceitful. Following is a quote from the letter he wrote to her regarding this (the 'Charlene' referred to was Charlene Beck, the niece's companion until she ran into problems with the Immigration department and got sent back to the USA later in 1999):

"As I noted above, Charlene, and many others, have been spreading the word that we had CHOSEN to leave, and as I noted, that verges on being a lie, although in one sense you might say it was our choice. Let me illustrate with a little parable (sort of) to show that 'CHOICE' is a very misleading word here. Let's suppose you were walking by a schoolyard and saw a child, Billy, who had obviously been beaten up. You ask the child, "Who did it?", to which he replies that Jimmy, the schoolyard bully, had done it. You then proceed to find Jimmy and ask him why he did it, to which he replies "Well, it was Billy's choice. He chose to be beaten up."

This obviously makes no sense to a thinking individual like yourself so you go back to Billy to get more information (That is what a thinking person would do, isn't it?). You say to Billy, "I understand that you chose to get beaten up. Why did you do that?". Billy then tells you the whole story: Jimmy had confronted Billy and told him that he wanted him (Billy) to help him (Jimmy) kidnap and assault Billy's sister. Billy, of course, refused to participate because it was obviously a heinous action that Jimmy was planning. Jimmy then told him "If you don't help me, then I'll beat you up." Billy had the integrity to stand for what he knew was right, even though it meant a brutal punishment from the bully. But, it left Jimmy in the place where he could say that Billy had CHOSEN the punishment that had befallen him."

Hopefully, you can see how the circumstances surrounding Billy's CHOICE were similar to those surrounding these folks. In Galloways' case, for example, they had allowed an old couple to attend their meeting – they do have an 'open home', you know. When the workers came to see them about their 'offense', they were asked **the question, "Are you prepared to support the ministry in our actions regarding taking meetings out of homes and putting people out of the fellowship?"** Knowing the facts as to what had gone on in this regard, it was obvious that they could not agree to such a demand and that is what they let the interrogator know. So, yes, their excommunication came as the result of a choice they made, but they could have never lived with their consciences if they had made the other choice – just like Billy could not have, if he had chosen to participate in the immoral actions that Jimmy had planned. What has been described in this document are just the events related to the excommunications and removal of meetings from homes. This has just touched the 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of disclosing the real underlying issues and concerns in the province (and elsewhere).

Some of you have also wondered what has happened to those who have been “kicked out” and/or had their meetings taken. Several of the elders who have had their meetings ‘taken out’ by the ministry have opted to continue to have ‘open homes’, and most of the ones who have been excommunicated have continued to attend these meetings in what are now ‘worker-unapproved’ homes. Additionally, there have been a number of other friends who had become so discouraged or disheartened by the way things have been proceeding in their ‘approved’ meetings that they have opted to discontinue meeting in those places and to go to the ‘unapproved’ meetings. Those who attend these meetings feel they have had sweeter fellowship in these meetings than they can recall having had for many previous years. There is a focus on Jesus, rather than on certain men and/or women/ministry/system. There is a true unity and oneness of desire to serve Him; and a freedom from the bondage that has developed in so many whose primary focus was to curry favor with the ministry and to look good on the outside (in accordance with a set of man-made rules).

Of course, various workers have been spreading the story that they have started their own religion, which is, of course, an utter lie. The elders involved feel that those workers who took out the meetings and did the excommunications had no authority to do what they did. These workers have been guilty of lying and spreading false doctrine; they have not shown any of the love of Christ; and they have not displayed any willingness to stand for right. Based on these marks, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit is not leading them and these elders would, therefore, be foolish to allow them to take away something that was put in place years ago by workers who were presumably being led by the Holy Spirit. They have, therefore, simply continued to have meetings in their homes the same as they have done for years, with the only difference being that they are trying to keep their focus entirely on Christ where it should always have been.

The ones who have been put out, or who have left the system on their own, continue to have a deep love and concern for their friends who are still in ‘the system’, although the feeling does not, in many cases, seem to be reciprocated. Emotions they have felt over the last year and a half include:

- a) Disappointment in those elders who were not prepared to stand on their own convictions but, instead, knuckled under to the demands of a misguided ministry and closed their homes to ones they had previously treated as friends, without seeking to determine the true facts and circumstances;
- b) Sadness because many who are in the system have been convinced that anyone outside their little group is an ‘evil person’ who is destined for hell and should be avoided. No doubt, the ministry are telling the ‘friends’ that those who are now ‘out’ have bad spirits and are bitter, but that is about as far from reality as any statement could be. It can only be hoped that some of the friends are wise enough to recognize this, and are honest, interested and concerned enough to seek to visit openly and honestly with those who are ‘out’ to get a better understanding as to what motivated them to take the stand that they took; and,
- c) Deep concern for the emotional and spiritual welfare of any workers who have true love and compassion for God’s people but have been motivated by the fear of man to go against their own good consciences to commit acts of ‘spiritual terrorism’ against those who had loved them and held them in high regard. There is so much more that could be written regarding the repugnant and uncaring behaviour of the ministry in Alberta, but this will perhaps be sufficient to give you an overview as to what has transpired.