

Who Was William Irvine?

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Some Explanations

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What some Workers have said about William Irvine...

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Some Workers' Explanations:

"During the closing years of the last century and the first years of this century, a number of people in the British Isles and America...in the several churches of which they were then members...became fully convinced that there should be a return to the methods and purposes taught and carried out by Christ and His first disciples. This conviction led to...religious meetings, and in due time a number of these people...devote(d) their lives to the preaching of the Gospel according to the teaching and example of Christ as given in the New Testament, i.e., "Two by Two" and without salary ...putting implicit trust in God...As a result...many people...desired to be in fellowship with such preachers and this led to regular gatherings together of small assemblies in homes for worship and study of God's word." **George Walker, Letter to US Selective Service, 1942**

"You can tell whether a church is a false church or not if it was started by a man or woman. We are the only church on earth that was started by Christ." *Jack Carroll*

"We did not start this Jesus way...it was started and planned by God before we were ever thought of, and if you go any other way you will go to hell." *Ed Cooney*

"Our mission was started by William Irwin, a Scotchman, seven or eight years ago. Others followed him. I myself was a Civil Servant in Dublin. I resigned my post, sold all that I had and gave to the poor, and went out to preach." *Wilson McClung, Overseer of New Zealand, **Feb. 16, 1905** Impartial Reporter)*

"One of the head men in this work was heir to all his father's business and other money besides; but he was brought to see that riches will never save a man. So he gave it up, and is now one of the Tramp Preachers, and has never regretted it. **Another man (the first man that started the work)** was earning £6 a week, when he left it all and became poor for Christ's sake" (sister worker Edith Easy, **January 27, 1907** Lloyd's Weekly; Edith entered the work in 1905)

"Since early workers followed a Scottish preacher in Ireland before the turn of the 20th century, they have spent their lives traveling from home to home with little more than their clothes." *William Lewis, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Minnesota 11/2/86*

"We are often asked who started this church? Heb. 12:2 'Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...' Jesus gave us God's eternal plan of salvation in its fullness. He is both the author and finisher." **Dan Hilton, Burlington, WA Special Meeting, 1/1/84**

"Jesus Himself set us up." *Tharold Sylvester, The Bellingham Herald, 8/20-/83.* "We are not following some way founded in the early 1900's, but it goes clear back to Christ." *Tharold Sylvester, 11/16/83*

"Ireland is the only country where workers weren't imported, but rather exported." *Sydney Holt, 6/27/85 Letter*

"We believe we have existed since Jesus sent forth the 70 disciples, Two by Two." *Richard Sullivan, 1943*

"The church does not have a name, even though it has existed at least since the turn of the century," *Greg Kilgas;* "The church has existed right from the beginning. It's a continuation of what happened in the New Testament in the Book of Acts." *Howard Nussbaum, The N'West Iowa Review, Sheldon, IA 9/14/96*

"With regard to your question about William Irvine, there is no need for us to be 'brave and honest enough' to acknowledge the part he had in this Fellowship in the early part of this century, as there is no secret about it. He was not alone, of course, as there were other good and faithful men there also, but he no doubt had the leading part. However, when it comes to acknowledging him as being the '**Founder**' the answer is definitely 'No', for the simple reason that he was not. The Truth of God has been from the beginning – Psalm 119:89 tells us 'For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in Heaven.' It was fully revealed to us in Christ and this has never changed. God has always been able to raise up those that He can use to 'revive His work in the midst of the years' but they have never 'founded' it. If they continue faithful He is with them; if they drift from the Truth He can set them aside. The apostle Paul was greatly used in his day in spreading the Gospel but he never 'founded' it. As he wrote himself 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus'. We are glad that in our day and age God can revive His work and is still sending forth those who will go as Jesus commanded to carry the same Gospel into the world. But our only 'Founder' is Christ, He is the corner-stone, the only rock on which we seek to build and we do not need or believe in anything else." [*Ken Pagington Letter to Kathleen Overby, 5/25/95*]

Robert Johnson said that George Walker told him about Irvine and the first days and that there being no workers before Irvine.

Garrett Hughes said, "Ninety years ago, a letter came from Ireland. We heard about those with no home, no name, etc. Forty people made their choice. Sixteen went out in the work—**that was the beginning**... There is not a country not open to the gospel now. It is the most marvelous thing ever to happen." [**"Ninety years ago" = 1987 Minus 90 years = 1897**] Funeral Service for Erling Omdal, Oct. 6, 1987, Eagle Bend, Minnesota, spoken by **Garrett Hughes** (deceased USA Worker Overseer)

Garrett Hughes also made numerous references from convention platforms in his last years relative to "the beginning of days," first workers, first conventions, etc. One in particular was at Hunter, North Dakota in 1988, 1989 or 1990. And Garrett would know about these things since his Grandparents were some of the very first to profess in Ireland, in the mission where 40 professed and 16 went in the work. His mother's brother, Willie Gill, became Overseer of England and her two sisters, Emma and Jennie Gill, were the very first sister workers to go out preaching in Irvine's new movement. All three of her siblings went in the work in 1900 and are shown on the 1905 Workers List. Garrett's parents Fred & Mary Ann (Gill) Hughes professed through Wm. Irvine in North Dakota.

At the Silverdale Convention in Sydney, Australia in the early 1990's Clyde Mackay said that **Gordon McNab** (overseer of NSW at that time) spoke about how thankful he was for the "Truth" and **"that we had a lot to thank William Irvine for."**

John Long's Journal confirms that Wm. Irvine was the founder of the Two by Two sect.

"...my remembrance of how for several years at Special meeting time, I remember a favorite subject of Wm. Jamieson (when the Workers would be gathered in the home) was to tell us that as far back as we could trace this fellowship was unto Wm. Irvine. He spoke openly and freely of all which he knew of Wm. Irvine, etc. What he told us was unto enough people that it would be common knowledge statewide." [**Donald Fisher letter to Fred Miller, circa 1983**]

Wm. Irvine was the man who *"brought order to this way."* [1995: New Brunswick worker]

"When it is said that this way was instigated by a man, it raises too many questions and takes away peoples' faith so that they start to concentrate on the man who started it rather than the Lord and our God." [Canadian Brother Worker]

"When I was young, an old trustworthy worker told me not to let anyone ever tell me that William Irvine started this way because it wasn't true. And I have never believed it since...I believe **the way sprang up again** around the turn of the century; that godly men were moved by the Holy Spirit to get together and restart the way." [Jim Price, Texas, SD, Colorado Worker]

"I believe it was started from God back in the very beginning of time. And between Malachi and Matthew there is no record of God's people, you might say, but I don't feel God's Way was ever done away with. I feel that God has had a way on the earth since before the foundation of the earth. I don't believe William Irvine is the beginner of it."

"Do you know of anyone prior to him?"

"No, I don't." [Visit with Bea Moonkini, Worker, 1985]

"This faith began in New Testament days, not in Ireland nor in the U.K." [Roddy MacLean (Scotland Worker) Letter dated June 1, 1995]

"You sound rather disturbed about something to do with a man called William Irvine. I do believe he served God in sincerity and truth at one time. What happened I've never asked because our life doesn't really revolve round any person but around Jesus...I'm sure your faith isn't built on the rights or wrongs of men but the simple right or truth in Jesus...Don't worry needlessly about things really that don't come into this matter of our salvation." [Helen Phimister (Scotland Worker), Letter dated June 15, 1995]

"Some have asked when this way first got started. I don't know the answer to that. All I know is that in MY family it started in 1904, when Irvine Weir came to California." [Harry Brownlee, Hunter, ND conv., 1995]

"In answer to your question, 'Where did this religion actually begin? Was it with Jesus as we have always been told in Gospel Meetings, or by a man named William Irvine in 1897? We believe Hebrews 12:2 'Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.' I would like to give you some references that mean a lot to me as we carry the gospel to people and point them to something that is **from the beginning** and not to something begun by man. In John 17:5 Jesus spoke of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and in John 1:1 'In the beginning was the Word,' etc. So there is no date for the starting, as it was with the Heavenly Father before the world. Why would we want something started by a man when we have in the scripture something that is from the beginning and scripture to back it up?" [Letter by Doris Bloemker, Worker, 1989. [Note: Fallacy of the strawman used. Proof was given for when the Word and the glory Jesus had with the Father started. This information is totally irrelevant to the question asked in the first two sentences.]

"It is true Irvine's mind did go bad. Did that change God's way? Would you expect a man's prophecies to come to pass who was mentally unbalanced? Would you call a man a false prophet who had the misfortune of losing his mind?" [William Peterson, Oklahoma & Kansas Overseer]

"Irvine's founding role is of little consequence, for we alone follow the true pattern of the original apostles, and the early church."
Gordon McNabb (*The Secret Sect* by Doug & Helen Parker)

"...not by William Irvine, but rather **by many men** getting together and deciding to really follow the New Testament teaching of Jesus."
[William Peterson, Deceased Kansas & Oklahoma Worker Overseer.]

"We're simply a continuation of the author of Truth." [Harry Brownlee, Worker, quote in *The Sentinel*, Cottage Grove, Oregon 8/16/79]

"Yes, William Irvine started this way; it was a divine revelation from God. **He was raised up to revive** the truth just like the Word of God was dormant for 400 years..." [Sharon Williamson, Illinois sister worker, in Rockport IL gospel meeting, Feb, 94]

Unnamed workers:

A brother worker who read ***The Secret Sect***, stated that it's factually sound from what he already knew, except for a few minor details; his knowledge came from older workers who personally knew William Irvine.

"Yes, William Irvine was **among the first workers** and contributed to the first days of newness of life for the Way; but he got some grave delusion and lost out."

"I never met Wm. Irvine at any time and believe he was used of God, but was never the origin of what we believe. I understand he became too big in himself and left the fellowship we love. Workers I know and respect preach only what Jesus lived and taught with no mention at all of Wm. Irvine or any other man save only real appreciation for those who retell in our day things taught in Jesus day.

Woman asked one of the older brother workers if he had heard of Wm. Irvine.

The worker: "Well, I don't think I can talk about him..."

The woman: "Well, have you heard of him or haven't you?"

The worker: "I can't hear you very well, my hearing is getting so bad."

"I have been aware of William Irvine's life and fall from truth since a child. This has been proof to me that this fellowship is greater than any man or group of men. It also upholds the integrity of the early workers as they rejected William Irvine and Ed Cooney."

Read more :

Where Did Irvine Get the Idea to Start the Two by Two Ministry?