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The Church without a Name

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PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to summarize the teachings of this church in order to encourage people to draw nearer to and obey God. This is not a comprehensive report done by the church ministry. It is being published because they refuse to document what they believe. It is an attempt to bring to light what they have tried to hide from the public for over a century. These are things that have been observed and learned by an ex-member whose family has been part of the church for five generations. I am deeply indebted to hundreds of people who have contributed to my understanding of what has been hidden so well for so long.

It is not my purpose to draw attention to, or criticize any particular worker. Most of the quotations are from well known senior workers or head workers and from the founder, William Irvine. The purpose is not to condemn this church, for the people are truly serious and sincere in their beliefs and desire to serve God. There is no church on earth without problems or ignorance on some point of scripture. My own observations are not the last word on any subject, either. I am only bringing to light the literal view of scripture so that the readers can judge for themselves what makes better sense. Read Revelation 1-3. It is time for every Christian to examine himself and what he has been led to believe about salvation. It is also time to witness to the world that Jesus is the only Way and Redeemer, the only Mediator between God and man. The Way isn't a Church. Jesus Christ is the Way.

This is the third printing of this book. It was previously published under the pen-name, **David Stone**, in the hope that our professing family members would not be troubled by my work. They have not taken an interest in this topic and we are still praying for them.

I had been totally committed to the Two by Two Church and for most of my life had attempted to draw others into its system. Since I came to know the real Truth about Jesus, Who He is and what He did for me, can I do anything else but testify of His grace, mercy and love to the world and especially to those who are still in bondage to William Irvine's doctrine?

Kathleen (Munn) Lewis

Following is a reprint of the second edition published in 2004

NOTE:

The first edition was originally published in 1990 under the name of David Stone (pseudonym of K. Lewis)

The second revised edition was published in 2004 by Kathleen (Munn) Lewis

Both editions are Out of Print.

Author has given permission to reprint 2nd edition below.

CHAPTER 1 Characteristic Teachings

The following information cannot be called a doctrine so much as an attitude and method because so little real teaching occurs. The church believes the following statements and practices but there is probably a range of disagreement regarding a few points depending on who is in charge and where the church is located. There will be those who will challenge what I have written and some points will be moot but the point is: this is what the church believes and practices regardless of the rationalization given. These beliefs are world-wide and well documented.

Sermons are preached in the form of clichés attached to a few verses used out of context. People are not fully aware of the implication, or the fulfilled logic of the workers' statements. The purpose of this publication is to help people examine what they believe and what the workers say at meeting. Since the workers have never published a statement of belief they have been able to operate without fully understanding **what they** believe. **Their main belief is that their church is the only true church, the only way to heaven, the body of Christ.**

They believe this because of the way their ministers live and because their church meets in homes instead of church buildings.

The Ministry

The ministry is unmarried, must give up all their money and possessions except for a few clothes and a suitcase, going in pairs, itinerantly. In the early days there were a few married couples who were required to separate and preach with different companions. There were also a few married couples who preached together where unmarried ministers were not allowed. Their children were cared for, at times, by different families. The men who preach are called brother workers, and the women who preach are called sister workers.

The workers do not believe in collections or tithes and they disapprove of anyone who does. They claim that the only collections ever taken by the early apostles were taken for saints who were suffering from a famine. But the workers do not take up collections for the needy at all. They believe the scripture is referring to the workers when it speaks of "the poor."

The workers say the reason the Pharisees put Jesus to death was because they didn't like the kind of ministry He instituted in Matthew 10 (Two by Two and homeless) as it was a threat to their power over Israel.

The workers have complete authority over the congregation. The workers' words are considered equal to the scripture in authority because they are believed to be "the shepherds," "apostles," or "sent ones." The workers are accountable only to the head worker or overseer of his or her territory. Although they call themselves "servants" they see no inconsistency in their authority over the people. They consider themselves God's servants and the church's masters. The workers compare themselves to Moses, Christ, Paul and all the other apostles and prophets of the Bible.

Sister workers lead the meetings when brother workers are not present. According to the 1988 workers list there are, on the average, twice as many sister workers as brother workers. The preachers do not attend seminary or take vows or receive man's ordination.

The workers do not perform weddings. They believe being married is choosing second best to going into "the harvest field". Marrying is considered to be "giving in to the flesh." They don't usually do premarital counseling or much counseling of any sort. "Correction," is done privately in what is known as "visits".

The workers refer to the following scripture to support the idea of the homeless ministry: Matthew 8:20, Matthew 10:9-11, Luke 9:3-4, and John 8:17. Choosing a new companion to replace Judas Iscariot in Acts 1:25-26, is thought to have been necessary in order to insure that the apostles continued "Two by Two." They believe the continuance of a two-by-two ministry is mentioned throughout Acts. Acts 4:34-37 and Acts 5:1-14 are said to be examples of a man and wife who wanted to be preachers but who failed to give up all that they had. Verse 13 is used to prove that the death of Ananias and Sapphira frightened others from going into the ministry but added more to the congregation of saints. Acts 13:2 and Acts 15:39 are used as examples of Two by two preachers. (Acts 20:27-35).

In I Corinthians 15:31, Paul assures the Corinthian church of the certainty of the resurrection and urges them to be courageous in the face of persecution and martyrdom. The resurrection was the reason he could face the possibility of being killed. He used the phrase **"I die daily"** as he preached in a hostile environment. The workers have misunderstood this statement to mean a person should give up normal activities, pleasures and relationships that a human being would desire. They say that everyone must die daily in order to be saved. They also use the text of John 12:24, **"a corn of wheat must fall into the ground to die."** They believe that these verses mean that those who preach the gospel must die to human desires such as marriage, children and a home. One **"must give up all for the gospel's sake."**

They use part of a verse in I Corinthians 9:18, **"when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my power in the gospel."** Because they ignore the message of this whole chapter, they think Paul was saying preachers should not receive wages for their work.

In Galatians 1:15 Paul said, **"I conferred not with flesh and blood."** The workers believe this means that the ministry is to learn from the Spirit, not from education in the scripture, how to preach the gospel. Great emphasis is put on **the Spirit** rather than discipleship in the scripture. They ignore the fact that Paul had been trained from childhood in the scripture before he came to know who Jesus was.

Jesus said in Luke 10:21 **"I praise you, Father, that these things are hidden from the wise and prudent."** The workers say that God hides His will from men who are educated in the scriptures like He hid it from the scribes and Pharisees. They believe that only those with **the right Spirit** can understand the scripture. **The right Spirit** is only obtained through the workers. "Like begets like"

therefore no one can become like Christ unless they have received the Christ Spirit through hearing and following a worker. They believe that only the “*True ministry*” can lead people to Christ. They don’t believe a regular member of the congregation has enough of the ***Spirit*** to lead an unbeliever to salvation.

Therefore, the congregation is not taught to witness or teach. They believe it is wrong for “*anyone who has not paid the price*”(giving up all possessions) to do any teaching. Professing people are supposed to bring unbelievers to gospel meeting where they can receive the true seed of the gospel from the workers.

When this church began in 1899 the workers took vows of poverty and celibacy. However, now the workers usually are not required to take any sort of vows nor go through any sort of ceremony prior to entering the ministry. Sometimes they are encouraged to make private vows. Workers usually begin their ministry at Special Meeting or Convention time. They are not taught anything except to obey their companion and the head worker.

They believe that the scripture alone is not the Word of God but that it comes ***alive*** when preached by a worker. They say, “*The Bible is a dead book unless it is revealed through a worker because the seed is not living until **spoken** by a true minister who is carrying out Jesus’ command for the apostles.*”

They quote, “***faith cometh by hearing,***” inferring that only through ***hearing*** a worker can one receive eternal life. They don’t believe that anyone could be born again simply by reading the scripture nor through a heart-felt prayer to Jesus Christ to receive salvation. ***They believe “the workers are Jesus Christ come again in the flesh” because they are living in the same manner that he lived:*** homeless and itinerant. Jesus is the “example preacher.” They believe the Spirit speaks directly to them and through them and they are “*interpreters of the scripture.*”

They do not believe in predestination but they do believe in the foreknowledge of God. They believe that Jesus Christ did not die for the sins of whole world but only for the “elect,” those who believe and obey the workers and meet in homes. Therefore, there isn’t a great need to witness or evangelize because God will do the job of bringing the elect into the fellowship. They don’t really believe John 3:16 because they don’t believe that God loves the world. He only loves the people in their church and any people who He may be planning to bring into their church.

The workers change companions and locale approximately once a year. In America, they always live with the congregation in their “field” and move from one family to another about every three days. Most live very frugally on money given to them privately by professing people or “friends” or “saints,” as they are called. The older workers control the money. The younger ones usually don’t have any money, unless they are among the few favored ones.

If they are living in an area where there are no professing friends they will rent a small apartment that they call a “bach”. In America, the workers borrow cars from the congregation for transportation. In foreign mission fields they walk or take the bus or train, or use bicycles. Their money comes from secret accounts or donations from professing people or workers. They do not live as “tentmakers,” on income from their own activities or labor.

Numbers of People and Nations Involved

It is impossible to know the number of people belonging to the group because names and addresses are private. Each “field” has its own directory but it isn’t shared with other localities, except through the workers. I was once told that there are only about seven nations in the world that do not have members or workers within their borders. This was probably an exaggeration. They claim to have a goal of reaching every nation on earth.

However, even though it has members in many nations, those members are very few. It has been estimated that there are approximately 600,000 to 700,000 people who are actively involved, worldwide. There are approximately 450,000 in the United States. Canada, New Zealand, Korea, and Australia have large numbers of professing people in their borders and send out many workers to other countries. The nations that have no professing people are either war-torn, primitive or closed to western influence.

Even though the numbers involved are relatively few, it is estimated that at least ***four times that amount or more*** have been influenced in some way by this church. Nearly everyone who has come in contact with the workers has been strongly affected by their teaching. Many people who have been raised in the church leave it but they still believe it. **The workers are masters at turning people against Christianity. It is for this reason that I urge every Christian to learn as much as possible about this group.**

Buildings

They contend that God did not authorize any buildings to be built for worship for the Christian Church. They claim the only buildings that God commanded to be built were Noah’s ark, the Tabernacle, and Solomon’s Temple. I Corinthians 6:19 says, “***the body is the temple of the living God,***” therefore, they take that as a command that believers are not supposed to build churches, claiming that church buildings are built by those who serve Satan. They believe it is wrong for a church to own property or to organize charitable efforts. It is a waste of time to meet medical needs of the poor, write or publish worship music, to spend time or money on biblical education, to disciple new believers, teach pastors to preach, hold weddings or funerals, teach children, do marital or premarital counseling, translate scripture, protest abortion, pornography, or drugs, get involved in political causes, help the elderly, train evangelistic teams, or hold prayer services, etc.

The workers hold “gospel meetings,” for outsiders anywhere: Masonic Lodges, Odd fellow halls, schoolhouses, grange halls, bingo halls, peoples’ basements, Elks Lodges, funeral homes, tents, or borrowed “false churches”. However, Sunday morning fellowship meetings and mid-week Bible studies must be held in the homes of the elders or deacons in the community. Scriptures used to

support the practice of meetings in homes are: Philemon 2, Colossians 4:15, Romans 16:5, I Corinthians 16:19, Acts 12:12, Acts 7:48, Acts 17:24, and I Peter 2:5. Exodus 12 says that Passover was conducted in homes, therefore they think communion should be in a private residence.

Pianos are used in gospel meetings but not in the fellowship meetings. Workers frown upon choirs, believing they are vain performances. Solo or duet singing is usually only done at funerals or sometimes at weddings. It depends on the area. Some areas have a more open attitude towards solos or duets at gospel meetings.

The annual convention meetings in the United States are held on church members' farms where tents are erected and barns are converted into sleeping space for four-day periods. Recently, at new convention sites, permanent buildings for convention purposes have been erected.

Gospel

The workers say the gospel is that **Jesus came to earth to establish the Two by Two ministry and to die to be the example to people how they must die to their earthly desires in order to have salvation, and that His blood will only cover the sins of those who die to self as He did.**

They use Mark 8:34-38, **“Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and my Words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”**

The workers believe that “denying self and taking up the cross” means to forsake the enjoyment of life and (that the women are) to dress unattractively. **The workers teach that one cannot have salvation unless he hears and professes through two workers. Then he must for the rest of his life follow the workers, always agreeing with their exhortations and attending every meeting and convention. They believe that “the gospel” is the Two by Two ministry and meeting in the home. Whenever they use the word “gospel,”** that is usually what they are referring to. However, the Bible says that the word “gospel” is the good news that Jesus Christ paid the price for sin and that all those who believe in Him will receive eternal life, John 3:16.

The workers aren't necessarily attempting to communicate a **message** about Jesus. They are trying to transmit the **Christ Spirit** to those who hear them. They believe they have succeeded when people receive **the revelation that the workers are the only true ministry and the Two by Two church is the only true church.** They actually don't feel it necessary to understand or think about their beliefs, it is simply their duty to obey. They feel that the human mind is fallen, corrupt and carnal. So no real attempt is made to disciple people to understand scripture. They are simply expected to do what the workers tell them to do. Practical books such as Proverbs and James are pretty much ignored. The Praises in the Psalms are ignored. Prophecies are ignored. Revelation is ignored. They do teach from those books but ignore the primary lessons of them. In fact, most of the Old Testament is ignored except for how it may be used to instill fear, guilt or dependence on, and reverence for the workers. The letters of Paul are used extensively but all of them are misunderstood and twisted beyond their original intent.

Their “gospel” is that people can't have salvation unless the workers say so. If the workers invite them into the fellowship and they accept the invitation, then they are saved until the workers disfellowship them. This happens regularly to friends and workers alike. However, they don't admit to this, they explain it differently. They say the people “*lost out*” or “*chose to leave and separate themselves.*”

Fellowship

Fellowship meetings are held on Sunday mornings in the home of the same elder each week. They teach that the Sabbath day of rest commemorates the Creation but the Sunday day of worship commemorates the Resurrection Day. They do not practice the Saturday day of rest. Scriptures used to institute Sunday worship are: I Corinthians 16:2, Acts 20:7, John 20:19-26, Mark 16:9, Revelations 1:10, and John 9:16. They practice a Sunday day of rest and fellowship.

The meetings held in the homes are led by the elder or deacon. If a worker is present, he or she will lead the meeting. Sunday morning and midweek meetings consist of singing, praying, and giving testimonies. The meeting is started with one or two hymns being sung by the congregation, usually 10-25 people. This is followed by a time of prayer. Then a testimony time begins: Each professing member, man, woman, or child stands up to read a verse or two, telling how it encouraged or corrected him or her during the past week. Each testimony is only to be one or two minutes. Each person reads a verse, makes a statement of thankfulness for the workers or the Way, then says he wants to be a good example to others. They believe their example will make someone else want to follow in “the Way”.

Every Sunday at the end of the testimony period, prayers of thankfulness are given for the bread and wine that are emblems of Christ's body and shed blood. The emblems (one piece of bread and one glass of grape juice) are passed around the room for the baptized adult believers to share. Everyone drinks from the same cup. In Europe, wine is used instead of grape juice as a symbol of Christ's blood.

The meeting lasts about one hour and quiet solemnity is the tone. Silence is expected of the congregation for approximately ten to twenty minutes before the meeting begins so that the Spirit can be present. After meeting everyone shakes hands and goes home.

Singing is done by the whole congregation without musical accompaniment. No choirs are ever formed nor any organized singing is usually done. Most singing is weak because developing talents is not encouraged in this church. Singing is generally slow. Enthusiastic singing is considered irreverent.

Statements of “Praise the Lord” and “Hallelujah” are considered irreverent and offensive. Professing people and workers are embarrassed by such things. They don’t even like to hear others say them for they feel those statements are only made by people who are serving Satan. One professing woman said those statements are blasphemous.

Mid-week Bible study consists of singing, praying, and sharing thoughts from a lesson for the week chosen by the head minister of the state. Yearly lists of the Bible studies are passed out at the beginning of each new year. The studies appear to be chosen to back up the main tenets of what the Church believes.

There are yearly 4-day conventions held on specified farms in each state or main field. The convention is compared to the Feast of Tabernacles. Attendance numbers in America range between five hundred to twelve hundred people per convention.

There are three meetings per day. The conventions are held at no monetary cost to the congregation other than what one wants to contribute. Many people contribute nothing at all and eat 3 full meals a day but it is made up for by contributions by others. Usually people will bring baked goods and food as well as give money to the workers. The practice of not charging for convention attendance makes everyone feel welcome. Everyone pitches in to help voluntarily with the work.

There are no recreational activities or business meetings held at the convention. Most states or regions discourage recreational events for the church although some states, such as Oregon, encourage more friendly, regular interaction among the friends and workers. Any business meetings are secret when there are any.

The messages in each meeting are primarily “keep on going” messages. Topics of the meetings are usually regarding the ministry, methodology, submission, obedience, thankfulness, prayer and self-denial. There is no doctrinal teaching. The last two days’ evening meetings are always invitational meetings for any non-professing people who might be attending, giving newcomers an opportunity to follow in the Way of Jesus. There is little verbal praise given to the Lord, except appreciation that the “Truth” was brought to them by the workers.

Worship

Worship services in which specific time is spent in praise and adoration of God are never held. Under the topic of Praise in their hymnbook, there are only nine hymns listed out of the 412 hymns. There are no hymns under the topic of Worship. Willie Donaldson said, *“Hallelujah, Praise the Lord!” is an empty service, without meaning or expression when said in churches.”*

Meetings

The only meetings are fellowship meetings, mid-week Bible studies, and gospel meetings, union meetings and special meetings. Teaching sessions are rarely held, if ever, unless a senior worker holds special meetings for a short period of time. Any scriptural study must usually be undertaken on one’s own, except in the case of new converts. There are never any special prayer services held outside of the prayers during the usual meetings. Most services center on what ***man must do to be saved rather than on what God has done to give man salvation.***

A few times a year someone will invite a few people to their home for a “Sing”. A Sing is a friendly time of getting together and to practice singing the hymns. It is one of the few recreations or entertainments allowed other than potluck dinners. Originally, and for many years, all sings and church gatherings had to have the workers’ permission, and presence.

There are annual Special Meetings held in public school buildings or other large halls that last all day with a break for lunch. The messages are similar to the convention messages or gospel meetings.

Gospel Meetings are held in rented halls. The workers used to be able to find halls for free or for just a few dollars an hour. Now that insurance rates are so high for public use, the workers have more difficulty finding places to rent. The workers hold two or three gospel services per week about six months of the year intended for nonmembers to come and hear why this is the only true ministry in the world. Of course, that isn’t how it is first presented, but eventually, that is the real message. Most people who attend are professing. Most new converts are children born into the group. These meetings are half-hearted attempts at evangelism.

They state that their only message is Jesus and then proceed to talk about the ministry that they believe Jesus instituted and lived as the example preacher. The key point the workers look for is that the person recognize and verbally acknowledge that the workers are the true ministry and that the “Truth”, i.e., the church, is the only way to Heaven. The workers are thrilled when a new member renounces all previous religious knowledge and experience and humbly becomes “as a little child”. People are expected to stay as little children all their lives. When I was a young child I remember the workers visiting different people who attended gospel meetings, trying to get the people to admit that their previous Christian experiences were false. My mother and I sat in the car while the workers *“had a visit”* with them. After the visit the workers discussed how the people reacted to the discussion. It was usually a heated discussion, ending with the workers being thoroughly disgusted with their “blindness.”

Born Again?

The need to be born again is emphasized many times but one never hears of a born-again experience. Few seem to really know when or if they have been born again. The workers require converted followers to renounce any previous “born again” experience while in another “Christian” church, saying that it was an emotional experience of Satan. The workers say, *“To be born again means to*

receive Christ which means receiving the messenger and the message — and receiving the Spirit of God equals obedience to the Will of God."

Willie Jamieson said, *"We have to be born again every day of our lives."*

When one accepts the workers as the only True ministers, it is called "Professing". One professes by standing to his feet in a gospel meeting when it has been "tested". The invitation to profess is: *"If anyone wants to make it known that he wants to follow Jesus in His Way, please stand to your feet while we sing the last hymn."* However, anyone who has believed in Jesus before he heard the True ministry is not allowed fellowship until he admits that he had not received Jesus before he met the workers. They want to hear the new member declare that all his previous Christian faith was wrong. That is their view of "repentance".

The workers declare that in order to have salvation one *"must be like Jesus."* The way they become like Jesus is to mimic what they believe He was like.

The members of the church usually refer to themselves as "professing" rather than as "Christians". If anyone asks them if they are Christian they will often state hesitantly, *"Well, I hope so,"* or *"I try to be."* They feel that if someone can't tell they are serving God by their appearance, something is wrong with the questioner or themselves. They don't really use the term "Christian," because that is a term that other people use. However, they feel that they are the only true Christians on earth.

If anyone asks them if they "are saved" they will hesitate and then answer in the same way. Most don't believe they can know if they are saved until they die and those who do believe they are saved feel that they can lose their salvation at any moment. In fact, many sermons have been preached about the fact that if you are confident of your salvation it means you don't have salvation. Jack Carroll and Willie Jamieson used to say, *"When you don't know, you know."* They believe that confidence of salvation is presumptuous. They use the word "presumptuous" as a derisive term for anyone who disagrees with the workers.

They teach that *"Jesus lived to show us how to live"* therefore, one must either live as He did, as a preacher without home and family, or follow the only ministry that does live that way. They believe that His blood will not cover your sins unless you follow this principle. They believe you receive salvation when you recognize this point and adhere to it. They believe that if you stop following the homeless ministry with church meetings in the home that you lose your salvation. One cannot be baptized unless he or she has the workers' approval.

Vernon Myers said, *"Forgiveness is only given to those who obey God by coming to the meetings, supporting the true ministers and living according to His standards."*

Theology

They don't believe in systematic theology, the study of God and the logic of scripture. They believe in a mystical approach to the Bible, using metaphors rather than literal interpretation of words. They don't do word studies, subject studies, prophetic studies or covenant studies. They don't study the history of scripture or the nation of Israel. They don't study creation from a biblical perspective. They object to theological terms defining scriptural concepts.

The King James Version is the only book used by the church. All other versions are criticized because they have copyrights. The early workers accused people of making huge fortunes selling God's Word and preaching God's Word. They accept no other Christian literature or handbooks. The present workers do allow the use of the Strong's or Young's concordances but they rarely talk about it or teach anyone else to use them. Very few of the workers refer to original Greek or Hebrew texts when preaching. **Note: Within the last few years the workers have been allowing a few other versions to be used, such as the NIV.**

Irvine and Cooney's letters were once highly esteemed among the friends and copied and passed around among all the churches. For many years the workers' letters and sermons were considered as important as scripture. Now, however, that attitude has become a bit less obsessive. Still, everyone is encouraged to correspond with the workers and share their letters with the whole church. The workers preferred using onion skin paper for their letters, giving their letters more of a "biblical" appearance and because they weigh less for postage. The workers aren't prone to making spiritual remarks in their letters anymore since people have begun to compare their statements to scripture and challenge their statements.

Church Leadership

Christ is said to be the head of the church. The workers are said to be the foundation of the church because they are "apostles". The workers claim that God deals with the people through them, therefore, they have supreme authority over the people. The workers choose the elders and deacons who conduct the Sunday morning fellowship meetings and mid-week Bible studies, respectively.

They repudiate the Christian doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. One brother worker incorrectly said, *"That is what Jehovah's Witnesses believe."* (Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the priesthood of all believers. Jehovah's Witnesses are totally dependent on the Watchtower Organization for understanding scripture. Their church hierarchy is ruled from top down, as the Roman Catholics and all the cults, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, etc.)

The average elders have no teaching role or any part in decision making with the ministry. The elders' main responsibility for the flock of believers who meet in their homes every week is to see that the older congregation members get to meeting or to help out with practical assistance that may arise from time to time. They facilitate the meetings in the homes when the workers aren't there.

Although the workers are held on a pedestal of near worship, there is no use of the words: "father, reverend, evangelist, teacher or pastor" in relation to the ministry. They rarely use the words "deacon" or "bishop" either.

The workers do not wear any special robes or clothing other than business suits and ties while preaching. The sister workers dress in suits or dresses with long sleeves. The workers disapprove of denim fabric.

Church Name

The name the church members privately use for the church is “the Truth” or “The Way”. It used to be “The Jesus Way” or “The Testimony”.

They make the statements “no creed and no name but Jesus”, and “faith, not facts”. They refuse to take a public name. They make a great mockery of organized churches. They believe their church is a family and the Father is its head. They will accept no other name but His.

However, the head workers secretly registered the church with the United States government under the name *Christian Conventions*. American overseers have official stationery with this name printed on the top. Every nation has a different registered name for the group in order to identify it with authorities. Dozens of different names have been used by non-members to tag the group but the workers deny those names. If anyone asks the workers or members if they are Cooneyites or Two by Twos, or one of the other titles, they will firmly reply, “No, that is some other group that is very similar,” or “No, that group broke away from our church because they weren’t willing for the Truth.”

Some really believe that explanation, others know it is a smoke screen. Most members have never heard of the title of Christian Convention Church. I call it the Two by Twos because it is descriptive of the ministry.

Organization

The head worker controls every worker, every meeting in his “field,” state, states, province or territory. The workers claim that they are not incorporated but the church is secretly incorporated in Canada. Yet it has no visible business structure or acknowledged assets. However, there are liquid funds in very large accounts set aside to be used, at the discretion of the head workers, for travel, for convention facilities or for medical or hospital expenses for the workers, etc. Money is also given to the church ministry in people’s wills. This money is put in trust funds in the names of elders and/or head workers. There is little accountability for funds, and money matters are never discussed with anyone outside of the head workers and their closest associates.

At convention time all monies are collected from the workers and given to the head worker to be used for travel or any expenses incurred at convention time. Then each worker starts the new year off “on faith” once again with enough money to get them back to their field of labor. This policy may differ in each region. The group is considered to be like a family so that anyone, worker or saint, who is traveling has the privilege of being welcome in the homes of the congregation all over the world. This isn’t exactly true but it is still believed.

The congregation keeps in touch with the ministry and each other by letter and telephone. It is a very tight-knit fellowship with most people interrelated by marriage.

The workers correspond regularly with other workers from all over the world. They coordinate schedules for conventions and special meetings so that certain workers can travel from state to state, country to country and some even go around the world, on speaking engagements. There is nothing mysterious at all about how this church functions. Some people express amazement that it can function so easily. Yet, there is nothing amazing at all in how it is accomplished. The reason it appears to be done miraculously is because all decisions are made privately.

The ministry is very mobile. They travel quite extensively and know the congregation quite well since they stay in the homes of the professing members. The conversations are usually on a personal level rather than on scriptural themes so they know a great deal about each family. They know who is related to whom and who their closest friends are. The closeness of the fellowship is considered to be a real social security and a comfort, especially to the elderly.

Bearing Arms

In the United States, “professing” men usually do not believe in using weapons of defense during war, or at any time, although they do believe in serving their country. Consequently, during wartime, most do not enlist in the service but they register as Conscientious Objectors. When drafted, they serve in the armed forces as medics or in other positions of service.

The rule about bearing arms is different in Canada. Canadians serve in the military and work as policemen. Technically speaking Two by Twos are not pacifists, as the Amish or Mennonites. If an intruder threatened them or their families they would defend themselves.

The members of this church are loyal to whatever government they are under, whether in America or in a communist nation. They believe that one is to obey the laws of the land (Romans 13). They do salute the flag in the United States. They believe that the civil government has the authority from God to restrict and punish evil-doers. (Galatians 3:23-25, I Timothy 1:8-10, Hebrews 10 and Colossians 3:25).

Trinity

The workers are usually very quiet about this subject because they know its importance to Christians. They will usually answer that the word “*Trinity is not in the scripture*”. They say, “*We believe in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*” They usually end their statement with that, and a questioner usually accepts it without further interest. However, further inquiry is necessary. The workers **do not believe** in the doctrine of the Trinity and repudiate it as a Catholic heresy. They call it the “Argument of the Trinity”. One worker said that the “*Trinity is the belief that God is the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and Mary the Mother of God.*” The workers are very ignorant of

what Christians mean by the term Trinity or at least they act ignorant. They wrongly say that Christians think that Jesus is his own Father. The workers say, ***“The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separate beings, united in spirit (attitude or purpose), not in essence.” And, they say “the Church is One with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”*** They believe that *“there is only One God, the Father.”* They state that Jesus is a just a man, the Son of God. But they do not believe that He is the Creator, or equal to God in any way. He isn't to be worshipped.

Some workers refuse to comment on this subject by saying that they don't really know. They close their minds to the question of whether Jesus is the Creator, claiming it is of no importance. Some workers refer to II Timothy 2: 23 that says to avoid arguing over words.

One older brother worker said, *“the ‘Word’ referred to in John 1:1 is Christ.”* He said that the original Greek states that the “Word is god”, with a little “g”. In other words, Christ is a god. They say *“Christ is the **Word** in the sense that He lived the Word so perfectly that He was the Word made flesh or the Word made clear to the world what God wants every human to be...perfectly obedient to the Word.”*

There is so little teaching regarding the person of God, few people have any idea of who God is. It is not a well-defined, verbalized concept. “Who God is” is not important to them. Only “who the ministry is” is important.

However, they primarily view Jesus as only a **man** who was completely filled with the indwelling **Spirit**. And of course, they don't believe the Spirit is God either. Sometimes they say they believe Jesus was fully human and fully divine, but if they were asked, they wouldn't be able to explain what “divine” means. They assume that it means holy or sanctified. They state simply that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Since they don't view the Holy Spirit as the Creator GOD, but only the power of God, they don't really view Jesus as being much different than any other human being believer who is filled with the Spirit. They often refer to Jesus as our elder brother, inferring that He is a human child of God just as other humans, and our perfect **example** of what God wants all His children to be.

They view the Holy Spirit as the power of God, not God and not a person. They refer to the Holy Spirit as **“it.”** Some workers refer to the Holy Spirit as being “the mother spirit” because the Greek word for *spirit* has a feminine article. They don't believe the Holy Spirit is to be worshipped or prayed to because the Spirit doesn't glorify itself, instead, “it” glorifies The Father and Son. They don't view “it” as equal to God or a person of the Godhead.

One of the earliest workers, Willie Jamieson said, ***“There is One God, and Two Lords, the Lord God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*** They quote many verses to prove that Jesus is not God because He could not pray to Himself, nor sit down at His own right hand, nor speak from heaven saying, ***“This is my well beloved son.”*** They say that Jesus does not know the hour of His return to earth so that proves He isn't omniscient.

Instead of viewing Jesus as God who became man, they view Him as a man who became godlike. Thus giving the impression that other men can do the same. They believe that the workers are like Jesus because they have denied self in obedience to **the Spirit**.

The illogical reasoning in this is that they believe that the Spirit enables believers to be obedient and deny self, yet they believe that self-denial is the key to obtaining the Spirit which enables them to deny self.

Since they are ignorant of the eternal plurality of God they aren't able to comprehend the eternally infinite love of God. How could God be able to love in eternity past, if there was no one but the Father in existence prior to creation?

Original Sin

Tharold Sylvester said, *“We do not believe in original sin.”* They don't believe in the doctrine of original sin, but they do believe Jesus was born with a sinful nature because He had a human mother. This is another of their many contradictions in logic. They believe Jesus was born with a carnal nature and could have sinned, therefore He could not be God.

Great emphasis is put on the verses that call Him the Son of Man. They say He learned obedience through suffering. They believe that any man on earth could be like Jesus if only he could be as obedient as He was, thus obtaining enough of the Spirit. They infer that if people were willing to **suffer** as Jesus did, they could then be as obedient as He was.

William Irvine said that every baby born was born innocent and it made him angry to hear people talk about original sin. Although this subject isn't spoken on very often there are recent records of head workers stating that they don't believe in original sin.

Since the subject of sin is so rarely mentioned, not many members even think about original sin and probably don't know the church position on this doctrine. Sin isn't much of a topic in this church. They are more concerned about affiliation with the One True Church and the One True Ministry rather than sin, repentance and the Cross of Jesus. The workers are not educated in the doctrines of sin and atonement. They are more interested in the “standards of the Kingdom,” the workers' rules for the church.

There weren't any Two by Twos until 1897, but they resurrected an old heresy known as Pelagianism, that originated about 360 AD: **that people are not born with original sin but born with both the ability to sin or to be free of sin and that Christ's life was to show man that it is possible to live a perfect life.** This heresy appears to be one of the most basic thought processes of the workers. It is so basic that very few even think about it. Pelagius taught that sin is voluntary and that it is only the result of people following the bad example of Adam instead of the good example of Jesus Christ. He said that fellowship in the true church was necessary for salvation and that moral perfection on earth was attainable. (The Pelagian's view of the true church was **not** the Two by Two church.) Pelagius maintained that sin originates with each individual and therefore, is the responsibility of each individual to overcome through his own choice to be obedient to God.

The workers maintain that Jesus is the example of perfection that mankind needs in order to have salvation. They call Jesus, “the Savior”, and acknowledge that His blood, death and resurrection applies only to those who hear, follow and obey the workers.

What does scripture say? **The Bible says that sin entered through Adam and was cleansed by the life and blood of Jesus Christ, the second Adam. (I Corinthians 15:22, Romans 5:17-21.) Both actions were outside of the rest of mankind’s control.**

Their main view of sin is “false religion” rather than immorality or disobedience to God’s Word.

Jesus Christ, Who Is He?

The workers teach that Jesus was simply a **man** who was filled with the **Christ Spirit** due to His denial of self and material things. They declare that anyone can have the same indwelling if he is only willing for enough self-denial, such as the workers who have given up money, possessions and a home. This is a Gnostic heresy. A typical inconsistency is: they imply that Jesus was initially separate from Christ until the **Christ Spirit** filled him at the time of his baptism, although, they will also acknowledge that Jesus was the result of a miraculous conception.

This belief that Jesus and Christ were two beings who merged because of self denial is a major point of departure from biblical Christian theology. This isn’t spoken about very often but there are several recorded sermons from the past and present with this idea inferred.

Oddly enough, the Hindu religion also teaches that a god will come down and inhabit the bodies of men and reveal divine truth to those who deny their human needs and desires. From studying old sermon notes, this appears to be what the early workers believed about Jesus and the **Christ Spirit**. The early workers taught that they had the same **Spirit of Christ** because they had forsaken **all**. This type of person is called an **avatar**. The concept is distinctly Hindu, not Christian, not biblical. This belief is akin to New Age beliefs, which many professing people and workers also hold.

The workers **don’t** use the word avatar, although they preach the concept. It is a word from the Sanskrit language and it is actually a type of medium or witch. The workers believe that the **Spirit** reveals divine truth, therefore, it isn’t necessary to study or understand the scripture in any depth. Moreover, they feel the **Spirit** enables the person to live on a higher, purer level of life. They fully believe that they control the amount of Christ’s Spirit by the amount of self-denial they are willing for. Many references are made to the idea that “self-denial is the **key to salvation**”. They don’t understand the difference between the **incarnation** of Jesus Christ in contrast to the Holy Spirit **indwelling** believers.

In scriptural reality, when people are born again, they do receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who guides them into all truth. But they still need to be taught the scriptures, they don’t automatically understand all there is to know about God. They need to be disciplined in a Bible-teaching church. Because the Holy Spirit and the Word are One, the Holy Spirit convicts and teaches through the scripture, not apart from it. There is a difference between Jesus and the rest of humanity. He is the Alpha and Omega. He is the Creator. He is the only begotten Son. Jesus Christ was One with the Holy Spirit eternally. He is also the Word who was with God and the Word who was God in the Beginning. John 1:1. Salvation was totally in the hands of God, from the beginning, not because of man’s decision for self-denial, worthiness, obedience nor willingness. The scripture says that Jesus Christ was fully God from eternity past and became fully man from the point of conception. Born again believers are human beings who have been adopted into the family of God and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit **because of faith in Jesus Christ** through the grace of God, **not because of their willingness and submission**. Willingness is a virtue inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The workers believe Jesus is only a man filled with the Spirit of Christ. Since they view the Spirit as the means for people to understand scripture and avoid sin and error, they concentrate on urging people to come to meetings where they will receive the Spirit, sort of like catching a germ. Their messages don’t center on a logical understanding of the scripture, or in teaching the principles of the Bible because they believe that automatically happens when one receives the Spirit. Consequently, the people don’t really ever understand scripture very well. The workers ignore Christ’s command to teach in Matthew 28:19, **“Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”** Discipling means teaching, using the Holy Scripture as the text. The workers don’t teach and don’t approve of teaching. They believe in testimonies, which are impromptu experiential observations about life. They could be given with or without the Bible.

Some professing people believe it is wrong to worship or pray to Christ because He is only human. Others believe it is right to worship and pray to Christ because the scripture says He is Lord and Creator. Most of them haven’t even thought about it. A great many of them wouldn’t think it is important enough to discuss because worship isn’t practiced in this church. The most important things to them are meeting in the home and the Two by Two ministry. They often say, **“If the messenger is right then the message will be right.”** In other words, **what is said and believed is less important than having the right Spirit**. If one has the right spirit he or she will agree with the workers. This is one reason they haven’t published their doctrine. The doctrine, aside from their methodology, is relatively unimportant. And, it is safer for their doctrine to be secret so that it may remain undisputed.

Some workers have said that Christ was the first created being, using Colossians 1:15 as their text. If that were true then it would be a denial of Colossians 1:16. He couldn’t be worshipped because no one is to worship the creature more than the Creator.

They believe that He was put to death and resurrected bodily on the third day. They don’t acknowledge the fact that Jesus raised Himself from the dead. John 10:17-18; John 2:19-21; John 11:25.

Doctrine Of Grace

The workers vigorously oppose the doctrine of salvation by grace. They consider it to be a heresy. It is rarely mentioned. When it is mentioned, it is disparaged by inferring that those who believe it feel they can live in any manner they please and don't need to obey God's Word. One sister worker privately said it was a belief of *"those damned Baptists!"* Rose Ella Behreud said, *"The price that Jesus paid that He could be one with His Father. This is the price we all must pay."*

If anyone points out to them the scriptures that teach that grace is a gift, the Spirit is a gift, salvation is a gift, faith and righteousness are gifts, (Romans 6: 23, Acts 11:16-17, Acts 2:38, Ephesians 2:8, Romans 5:17) they say, *"God only gives gifts to His children."* *"God doesn't give gifts to strangers."* They definitely don't view grace as a real gift but rather something that man must qualify for or pay for. Nearly every prayer of a professing person contains the sentiment of *"longing to be worthy of Christ's Blood, or love"*. Is it possible to be worthy of Christ's Blood or love? No!

In their typical manner of dealing with orthodox doctrines, the workers explain them incorrectly and then disparage them.

Second Coming

They say they believe that Jesus is coming again but they don't know if that refers to the catching away of the saints or when Jesus comes in wrath against unbelievers who are annihilating Christians and Jews or when He begins the thousand-year reign or for the wedding celebration with the church or the foundation of the New Heaven and New Earth and the New Jerusalem. The second coming, the tribulation, Armageddon and the thousand-year reign are not discussed. These subjects are considered not necessary to mention because believers *"don't need to know—they only need to have the Spirit and be ready,"* in other words, obedient to the workers.

Most of the workers appear uncomfortable when anyone asks questions about the second coming. They discourage workers who speculate about the prophecies concerning it. Only the oldest workers may talk about it, very infrequently.

There are differing worker opinions as to whether the thousand-year reign is literal or spiritual. Some believe in a pre-millennial rapture but most do not. (However, they *never* would use that phrase.) They teach that His Kingdom is not of this world, that it is a spiritual Kingdom and that He will not reign in a literal, natural sense because He is of the spiritual world. Some workers believe that we are now in the millennial reign. They believe that the natural world is bad and the spiritual world is good, so they don't really look to a new natural world order. Their hope is heaven, not a new world because they think the world is evil.

Some of the workers do not believe that the Jews will get any other chance of salvation because they view the current Gentile Two by Two Church as the "spiritual Jews," the "Children of God," or the "Children of Israel." Other workers do believe that the Jewish nation will eventually recognize Jesus as Messiah.

One worker who dared to preach on the topic did so in a private meeting of about seventy friends. His view was a pre-millennial, pre-tribulation rapture although he didn't use those words. Later, he was privately criticized by other workers. Of course, the friends thought the sermon was inspired! He died a few years later and in the funeral service, the workers made off-hand remarks about his unusual views about certain subjects, inferring they were above such ideas. Most of the friends had no idea what the workers were talking about. The workers ignore God's words in Revelations 1:3, ***"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy."*** Revelation is John's vision of Christ's glory and honor in heaven. The workers don't really talk much about Christ's glory and honor in heaven because they don't worship Jesus. He is just the Son of Man, the Son of God. They love Jesus and talk about Him as their Lord and Savior, but they don't believe He is to be worshipped. This topic varies among friends and workers.

Election Or Predestination

They believe that man determines his own destiny in choosing or refusing God's call to salvation, which can only come through the workers. They believe that man controls his destiny by the amount of self-denial he can muster. They are the elect, the chosen people of God. This gives them the right to look down on everyone else in the universe. The workers, especially the head workers are spiritual snobs who look down on everyone, even other workers. Even the most "hearty" people (people who worship the workers' every word) are made to feel that they don't measure up. The workers believe that it is possible to lose one's salvation at any moment. Following their typical inconsistency, they sing a hymn that says, "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day." That hymn, inspired by II Timothy 1:12, was written by a Christian, not a Two by Two.

Two by Twos believe that people can receive salvation, lose it, receive it again and lose it again. There are professing people who re-profess every few years.

Speaking In Tongues

The workers disapprove of tongues. They point out that the tongues of the Pentecost were actual languages. They declare that meetings are to be conducted decently and in order, implying that tongues are not decent or in order. They ignore Paul's previous statement ***"do not forbid to speak with tongues"*** I Corinthians 14:39. They enforce strict quietness for several minutes before each meeting in an effort to obtain the Spirit. Some places enforce strict quietness after meetings to prevent losing the Spirit.

Miracles And Prayer

They say prayer is *"only for spiritual things."* In other words, they can only ask for virtues, not for natural things. Miracles done by Jesus and the apostles were only *"a type or picture of the salvation experience."* They say that real miracles were done for Jewish

people not Gentiles. Yet Christ and the apostles did miracles among Gentiles. Christ said to ask anything in His name and it would be answered if we ask in faith, according to His will. The congregation does not look to God for any natural help at all. If any earthly help is to be expected, it is only for the workers. They often claim that Satan answers the prayers that other Christians attribute to God.

Workers don't answer questions of any depth so they never discuss "why bad things happen?" Professing people expect bad things to happen. They see this world as the place to suffer. They look to eternity for their peace and joy and don't ask God for help in this world. Their prayers must be for spiritual help only because they divide their lives into two distinct planes, natural and spiritual: Gnosticism. The natural world is evil so don't expect God to help us here. God is only interested in spiritual life.

Birth Control

Birth control is left to the individual family to decide upon. There is no counsel given regarding the methods that destroy the fetus after conception or the methods that prevent conception. There are cases of professing girls and women who have had abortions. Most workers think abortion in the first trimester is permissible but they don't talk about the topic. They have the attitude that the doctor should make the decision. This is definitely a point where there would be a disagreement. However, the practice of not saying anything about the subject prevents controversy. Most of them wouldn't dream of opposing abortion in society. That would be viewed as being too concerned with the cares of this world. The church position towards public law seems more pro-choice on abortion than pro-life. This may be because of the attitude that they don't care what "the world" does. They wouldn't want to admit that professing women have abortions. They view everyone who isn't professing as going to hell anyway, so it doesn't matter what they do. The workers would encourage a professing woman to keep her baby under most circumstances but wouldn't object if she decided to abort. This topic also varies.

Baptism

Baptism is by immersion in a natural body of water. No other methods are used. Adults and teenagers are the only ones baptized and it is considered an act of burial of the fleshly will and a symbol of rising again to newness of life. Believers are baptized with the words, *"I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."* One cannot be baptized without the permission or approval of the workers. Acts 10:47, ***"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?"*** used as the proof text. Careful reading of that passage reveals that Peter is simply saying that no one can argue with or forbid what the Holy Spirit has already done among the Gentiles. There are lots of reasons that the workers will forbid baptism to someone but they usually don't tell what those reasons are. Usually it is because the person may have asked a question that the workers didn't like or because he still believes Christian doctrines or may have too many friends outside the group. They believe only the baptism of their ministry counts in the eyes of the Lord. However, they don't believe baptism must occur for salvation because the thief on the cross wasn't baptized.

"It takes a very short time to be baptized but it takes a lifetime to live out what baptizing means. Because we believed and received the gospel we became candidates for baptism but it doesn't make us a Christian."

"Baptism is a type of burial... The authority to baptize was given only to one type of ministry. The ones to whom Jesus give this authority. No minister can bring you into anything more than what he has. The wrong kind of minister even though he might baptize you by immersion can only bring you into the church that he is a part of. On the other hand, when one is baptized by a minister who is in fellowship with Jesus, he shares with him the same pure fellowship that he is enjoying."

Holidays

The church does not honor Jesus at Christmas because workers say it is a pagan holiday which Catholics practice with the pretense of honoring Christ's birthday. Jeremiah 10:3-4 is the verse used to discourage Christmas trees. They say that no one knows when Jesus was born and that he was probably born in the springtime. They usually don't sing any songs celebrating the birth of Christ at any time of the year. They disapprove of the attention and worship that Christ receives at Christmas. However, some professing people do give gifts to their children and let them believe in Santa Claus.

The church does not celebrate or mention the Resurrection on Easter Sunday either. (Easter is mentioned in Acts 12:4). If the workers mention Easter it is to ridicule Easter Rabbits, Easter Eggs and new clothes. They don't usually approve of any kind of seasonal decorating or celebrating special days. The church does not practice any traditional celebrations. They believe religious traditions are wrong.

Thanksgiving in the United States is celebrated but the main theme is the food, not freedom, or the Providence of God in helping the Christians who were escaping persecution in England and Europe. In their minds, those Christians weren't Christians because they weren't Two by Twos. Professing people are thankful people. They just don't like traditions.

Good Works

The workers don't like "Christian" activities either. They accuse those who do charitable works of being in bondage and trying to work their way into heaven. They **don't** believe in Christian works such as helping orphans, discipling others in systematic Bible study, communicating with prisoners, assisting elderly people, charity to unbelievers, reaching out to the handicapped or retarded, organizing church music to spread the gospel, translating the scripture into foreign languages, distributing Bibles, giving away medical help, helping foreign Christians in any natural way, counseling troubled families, or ministering to drug addicts, alcoholics or others in need. They don't speak out against sins such as abortion, pornography, gambling, drugs, witchcraft, etc. They disobey everything

taught in the book of James and disbelieve the teachings of Paul in regard to helping others and promoting the gospel message with their money.

They view those things as pertaining to the natural unholy world. They are above such things for they believe that the spiritual life is all that matters.

It is considered *“a waste of time to let anything destroy our peace”* or to *“get taken up with earthly cares”*. Some of the friends have wanted to do some of these things but when they have asked about the possibility of a group effort from the church they are told very firmly that it isn't necessary.

Occasionally, a professing person will become aware that the Bible teaches more about life than the workers teach and if he begins to talk about it he will be treated as if he is mentally “off.” Workers will warn people against him.

Topical Allegorical Sermons

The workers' sermons are “spiritual” rather than literal interpretations of the scripture. Actually, their word *spiritual* means allegorical, symbolic, metaphorical. They interpret certain verses strictly in a literal sense and then take the rest of the text and the Bible in a more allegorical sense.

“We want to avoid looking at the scripture in a natural sense. It is better to view it in a spiritual way.” They use most of the Old Testament as a picture of the New Testament. The workers believe the scripture is easy to understand, if one has the Spirit. They don't believe it is necessary to study the scripture very deeply. *“The important thing is to prepare the heart, not the sermon.”* *“We get our sermons down from above, not out of a book.”* *“We believe in heartucation, not headucation.”*

The Old Testament is usually ignored because they say the Old Testament is no longer in effect. One of the older brother workers made the remark, *“we don't need the Old Testament because it has no life in it.”* The Old Testament is considered obsolete because Christ brought in a New Testament. They speak against the Old Law as if it is what produced the Pharisee religion.

They don't encourage the congregation to memorize scripture. The ministry does the memory work. They urge children to memorize a few verses that they think support the methodology of the workers. ***“Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay his head.”*** ***“God dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”*** Those particular verses are not commands to the church or the ministry, they are statements about Jesus.

The workers divide the scriptures into certain parts that are supposed to apply to the preachers and others that apply to the congregation. Matthew 20: 1-16 is interpreted to refer to the workers in the harvest field.

If a professing person asks a question about their views, they act as if there is something wrong with the person asking the question. They infer that the Holy Spirit isn't telling the person what he or she should know because he isn't submissive enough. This attitude varies with the worker.

Outreach

The meetings are usually pretty invisible to the communities in which they are located. Sometimes, they will put a small ad in the classified section of the newspaper. They also change locations of services about every three months, especially if there is opposition or lack of interest.

The workers have invitation cards printed with their names and the time and date of the Gospel meetings on them. The workers and some volunteer members sometimes leave the invitation cards at people's doors in the hopes that people in the neighborhood will respond. However, most visitors are brought by members who have invited them.

In foreign lands the workers will offer “English classes” in order to make contact with outsiders.

Testimony Meeting

Professing adults and children are expected to pray and speak in every Fellowship and Bible Study Meeting. The early workers made it mandatory to pray and give a testimony, otherwise you weren't considered part of the Kingdom.

It is imperative that members attend every meeting possible. Meetings are considered an appointment with God and it is inferred that if one misses meeting then one cannot have fellowship with God. If people are sick or going to be away at meeting time they are expected to call their elders and let them know why they can't be there. If they fail to come to meeting the elder is expected to call them.

Since meeting is the place where one receives the Spirit, they feel that if anyone misses meeting, he will lose the Spirit. It is like recharging the Spiritual battery, so to speak. Their view of the body as the Temple of the living God is tenuous, at best. They say that the Holy Spirit resides in believers but the Holy Spirit isn't God, according to their view. So who is the God dwelling in them? Does the Holy Spirit come and go depending on whether one goes to meeting regularly and obeys workers? Does that sound like eternal life or like they have been born again?

Counseling

Their attitude towards counseling is radically different from Christian churches' attitude. The workers say that the Spirit will convict men of sin and enable them to do God's will. They believe that the Spirit will also keep God's people from sinning. Therefore, it isn't necessary to counsel the people. They state categorically that, *“we don't teach people to be Christians. God transforms those who submit to Him.”*

If anyone needs natural guidance the ministry is willing to privately visit with the people but they do no counseling in meetings because the structure of the meetings is rigidly formal. There is no room in the meetings for addressing special topics or answering questions.

The primary interest of the workers is in preaching their methodology, **not in the practical application of Biblical principles or in convicting sinners to stop sinning**. Moral sin is considered to be of the flesh and it isn't as serious as religious sin (Christianity). The standard answer to problems is *"get to every meeting", "pray," "deny self," "submit"*. Meetings is where all help is given. If people don't get to meeting it is implied that God cannot or will not help them. They cite the day of Pentecost when all believers had to remain in Jerusalem to receive the Spirit. If a problem requires more than the need to have questions answered the workers will refer the person to a psychiatrist or other counselor or doctor. This varies from one area to another, depending on the worker in charge.

When a person with a problem or question goes to meeting for help he may hear his situation alluded to very vaguely. The rest of the congregation may or may not know who or what the worker is talking about. The statements usually made in meeting are so general that they rarely help except as encouragement to *"keep on going"*.

There are some workers who are able to counsel from scriptures but not many. Most counsel consists in reaffirming the rightness of the way, the importance of the right attitude towards the workers, of getting to meetings, and upholding the standards of appearance and behavior.

Most counsel or correction is usually done privately, rather than in group settings. This eliminates the problem of alienating anyone who might not agree with the correction. It also enables the workers to skirt an issue that they know may scare away someone interested in meetings. It also gives the impression that the church is without problems.

The friends and workers are usually very hesitant to admit to anyone else that they have any problems or need for counsel because they are continuously reminded **not to discourage anyone**. The friends don't want to burden the workers with their personal problems and the workers don't want to burden the friends with their challenges. People with problems are made to feel they are the only ones with difficulties.

Education

The older workers ridiculed and discredited education. They didn't have any. They claimed Jesus didn't have any. They believed an educated person would never profess. However, they never differentiate between secular education and Christian education nor do they provide any education for their children or church. It is assumed by most people that they are against worldly or secular education.

However, closer examination reveals that they favor secular education over Christian education because they don't want their members exposed to Christian people, reasoning and logic. Moreover, they don't use the scripture in a rational fashion so they don't connect it to everyday life.

The early workers said that the only purpose for higher education was to make money, which was worldly. Presently, they are very proud of any members of the congregation who have college degrees and who are also willing for the subjugation of the workers.

Dress And Behavior Code

The Worker, Howard Mooney, said *"We don't set down a list of rules or regulations and tell them what they can and cannot do. They are satisfied in Jesus."* Members are forbidden to listen to Christian preachers, or read Christian literature because they are of the devil. Television, movies or other entertainment are worldly. Sports, dancing or hobbies are also a worldly waste of time. The unspoken motto is, ***"If it's Christian, repent of it, if it's fun, forget it. If it looks good, forget it!"*** The workers disapprove of most games, especially card or dice games. Women and girls are not to cut, color or perm their hair or wear it hanging down (I Corinthians 1:5-15). Some workers do not allow hair spray to be used. The women and girls are advised to look like the sister workers. Men should have very short hair and look like brother workers. *"It is just as much of a shame for a woman to have short hair as it is for a man to have long hair. We know that we are under subjection by the length of our hair. Women must be under subjection."* Women are not to wear jewelry or make-up (Jezebel, II Kings 9:30) or slacks (Deuteronomy 22:5). Wedding rings were prohibited until approximately the 1960s. They discouraged bright colors from being worn. They used to frown on decorative pins, buttons or watchbands. Shoes were supposed to be as plain as possible and usually only in black, blue or brown. Sandals were considered immodest. Professing people are expected not to use drugs, alcohol, smoke cigarettes, gamble, or curse although very little is ever said about any of those subjects.

The rules for appearance are extremely important because that is their disguise. As long as they are strict about their appearance it gives the impression that they are strict about everything else. They aren't. Legalism is the best way to hide sin and to intimidate people. If they can intimidate people with legalistic demands there is less chance that people will have the courage to object to anything doctrinally unscriptural. Paul Sharp said, *"I don't like to see the trends of some things amongst God's people, such as makeup, jewelry and games. We don't want to see law have to be used. We need clean homes, not videos. You folks will have to decide whether we have to use the rod."*

Christian Symbols

Paul said in Galatians 6:14, ***"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world."*** Yet, the workers disapprove of the use of the cross on a grave headstone or in any display of faith. The workers disapprove of any kind of Christian symbol worn or used as display in the home. *"God's people don't*

believe in it. Those are idols.” “The cross was like a gun.” The friends could use scripture on the walls of their homes, but not many do. However, most professing homes have pictures of the workers on display. The workers openly encourage the use of worker pictures in people’s homes as a witness to people. They hope it will be an example that an outsider will admire. *“It may lead someone to profess.”*

The friends don’t use Christian greeting cards or any visible Christian reminders. The workers warned against *“making merchandise of God”*. They would sooner support secular businesses and artists than Christian businesses or artists.

Christian Music

Two by Twos do not usually listen to Christian music. The only songs they ever sing or consider “any good” are the hymns from their own hymn book, or hymns that some of their people have written. They sing them only at sings or at meeting, or hum them at home. They don’t usually allow any recordings to be made of their hymns. Most professing people think that their hymns have been written by workers and friends. Actually, most of their hymns were written by Christians from other churches but many words and melodies have been changed. This may be the reason that they don’t want their music to be seen or heard by unprofessing people. They fear the copyright laws.

Several years ago, it was against the rules to have tape recorders or radios. It still is in some places. There were many workers who would rudely refuse to ride in a car if it had a radio in it. Now, however, many professing people do listen to the radio. It became more acceptable in the 1950s during the cold war when people were concerned about air raid attacks. The music they usually listen to is secular music. They scorn Christian music and consider it devilish. Some professing mothers refuse to let their children sing Christmas carols at school. Professing people will not ask an outsider to give thanks at a mealtime. Only professing people can give thanks at the table. In the past the workers ridiculed people who used memorized prayers at the table, but now the friends and workers usually sing a convention grace at the table instead of impromptu praying as they once did.

Black Congregations

In the eastern and southern parts of America there are Black professing people. People are told that the Blacks prefer to keep their congregation all Black for safety’s sake. But this isn’t true. Other Christian churches have Black and white congregations. Most of the Black workers are sent out of the United States to the Caribbean Islands. There is racial prejudice among Two by Twos in Africa as well. There is no question that prejudice exists among some workers and professing people but no one is allowed to ask questions or object to anything. Two by Twos are prejudiced against most everything, so why should race be any different? This topic varies.

Salvation Qualifier

The reason they believe they are saved when others are not, is that prior to their involvement with the Two by Twos, God saw **willing hearts and obedient, honest attitudes** in them. They *“were willing for Truth.”* It is the worker’s common statement that, *“we are not worthy of salvation but God saw in us a willingness to obey.”*

They believe they alone can know Truth. Their “willingness” is simply biblical ignorance and gullibility in the face of manipulative deceitful techniques. For many people, willingness is obedience to parental requirement. They don’t even know what the workers teach, they just obey. John Cook said, *“This is our salvation that we are able to master ourselves.”*

They don’t believe in “saving grace” or “salvation by grace”. They really don’t think of grace very much at all, except vaguely, as God’s “graciousness.” They accuse the *“false church doctrine of grace”* as being heresy. The workers say, *“Grace is the ability God gives us to do His will.”* They never sing the hymn, **Amazing Grace**. One sister worker called “Grace” *“that damned Baptist doctrine.”* Another sister worker whose given name was Grace legally changed her name to Selma. Howard Mooney said, *“God doesn’t take anyone into a prepared eternity unless they work to get there. It is the life, not the blood that saves you.”*

Two by Twos believe that in order to have salvation one must **“die to self and the world in order to have eternal life.”** Their definition of “dying to the world” and “self-denial” is different than other Christians’ definitions of those terms. Christians practice self-denial by avoiding sexual immorality, by telling the truth even when it jeopardizes their lives, safety, jobs or popularity, by obeying God’s Word, by sharing the gospel with non-Christians even where it is dangerous or illegal, by avoiding strong drink and drugs, by avoiding a life of ease and partying. Dying to self and the world comes in many forms for Christians, depending on what God has called them to do and where they live. Professing people think it means becoming a worker or obeying a worker.

Assurance Of Salvation

There is no assurance of salvation, ever, until after death. If someone quits going to meetings and attends some other church he is considered lost. *“Certain steps, if we don’t take them mean death to the Christ child.”* A woman who cuts her hair, paints her fingernails or wears pants is in danger of losing her salvation. A man or woman who gets a divorce definitely has “lost out.” In short, they teach that salvation is a result of: **hearing the workers, receiving the Christ Spirit, obeying the workers, dying to self, dying to the world, reading the Bible, praying, giving testimonies in meeting, attending meetings in the home, never getting divorced or remarried, attending all church functions, don’t do anything fun or frivolous.** *“Losing out”* is a Two by Two term meaning losing salvation and being outside of the group.

Questioning Church Leadership

The friends fear the workers’ disapproval because of their power over them for all eternity. The workers have the power to excommunicate them or bestow favors on them by allowing social privileges to them. These privileges are eldership and invitations to

functions where the workers gather.

It is implied that sins are forgiven by the workers because of the statement made to Peter that, ***“whatsoever you bind in heaven shall be bound on earth and whatsoever you loose in heaven shall be loosed on earth.”*** Therefore, the friends are fearful of the workers’ opinions.

Here are a few verbatim quotations spoken at a 1988 Milltown convention.

“God’s servants are interpreters...interpreting God’s words into things we can understand.”

*“Christ has shown us how to conform ourselves to the image of God. We **try** to conform ourselves to the image of God.”*

“Self-denial is the part of our service that brings eternal life.”

“Speaking against the workers is murmuring and blasphemy.”

*“You wouldn’t think anyone would despise a **Worker!**”*

“Humble people will always obey.”

The workers reserve the right to interpret the scripture and to decide what activities the friends may do. The congregation is discouraged from thinking for themselves regarding the scripture. The congregation cannot initiate any activity except potluck dinners or sings without permission of the workers. And even those sometimes must have their permission, depending on locality. If an elder decided to take up a collection of money or clothes and food to send to needy people in the church or if he independently initiated a special prayer meeting for a sick person in his meeting he would get corrected in a hurry.

The workers allow individual freedom in decisions regarding school (as long as it is secular), who to marry (as long as he or she is professing), where to live (must be close to meetings), occupation (within their guidelines), and who to socialize with (as long as they are professing). The main controls are interpretation of the scripture, logic, lifestyle, and appearance. From time to time there will be a worker who is more lenient on the rules, but rarely.

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