

# Vern C. Russell – 'The Way': How I Got In and Why I Got Out

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Testimonies & Exit Letters

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### "The Way": How I Got In...And Why I Got Out

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(no date – after 1955)

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#### Introduction

This account describes how I became associated with 'THE WAY', fondly referred to as 'THE TRUTH' and sometimes referred to as 'Cooneyites', although not by those who remain in it.

It is then, a testimony of my involvement with 'The Way', outlining some of my experiences and the reasons why I am no longer involved. I have also included information about the origins of the group.

#### My initial involvement.

I was staying at the Y.M.C.A. in Auckland N.Z. in 1939, and one day a pleasant waitress, inquired if I was interested in Christian things. She had noticed that I always 'gave thanks' before my meals. "Yes," I replied, "because I am a Christian." She then told me of some Christian meetings conducted by two lady preachers and wondered if I would care to come to meet them. After asking a few more questions, I agreed.

I learned that the senior lady was Addie Kuchenmeister, and her companion was Isobel Honeycombe. During the meetings Addie explained that God had only one way on earth to be saved, and that we must follow Jesus in this way that God has planned. She explained that from the time Jesus sent out his twelve disciples to preach "The Kingdom of God is at hand" (Matthew 10) others continued throughout the years to the present day, to preach in the same manner. It was made clear that to be saved, one must essentially HEAR the 'Living Witness' of the 'two homeless preachers as they preached the gospel.

The validity of all this sounded reasonable – you could say 'it really got to me'.

More meetings followed, plus a couple of personal visits to our lady preachers. As I had always been ignorant of this 'Living Witness' gospel, I felt there should be supporting proofs that would reflect its accuracy. I suggested to Addie that if it were indeed true that 'The Way' (as preached by her) had actually been faithfully preached, and so passed down over the years from one lot of preachers to others, there surely would have been much writing of letters etc. between them. One would presume that these letters would date back many, even hundreds of years, and could be produced and shown to such as I, as supporting evidence that the 'facts', as explained by her and her companion, were correct.

Addie answered my question in this manner, "God in His wisdom has seen to it that there are none." I understood from this, that she thought that if people such as I, had to see letters before being able to believe 'God's Word', then in His wisdom, they had not been preserved.

Eventually, Addie asked me if I could see that the churches and denominations were false and therefore not of God. She also asked if I knew that there were no Christians among the church people, and if I also realised that my profession with the Plymouth Brethren was false and that I had not been saved.

Yes, I realised the 'truth' of her assertions and she knew that I was ready to make my 'profession'. It was time to 'test' the meeting. Addie simply asked during the next meeting, "Is there anyone here who from tonight, is willing to follow Jesus?"

"Yes!" ... and I became one of them ... for 13 years.

I was to learn much of 'The Way' during my time with them. I made many good friends, but I also became aware of things that disturbed me.

#### Two Fatal Flaws

The preachers of 'The Way' made... and still make, two fatal mistakes.

The FIRST MISTAKE that the workers make is to preach that in unbroken succession they have come all the way from Jesus, sending forth the twelve disciples as in Matthew 10. The proof that they did not is overwhelming, and in fact, they only commenced preaching 'The Way' around the turn of the 20th century.

The SECOND MISTAKE, and perhaps even more insidious, is the lie they preach which says that people can ONLY be saved by hearing the 'two homeless preachers'.

When Jesus gave His disciples authority to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, (as in Matthew 10) God did not surrender His Divine Sovereignty to them. This of course would have been the case if it were indeed true that to be saved, one must hear the

'two homeless preachers' personally explain God's 'One Way' or 'The Truth'—so called.

This lie then, was created by the original preachers of 'The Way', having assumed a spurious authority, requiring needy people to depend upon them and their representation of the Gospel.

Apart from one's acceptance of what this proposition entails, neither workers (preachers) nor 'friends' can or will entertain any fellowship with even the most sincere of believers in Jesus, who have not made a profession through their ministry alone.

THIS IS TRAGIC! It is an outright denial of the Sovereignty, Spirit and Word of God. Surely, no sane preacher would purposely do such a thing! It is easily seen by those who want to see, just who the originator of this foul plot is. Satan's greatest victory is when he can deceive professing Christians into believing that their sacrifice and service is being directed by the Holy Spirit to the glory of God, when all along it is Satan who is accomplishing his dirty work by them.

Jesus commanded His disciples to go into all the world and to teach all nations all things he had commanded them to observe. Today, those who love the truth (as is in Jesus) still impart God's words of love, grace, truth and righteousness, by preaching what He commanded of those who are themselves examples of the effectiveness of His teaching.

Many books could be filled about the people who have found Christ—or who have been found of Christ—as the result of their wholehearted seeking for Him and His righteousness. Many have been convicted of their sins, and have cried out to the Lord for mercy and salvation, to be led into the fellowship of His people, to learn of Him. Revelations of Jesus, visions, angelic visitations still occur as in Bible days, just as God sovereignly wills to fulfill His purposes.

And what of Saul of Tarsus, who was found of Christ without even having sought the Lord?

God IS Sovereign. As the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:16, "Who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" and in Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

Had I known these things earlier, there would have been NO grounds upon which I could have been brainwashed and deceived.

**Addie Kuchenmeister** was such a nice person, that it goes against the grain to think that she would have purposely lied to me. I regard her as having been deceived by the old workers who preached to her. Emily Beckett, the waitress who first invited me to the meetings, was beyond reproach, and a most conscientious young lady.

### A great sadness of my life

Having refused to shoot Germans during the second World War, I spent nearly three years in Conscientious Objectors' camps, and was eventually released on parole. Upon returning to Auckland to look for a job, Isobel Honeycombe's Aunt, Mrs. Flavell, suggested I become an orderly at the Public Hospital.

I enjoyed my new job, except for one of the greatest sadnesses of my life. Over one hundred patients died in my ward during my time there, but I had been so securely bound by those two infamous soul-destroying lies of Satan (the father of all lies) that all I could do, was to helplessly watch them slip away into Eternity. I was not even allowed to tell them that my Saviour could become their Saviour too. How I would have loved to tell them of Jesus, God's dear Son. He bore their sin too, on Calvary's cross to offer each one forgiveness, and the gift of Eternal Life.

By believing the lie that they could be saved ONLY by hearing the 'two true preachers' message of Jesus and His way, I could not share with them, God's good news of Salvation.

Without any Biblical authority at all—not a word—the preachers had taken it upon themselves to actually prevent anyone who was not a preacher (a worker) from sharing the Gospel. They were preventing the Holy Spirit from inspiring and directing others to share the GOOD NEWS of Jesus, with the people for whom He died, and who were living and dying in their sins.

The preachers had become blameworthy of the terrible and ongoing sin of actually DENYING many precious souls, the opportunity of learning about the salvation for which Jesus had given all. Through their lies and deception, we were discouraged from believing that we could bring the lost through to a saving knowledge and understanding of God's dear Son and HIS salvation.

I know now, that I had and still have full biblical authority and responsibility to add my voice to those who faithfully obeyed God, who being led by the Holy Spirit, made the glorious message of Jesus' love and grace known everywhere they went. This was the same message that God's New Testament servants declared with much JOY!

### What the 'workers' will not preach

It is remarkable how much prominence and time the 'workers' can give to the 'two and two' ministry and 'The Way', etc. but they NEVER preach on scriptures that would immediately expose the lies upon which the so-called 'Truth' has been founded.

Take for example what Paul wrote in Thessalonians 1:7&8. "Ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia for from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad so that we need not to speak anything." If these words are not referring to the preaching of the Gospel—then I do not understand English!

Likewise in Acts 8:1, "There was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria except the apostles." Verse 4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word."

Had the 'two and two homeless preachers' ministry as declared by the 'workers', been essential to salvation, these verses could NEVER have been written.

Of course, I would say to anyone still in 'The Way' that it is not my wish to cause 'hopeless anxiety' through pointing out these things. God loves you, no matter what. Whatever has been done, God is able to change it according to your willingness and sense of responsibility. To REPENT, to CONFESS, and to FORSAKE, opens God's heart of GRACE, MERCY and FORGIVENESS.

One day when leaving my ward, a Nurse Short was passing, and I could hear her singing to herself,

"At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the Light,  
and the burden of my heart rolled away,  
It was there by faith I received my sight,  
and now I am happy all the day".

Poor Nurse Short, I felt sad for her, thinking she was right with God, and I 'knew' she was not. She was just a religiously deceived young lady, for she had never heard the Gospel preached by the 'two homeless preachers'. That was sad, wasn't it? Yes it was, though not about Nurse Short, but about ME!

Those two lies, by which the older workers had infected the young workers over the years concerning THEIR supposed origin from the Matthew 10 commission, had REALLY done their dirty work in MY poor mind.

How well I remember listening to one of my old camp mates preaching one night. A dear young man, **Fred Phillips**, was confidently asserting that he and his companion were among those who had come all the way down through the years from the time of Jesus sending out His first 12 preachers. I knew then that this was a lie, but Fred was not aware of it. I watched **Willie Hughes (the overseeing worker in NZ at the time)** sitting at the front, and though he knew better, he didn't bat an eyelid!

I know that long ago, God forgave my induced blindness and ignorance of HIS true and loving will, because I had HONESTLY thought I was being obedient.

### The rule of celibacy

I must label the rule of celibacy under which all of the workers are bound. It is NOT biblical! 1 Timothy 4:1-3 says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith (of Christ) giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry..."

The rule of celibacy is contradictory to the will and word of Christ. In Matthew 19:12, Jesus makes it clear that non-marriage is for those only, who are ABLE to receive. He had just taught in the preceding verses, saying that some could not receive it. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 7, "...to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Verse 9, "For it is better to marry than to burn" (with sexual desire). Again Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:5, "Have we not power (authority) to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"

Young men and women enter 'the work' because of their love for souls. Because this takes precedence over any personal desire to marry at the time, they accept bondage to the man-made rule of celibacy while in the work. Their honest commitment, however, has often been assailed by a need to marry, but because of their love for souls, they have struggled on in 'the work', resisting temptations as well as they can, but many have fallen into sin.

The pity of it is that it need NEVER have happened! So where did this hellish rule come from anyway? From Satan the destroyer, shouldering to one side Jesus and His word, through rejection of His authority because of the old workers' pride. This is done in total disregard to the suffering of those workers needing exactly what Jesus had provided for.

**Willie Hughes** used to say that if a worker were to marry, he would diminish his sacrifice—a reversal of what God once said, "...obedience is BETTER than sacrifice." When one considers the tremendous sacrifice made by Jesus to deliver us from our sins, surely, ANY sacrifice made by us, must pale into insignificance!

The fact is, the preachers believe that THEIR sacrifice is essential for our salvation and quote, "The servants of God are your salvation!" The unscriptural rule of celibacy became LAW for ALL intending workers in 1903.

### Two workers unable to keep their own law

Many years ago while talking with a worker about health foods, I told him that I used wheat-germ. In reply, he said, "Vern, don't eat too much of it, as it will cause a man to want a woman." I appreciated his concern—coming from one single man to another! A few years later, while talking with Olaf Isaachsen, a Naturopath who was also in 'the meetings', he told me how one of the workers had come to him for help. Unfortunately, he could do little for him as his condition was simply because he had given his life to 'the work'. I knew then that this worker's problem was a sexual one.

This dear brother who had advised ME, at last needed help HIMSELF. I do not suppose anyone could have realised the struggles to which he was being subjected. Having already denied him his right to marry, at last Satan closed in on him with his baited trap.

**He had been invited to stay the night with one of the 'friends', but the only place he could sleep in, was in the friend's teenage son's room in the spare bed. That night ALL HELL broke loose, and he homosexually assaulted the boy. Next day, when the boy told his father what had happened, his father was minded to phone the Police. However, the overseeing worker of N.Z. managed to get the other worker out of the country.**

Naturally, we do not condone what that poor fellow did, but how I would have liked to have spoken to him, not condemnationally, for he would surely have been heaping that upon himself already. But just a few words of understanding and comfort, in the lovely name of our gentle Saviour Jesus.

My heart also went out to the teenage son in HIS distress and hurt, and as well, to his sorrowing parents. Satan was the GUILTY one: the older workers pride had opened their hearts to deception, and a younger worker paid the price of it, while a precious family mourned.

At another time, a visiting overseeing worker to Australia (who was himself a vocal advocate for the celibacy of all preachers) demonstrated how unreal, unworkable and ungodly this man-made rule actually was. It saw him, as well as many others, commit sin because of this devil inspired trap.

**He was staying the night in the home of a couple whose daughter occupied one bedroom, their worker-son another bedroom, while they occupied another. The visiting worker was in yet another bedroom. During the night, this senior worker entered the daughter's bedroom and took hold of her. She made such a commotion that her parents and brother rushed in – shocked by what they saw – and the worker was 'led' back to his room.**

**Next morning, the young worker went and gathered some other workers together and put the senior worker 'on the mat'. He admitted having acted shamefully, but simply said that he had asked God's forgiveness, and was forgiven – OVERNIGHT! The other workers were therefore unable to adopt any punitive or disciplinary measure against him, because when God forgives, 'all others are expected to forgive as well'.**

Again, as in the case of the other worker I spoke about, though I, by no means condone this senior workers actions, under the circumstances of the cursed rule of Celibacy, they were understandable however objectionable. In their own system of religion, they could not help being made to partake of its fruits!

### Kicked out of the Kingdom

Many years ago here in N.Z., a couple questioned a worker's judgment and were promptly put out of fellowship. Their only recourse was to appeal to **Wilson McClung (the overseeing worker)** to intervene on their behalf to secure justice for them. His reply, as a professing 'servant of God' and His children, "I must uphold my fellow-workers," must have sent a shudder of disbelief around the angels of heaven standing before His throne.

To my mind, servants of God are examples of Christ's love. They DO NOT lord it over God's heritage, nor support each other in any off hand attitude toward God's dear blood-bought children. Nor should they treat them as coolly and unfeelingly as one would treat merchandise.

A New Zealand worker made this statement. "We hold the Keys of the kingdom, and what a responsibility is ours – who we LET IN". On the other hand, should not the feeling of responsibility be greater concerning those they have PUT OUT?

### Kicked out of the Kingdom of God, and NOWHERE TO GO for help!"

No wonder that it has been reported of some that they went to an early grave, disillusioned and broken hearted, believing the worker's lie—that they WERE lost. We shall ALL have to answer to the God of Holiness and Love at the judgement, especially as to HOW we treated our Christian brothers and sisters. The lines of judgement Jesus has drawn are exceedingly stringent, and they could not be more demanding of us than they are. As Jesus said in Matthew 25, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me," and then, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it not unto Me".

Jesus said in John 8:24, "Do not judge according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgement." Judgement of others must always be in accordance with TRUTH, and be balanced with LOVE and MERCY. It is recorded that Jesus also said, "The measure we mete out to others, shall be the SAME measure he will use in his judgement of us." (Matthew 7, Mark 4, Luke 6)

In dealing wisely in love and mercy with others—not forgetting our own frailties—we are treating them the way we would invite the Lord to treat us. Our love—OR lack of love for others, is the exact measure of our love for Jesus.

In loving our marvellous Lord Jesus, we are privileged to minister back to Him, who is dwelling by His Spirit in the hearts of ALL those dear brothers and sisters who love, trust and obey HIM.

We minister in His love, righteousness and truth, drawing always, upon the wisdom that is from above, which is pure, peaceable (peacemaking) gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, WITHOUT partiality and WITHOUT hypocrisy.

### Consider these scriptures!

"And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that MAKE peace" (James 3:17, 18), not forgetting that "the Peacemakers shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). So, "let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 4)

The workers refer to themselves as being "servants of God," and that because of their homeless and celibate stance, God has a special attitude toward them.

A worker one day told a friend to do a certain thing whereupon the friend said, "No, I will not do that because it would be a wrong thing to do." **The worker then told him that even if a worker told him to do wrong, God would honour him because he had obeyed**

**one of His servants.** That statement of course was very wrong, but it does indicate the workers moral drift from Truth and Righteousness.

I am reminded of **Willie Hughes** teaching on a worker's sacrifice: "A young worker of only ONE week, has made a greater sacrifice than anyone who is not in the work, no matter how many years of age they may be." All told, the workers manifest a very spiritually unhealthy appreciation of the sacrifice they have made in having gone into 'the work'.

### The old worker who repented

One elderly worker toward the end of his life, attempted to correct the lie that he had taught the friends about The Way and the 'Living Witness' coming right down through the years since Jesus had sent out the first 12 disciples to preach, as in Matthew 10. Obviously (and wisely), he was now lending attention to his conscience, knowing that his time for righting his wrongs would soon be past.

I for one, would experience great joy, were ALL the preachers of The Way, to take the same honest example of this dear brother, and calling upon the name of our merciful Lord, at last break out of the bind of lies which has bound them for so many years.

Whoever could have predicted the reaction of the friends toward the revelation made by this elderly worker? On account of his age, the friends concluded that he was 'going' in his mind, and treated the outcome of his repentance accordingly. They simply put his new explanation down to the mental instability of his advanced years. Well, God bless him – he did try to release his friends from the ghastly pile of lie upon lie to which they had become subject over the years.

Sadly, they could not accept his reversal of the lie as truth, having always believed the lie to be truth. How tragically frustrating though, their rejection of his truth-telling must have been, as he then found there was no way he could release them from their bondage to lies to which they had become so accustomed with—himself partly responsible. He will, however, find that our gracious and merciful God accepted his repentance with forgiveness so typical of our great and loving God.

### ORIGINS of 'The Way'

As some may be reading this paper, who have no knowledge of the facts concerning the origin of this group of professing Christians, I shall explain. Toward the end of last century, there was a Faith Mission in Ireland, which was conducted by the Govan brothers. As the result of their preaching, many young men and young women were converted to faith in Jesus Christ.

During this time, an older Christian arrived from Scotland and motivated many of the converts to get out on the road with him to evangelise the surrounding districts. His name was **William Irvine**, and his leadership and sometime extreme views were adopted by many of his impressionable companions without question.

**Irvine's** followers separated from intrinsic Christian beliefs, espoused a clearly defined expression of faith manifested in the model of 'the poor preacher' and gave support to a theological position—an emphasis on works versus grace—which has been the cause of persistent debate throughout church history. They were saying that people were to be saved by becoming like Christ in His poverty, homelessness, suffering and sacrifice. They embodied a contemporary popular trend of thought which swung the theological emphasis to the humanity of Christ, and was acceptable to people who had difficulty in receiving the distinctive Christian doctrine, that faith in the Deity, death and resurrection of Christ, gave the believer assurance of salvation.

Observers objected that the new dogma was based upon the believer's works, as opposed to the Christian doctrine that faith in the redeeming sacrifice of the Son of God, assured the believer of forgiveness and an imputed righteousness bestowed by God on the basis of faith alone.

**Joe Kerr** played a significant part in the development of the sect's doctrine, because he introduced Henry Drummond's idea to his fellow preachers. Joe applied the Natural Law of Biogenesis, as discussed in (Drummond's book) *'Natural Law in the Spiritual World'* to the spiritual relationship of those in their fellowship.

Preachers believed that the teaching of **William Irvine** was indeed the effect of a revelation, that he exemplified the simple pattern, spirit and purpose of Christ's mission and teaching, that he was the first since New Testament times to discover the essence of Christianity. They owed their new understanding to him, saw him as the one who gave a new form of life to them, and believed that this life would be passed on through him to them and others.

This was their practical interpretation of Drummond's exposition of biogenesis, that "Life can only come from the touch of life". So in fact, **William Irvine** "became the original progenitor". It was believed that by sacrificing literally everything, and living by faith, they would carry out God's will and become partakers of the Divine nature.

Known to the sect's preachers as the 'Living Witness' doctrine, the spiritual application of biogenesis was readily supported by the preachers, so that by 1904, the idea that "there were good men everywhere" was lost to the narrow view that only those who responded to **Irvine** and his workers were saved. Because those preachers considered that they had not experienced fulfillment within the churches, they came to believe that **Irvine** gave them freedom and assurance that they were in the 'True Way' that was acceptable to God.

Thus it came to be accepted that they owed their salvation to what was said to be God's revelation to **Irvine**. They passionately held the teaching that salvation was offered ONLY through their preachers. People were bluntly told that they would go to Hell if they did not accept **Irvine's** teaching and join the new fellowship. **Irvine** had no time for those who preached 'trust in Christ as redeemer of men.' 'Calvary ranters,' he called them.

Preachers who travelled overseas did not hear of these developments in Ireland and Britain until new preachers arrived. Because acceptance of the 'Living Witness' doctrine was made binding upon them by **Irvine** and the senior workers, some preachers who regarded it as heresy, were perplexed. They included **Edward Cooney** who said that he went against his conscience to agree with it.

The application of Drummond's views on biogenesis in the form of the 'Living Witness' doctrine was a significant development, for it laid the foundation of 'apostolic succession and authority,' that has been maintained by the preachers throughout the succeeding decades of the movement's history. [The above section in italics is taken from pages 8, 9, 18, 19 of 'The Secret Sect'. For more information on this book refer to Addendum 2.]

The mode and ministry the preachers had adopted set them apart from all other groups. They believed that Matthew 10 was what God had planned as a pattern for them to follow as preachers. Apparently, none of them were concerned about verses one and eight, nor of their lack of power to do those things which Jesus had commanded and empowered the twelve disciples to do.

Doctrines peculiar to 'The Way' or 'The Truth', as it was also called, were gradually added, and indeed, some of them were a blatant superseding of Bible doctrines which God Himself had timelessly set in place. Obviously, **Irvine** and his band of preachers had become so deceived and spiritually desensitized that the seriousness of their introduction of anti-Bible doctrines never registered with them!

It pleased the early workers in 'The Way', to accept the deceptions of **Irvine**, but God is faithful—HE ALWAYS IS. To counteract the lies they had accepted as truth, God raised up those who recognised them for what they were, and they steadfastly resisted them, in favour of the TRUE facts.

Years later in a written statement **Eddie Cooney** said that he had got to see this flesh and blood revelation to be VILE, and gave it up in 1914. He returned to the TRUE GOSPEL preached by himself and **William Irvine** for four years after they met, which recognised John 20:31 to be true.

As Paul's dialogue in Roman's 10:14-18 answered by Psalm 19 (where it shows God speaking through nature, and finally through the preacher) "the words of whose mouth and the meditation of whose heart is acceptable in God's sight." Eddie wrote, "The Lord knoweth them that are His, and the writer's (Eddie) business is to depart from iniquity himself, and exhort all who profess to be His to do likewise." [The Secret Sect by Doug & Helen Parker, Page 116]

### Pride prepared the way

Why was it that when **Joseph Kerr** introduced the 'Living Witness' doctrine to **Irvine** and the other preachers, he found a ready acceptance of it? Simply because the ground had already been prepared in their carnal minds through pride having boosted their ego concerning all the sacrifices they were making. Now ALL authority (spurious) was theirs! The 'sacrificing' preachers had become indispensable, and NO ONE could be saved without THEM. Sadly, they still believe, as I heard preached at convention, "The servants of God ARE YOUR SALVATION."

In almost one whole century, not one of the false doctrines of the so-called 'Truth' have been changed. They are ALL still in place, and knowingly or unknowingly, ALL of the preachers demand acceptance of, and obedience to what is FALSE. They preach that if you do not accept it, you can NEVER know Jesus, the only one who IS the Truth, and in whom all the workers profess to BELIEVE.

### An Afflicted Conscience

Having afflicted his conscience for ten years, **Eddie Cooney** denounced the 'Living Witness' doctrine. God was surely awakening **Eddie** and others to their need of 'keeping in line' with HIMSELF, instead of with men—who were not taking their line from God!

**Eddie Cooney** was one of the group's most forceful preachers, and became an irritation to those pushing the 'Living Witness' doctrine. **Eddie** may have had his faults, but loving and perpetuating a lie was not one of them. From then on, he could not stand hearing workers preach 'The Way' and the 'Living Witness' lies, and he would publicly contradict any worker he heard preach these lies as truth.

Finally, as a consequence of **Eddie's** constant reminders, **Jack Carroll (one of the original workers)** and the larger group of workers, called a meeting with him and those no longer in favour of the 'Living Witness' doctrine. Much was said to and fro till at last, **Jack Carroll** got up and walking to the door said, "I can no longer have fellowship with you **Eddie!**" **Eddie's** response was, "We shall have fellowship in heaven, **Jack.**"

### Put out of fellowship

Amazingly quickly, word was sent to those 'friends' who were billeting **Eddie's** group, that they were now OUT OF FELLOWSHIP. The friends were instructed to PUT THEM OUT. One couple, the **Elliott's**, I think, arrived back only to find their belongings packed in their suitcases, and sitting on the verandah waiting for them. It was MIDNIGHT and SNOWING, and if it had not been for non-Christian people taking them in and giving them a bed, they would have perished.

The word went out EVERYWHERE, that **Eddie** and his like-minded group of workers were 'out of fellowship,' and the friends were to have nothing to do with them. The bewildered friends wondered whatever **Eddie** and the others were supposed to have done to warrant such treatment. When **Eddie** came onto the scene, they all still fellowshiped with him and found to their joy, that he was still the same old **Eddie** they had always loved.

To their dismay, they too learned the results of not having done according to the workers' instructions and some were put, out of fellowship. Their sin? – fellowshiping with the 'unfellowshipped' **Eddie Cooney**.

What an unholy attitude to adopt toward their own brothers and sisters! This was a complete breakdown of their love for the brethren, the Word of God and towards God himself. Those workers progression into deception more and more, had led them into becoming 'lords' over God's heritage, in direct contrast to the loving, and humble self effacing Spirit of Jesus who came to SERVE, of WHOM they claimed to be the SERVANTS.

Under **Jack Carroll's** initiative, **Eddie Cooney** and his group who were faithful to what they knew to be true, were vilified as enemies of 'The Truth,' and therefore, God's voice through them was effectively SILENCED.

**Eddie** had his faults like me and you, but in the matter of making a concerted faithful stand in his love of TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS, he and those with him had to pay the price. Satan on the other hand was enjoying the fruits of his deceptions, having a wonderful time persecuting Jesus in those who had 'slipped through the net'.

The adoption of a spurious authority, usually 'goes to peoples heads', but the heartlessness of both the workers and 'friends' actions simply demonstrated that Jesus was FAR from being in control of their lives. They were clearly showing that they were NOT being saved by HIS life at all! Being wrongly instructed, the 'friends' all still denounce **Cooney**.

I am reminded of the verse in Matthew 25:40, "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the LEAST of THESE MY BRETHREN, ye have DONE it unto ME."

### The founder – put out of fellowship too!

The story of **William Irvine's** life was a very sad one. He heard the gospel preached by a Presbyterian Minister, John Mc Neill, responded well, and for a time attended a Bible College before joining the Faith Mission on 14 June 1895. He became an evangelist and sufficient to say he was regarded as being extremely enthusiastic but partially unbalanced.

It seems he had seen a lot of hypocrisy and lukewarmness in the church circles in his early Christian life, and this led him to adopt a very harsh attitude towards churches and church people. To start a fellowship as farflung as possible from 'church' life became an obsession.

**Irvine** was straying, deception was gradually taking over, and there was no purging out of the old leaven, and the young preachers were so immature in spirit as not to be able to discern between good and evil and arrest **Irvine's** downward trend into error.

By 1914 **Irvine** was bringing in much deceptive teaching and the workers had tired of his extreme ways. After being put out of fellowship, he went to live in Jerusalem, believing that God had chosen him to be one of the two witnesses of Revelations 11:3 but died years later [1947 of throat cancer] with the prophecy unfulfilled.

Surely this reminds us that if we are so open to satanic lies and delusions as **Irvine** was, then a worse and FINAL delusion awaits one just around the corner as planned for our destruction. It is so vital to our salvation that we ensure we love the truth with all of our hearts, lest a little self admits us to the BROAD ROAD of lie-lovers.

Six years after having been 'dis-fellowshipped', **Irvine** wrote a letter to **Bill Carroll**, and among other things one claim he made was, "God, through me, gave the last message of Jesus Christ".

How tragically sad, that **Irvine** never awoke to the real trend his life was taking, when, in humility and willingness to become spiritually like Jesus, he would have been able to have recovered himself out of the snare of the devil. Instead, his life ended in strong delusion. Oh, what might have been. Surely, a warning to us all.

We sometimes sing, "If you want to be great in God's kingdom, learn to be the servant of all. That's it, Just that – like Jesus.

### Joe Kerr's letter

During what was probably his last visit to New Zealand in 1953, **Eddie Cooney** stayed a few weeks with us, and was able to explain things concerning 'The Way', its origin and downward progression into more and more deception.

It will be of much interest to many, I am sure, to read the following text from an aerogramme letter written by **Joe Kerr** to (A photocopy of the entire original aerogramme is included as an appendix to this document.)

### [Click to read the complete letter on TTT](#)

My Dear Irvine [Weir],

...There is no possibility of mending the Testimony??? Its foundations are wrong. They are not sound on how men are born from above. Salvation is the work of God and it is God who must open men's eyes and turn men from darkness to light.

No man can come to me unless the father which has sent me draw him and no man can come to me except it were given unto him of my father. John 6.44.65; It was the Lord who opened Lydia's heart Acts 16.15; It is as many as are ordained to eternal life who believe. Acts 13.48; We need to get into the place where we are workers together with God. 2 Cor. 6.1; Remember that Salvation is in three tenses. (This is something the Testimony??? never understood.)

(1) We have been saved. For by Grace have ye been saved. Eph. 2.5 and 8. R.V. This is the salvation of the Spirit. 1 Cor. 5.5;

(2) We are being saved. Unto us which are being saved, it is the power of God. 1 Cor. 1.18; R.V. 2 Cor. 2.15; R.V. This is the salvation of our life which we are working out day by day: Phil. 2.12-16;

(2) Then there is a salvation which is nearer than when we believed. Rom. 13.11; A salvation ready to be revealed in the last days. 1 Peter 1.5; This is the salvation of your body, which will take place at the revelation of the sons of God. Rom. 8.19. R.V. This is the

redemption of the body. 8.23; or the redemption of the purchased possession. Eph 1.14;

The first and third salvation mentioned is the sovereign work of God called in Eph. the gift of God. The 2nd is something that is carried on between the Lord and ourselves. It is the salvation of our lives. It is possible for a man to be saved and to lose his life. Matt 16.26. R.V. Some people will stand at the Judgement seat of Christ and will have all their works burnt up but they themselves will be saved yet so as by fire. 1 Cor. 3.15; That side of the truth the Testimony??? have no knowledge of. Salvation is not of works lest any man should boast, but their salvation is definitely of works. Eph 2.9;

Irvine, it is no good trying to bolster up the old thing, it is better to admit that it is built on a wrong foundation, and to put in the right foundation. None of the people in the Testimony??? have any knowledge of the difference of a man standing in Christ, and a man's state. What God has made us in Christ and the extent to which we have sought to bring our state into line with our standing.

You are wrong when you say that we gather together on Sunday morning to remember Christ's death. We gather together to proclaim His death. 1 Cor. 11.26 R.V. We proclaim that all we are and have has come to us through the death of the son of God.

When doing this we remember him in his love and sacrifice and the proof that we are right with God is seen in the effect it has on our lives. We are crucified with Christ, we are dead with Christ. Rom. 6.6,8. The body of sin has to be destroyed or made ineffective V.6; That is our standing in Christ. Now how do we measure up to it experimentally?

You said that I was to tell you how they treated me when I left the Testimony???...

...We had a loan of beds etc. in the room we had and they sent the saints who owned these things and took them from us and left us the floor to sleep on. They forbid any of the saints to come near us, and I may tell you something that you may know already that the workers have almost the same power over the so called saints as the Priests have over their people. That is their strongest weapon... However, the Lord looked after us and here we are glad that He saved us and opened our eyes to what we had been led astray by. And now it is up to us to see that we walk with the Lord in the light of His word. His word a light and a lamp...

Love in Christ Jesus to all.

J. Kerr

**I [Vern Russell] copied these words from the original letter which I had received from Eddie Cooney, that had been given to him by Irvine Weir. Irvine was disfellowshipped in the early 1950's. The letter was an aerogram and written and posted in South Africa. It was undated, and the postmark was indecipherable. Joe stated that he had left 'The Testimony' about 39 years earlier. When Eddie handed the letter to me, he intimated that he had not had the letter very long. It would appear that Joe Kerr left 'The Testimony' about 1913-1914.\* I noted that each time Joe mentioned 'The Testimony', he added a row of question marks.**

### Joe Kerr explodes the MAIN-STAY of 'The Way'

Joe had at last received the 'Love of truth', and Jesus broke the chains of deception that had bound him, to his 'living witness' lie, and by which he had deceived others.

Few of the workers were able or willing to follow his honest lead out of the untruths comprising 'The Way.' It would have involved the renouncing also of their stolen authority to which they had committed themselves and their converts. When TRUTH is not the indispensable requirement in an assumed authority, further departures from Truth and Righteousness will be resorted to in maintaining the original departure therefrom.

Without enough questions being asked, or answers being demanded of workers, by myself or others, we honestly delighted in what we were given to believe – that God had CHOSEN to bring US into His ONE and ONLY way of Salvation – while passing THOUSANDS by! Quite candidly, some seemed to place more importance in this proud belief, than in Christ who died for them!

Many people 'belong' to false religions, and because they have been fed unbounded confidence in their religion, they believe they MUST be right with God. That is a Satanic masterpiece, and people are so easily satisfied and deceived, with the preachers so persuasive.

To those involved, the question at this point must be, "What steps are they willing to take in the separation of themselves from error, unto Christ and Truth, wherein ALONE reposes their salvation in time and for Eternity?"

### A case of TRUTH being stranger than fiction?

There was an elderly couple living near us in Dunedin and they were not in the best of health. One day I saw the old lady (a close friend of my mother) going out, holding onto the picket fence for support as she went along. Someone went and told the preachers that they had seen her holding on to the fence, and that she was drunk. Without talking with her or questioning her, they put her out of fellowship for being drunk!

Eventually she went to the preachers, and told them she was drunk, even though she knew she was not drunk. We asked, "Do you mean to say that you were not drunk yet you told the preacher you were drunk?" She told my mother that it was the only way she could get back into the meetings.

Nellie, my wife, when recounting this incident said, "My young head was ticking over, and I thought this is the strangest thing I have ever heard. She told a lie to get back into 'The Truth,' and it made me think, *what is truth?* You certainly cannot double-cross TRUTH." It bursts out sometimes when least expected, and certainly will at the JUDGEMENT, in fullest measure.

### A Judgement reserved for liars

Let me draw the attention of my readers to what I have observed in the last two chapters of Revelations. I say this with feelings of deepest concern with respect to the day when God shall speak to EVERYBODY personally in judgment.

By the grace of God, and through the intercession of Christ, my only righteousness, and having been born of His Spirit of holiness and truth – my guide during these many years – I can say in full assurance with Paul that, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against THAT DAY." Praise the Lord!

But my heart is full of concern for those who have knowingly lived a lie and have used the lie to deceive people, for whom Christ died, and who must acknowledge His Lordship alone. Christ is the Head of His Body but when the original workers usurped His authority unto themselves, they restricted would-be members from according Christ their whole-hearted submission and trust.

From God's word however, we learn that Jesus himself is the WAY, and the TRUTH and the LIFE, and not 'The Way,' or the so-called 'truth' as engineered by the workers and their 'Living Witness' lie. The DECEPTIVE statement 'The servants of God are your salvation', is another bolster to the above lie. Revelation 21 & 22 warn that those who 'make a lie', come under the heading of defilers, and that nothing that defileth shall enter the Holy City. Then, those that LOVE and MAKE a LIE will be OUTSIDE of where the Lamb and God are.

It is interesting to note that one verse (Revelations 21:8) lists the sorts of sinners to be cast into the Lake of Fire, but only one sort has ALL in front of it – 'ALL LIARS'.

I OFTEN WONDER WHY!

Liars are people who KNOW what is true, yet for reasons NOT originating in God's heart, they have chosen to misrepresent the truth by lies and deception.

THAT'S WHY!

Those who 'pass up' their option of 'love of truth', disqualify themselves from ability to love people as Jesus loved them.

'The Way' was floated on TWO OUTRIGHT LIES, and **Irvine** insisted that ALL of the preachers agree to them. This blindness opened the door to lying spirits which have empowered the deception in the minds of ALL in 'The Way.' The unrecognised lying spirits and their deceptions, have prospered in their control of the minds of the 'friends' ever since, bringing them into abject submission to the spurious authority of the preachers and whatever they choose to teach.

With so much denial of truth, the 'friends' relationship with God is FAULTY. The original preachers traded Truth with lying spirits, in return for the usurped authority of Christ, and both they and the people have been held in its vice-like grip for almost a century.

Are the preachers so oblivious to the false position they have placed them in, while resting, for justification, on the many sacrifices they have made? Likewise, they manifest the attitude that they possess a special place in the favour of God, as his servants, whereas in fact, satanic spirits have actually triumphed over their minds made partly, but substantially, subject to these errors.

Some of the preachers are aware of the lies forming the foundation of 'The Way' but are BOUND to preach them anyway! NO, they are NOT so special to God, that He condones their lies for ANY REASON.

There are those like dear Fred Phillips who are TOTALLY UNAWARE they preach lies, and the knowledgeable preachers hide the truth from the new ones, and like Willie Hughes, just allow them to preach lies in blissful ignorance.

No wise people will leave any lie unturned in their search for the truth as it is in Jesus, THE TRUTH, and His Word and Spirit of TRUTH, always having eternity in mind.

Oh how he loves us all, and yearns over us that we have the heart to make absolutely SURE, that we have His judgement day approval NOW, by believing and acting responsibly according only to TRUTH which we were side-tracked from, by those, having believed the lies themselves, assured us they were giving us God's only TRUTH.

Had the love of TRUTH which God promotes, become the relentless pursuit of the original preachers' lives, they would have prized and maintained the inviolability of it with their lives, to be TRULY like Jesus, as led by the Spirit of Truth. Instead, they tried to become like Jesus, by copying things he did, such as homelessness, non-married state, poverty, suffering and sacrifice etc. A Gospel of Works. However, there was a name to which their affections had been won above the name of Jesus, and in deference to **Irvine's** demands, the two hellish lies were made concrete and binding upon ALL preachers.

These remain in place today still, and are responsible for incalculable spiritual harm and loss to those who believe them and promote them, for Christ has NO PART in such iniquity.

One appreciates the vast amount of unrecognized sway that Satan has so easily managed to steal to himself, once having been given the 'nod', with the adoption of unreal and untrue perspectives.

The third lie which the original preachers created, followed the first two lies as naturally as 'night follows day.' The people of 'The Way' cannot have brotherly and sisterly fellowship with 'born again', Christ indwelt, faithful people whom God has manifestly accepted as His loved children, simply because they have been taught that they alone are God's children, having professed through God's own 'true' preachers.

To have been so wrongly instructed, as to not be able to recognise the Spirit of Christ in those who are at least as dear to the heart of God as they, must surely tear His Father's heart.

Let us realise that Jesus loves His body of believers, exactly the same as His heavenly Father loves Jesus – the head of the Body. If one desires my Christian fellowship, owning Christ as his Lord, then I must meet him equally on this ground, and with Christ in 'the midst', we shall both be blessed. To refuse fellowship on man-made grounds, however much one fulfils heavenly criteria, is repugnant to God. What must He think? It does not bear contemplation.

In Matthew 7:13-29 Jesus gave a preview of the judgement. Can any of us say we were never warned of consequences that would follow the practice of iniquity whether in word or in deed?

INIQUITY means NOT EQUAL.

1. 'Lack of justice or righteousness'.
2. 'A wicked, unjust, or unrighteous act.' (Collins dictionary).

Taking advantage of their preacher's immaturity and pride, Satan introduced lying concepts and during the first seven years of their new fellowship, these had developed into a new religion or 'the only way' Christianity was obtainable.

Sadly, Jesus – THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE had become dethroned from their immature lives before their love and faith could mature into the obedience of Christ. They valued a human unity among themselves as the first priority of their new religion.

A few however, realised what was happening. **Cooney** eventually saw 'the flesh and blood revelation' as being VILE, and renounced it at the cost of his total rejection and vilification afterwards. He refused to carry on teaching the lies which he had done for ten years to keep IN LINE with the other preachers. As God looks on the heart, those who have preached lies in ignorance must be in a much better position before God.

The preachers of today are still advocating the same lying guidelines as at the inception of 'The Way.' They reject most of what the Holy Spirit is doing among God's children as being 'of the devil'. This rejection will find 'The Way' people spiritually desensitized and unprepared for what the Holy Spirit is doing prior to Christ's return, and they must be the losers.

With all my heart I believe God is calling all the preachers to:

REPENTANCE

CONFESSION

RESTITUTION

Jesus came to this earthly scene, preaching 'the Kingdom of God is at hand – repent ye and believe the Gospel' (good news) (Mark 1:15). The Kingdom of God is simply where God is enthroned and His will is being done, and His authority both recognised and obeyed by people and angelic beings. The Father trusted ALL authority into the hands of His beloved Son, who never once acted independently, nor outside the will of God or His given authority. Jesus said he did not speak of Himself, but the Father gave Him a commandment of what he should say and speak. His commandment was life everlasting. For all Jesus' authority, and Divine position – He came to serve the people, and THAT cost Him everything.

REPENTANCE in simple terms, is the act of changing one's own mind for the purpose of accommodating the mind of God, and His will.

CONFESSION is the delightful surrender of a troubled conscience to God for His cleansing. Yes, His mercies are new EVERY morning. Great is His faithfulness! "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9). Though there can be no mercy shown on the day of judgement, there is abundance of mercy here and now for those humble enough to have repented in the time accepted...NOW! Forgiveness is also provided, without stint, conditional on OUR having forgiven all others in need of ours. "Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God."

RESTITUTION is to restore that which we have taken away, or have been party to removing. The people who have separated themselves to 'The Way,' and who profess to be children of God, but deny what God has done for others, are really bound by the lies. God loves them – yes, ALL of them! Their desire is toward God, and to know His salvation (and everything Jesus the Saviour means to others) is exactly what He desired that they should have the opportunity to experience.

I urge every preacher to stand and be counted for truth and righteousness and as a true accountable servant of His people. Let us all humbly choose this day whom we should serve, while the opportunity to choose belongs to us.

### Why WE left 'the meetings'

Some of the friends have wondered why my wife Nellie, and I eventually left 'the meetings'. One of the 'friends' had broken a minor law which had been legislated to control sale prices of property. His name had appeared in the Police Court news, though I understand he did not incur any penalty.

As a result however, the workers put him out of fellowship, forbidding him to attend any of the meetings. Nellie and myself considered that the workers had not acted in a loving manner, and I went to considerable lengths in writing to them to reverse their judgment. This was not done, and then we ourselves were subjected to what amounted to their threat of excommunication. We knew the signs!

At the conclusion of a meeting one evening, a worker drew me to one side and informed me, "After the others have been dealt with, you will be next." After about three years of being under this threat – plus the coolness – we decided that this was not what real fellowship was all about, and withdrew. Of course as usual, this lost us many friends and their visits.

It goes without saying that we harbour no resentment whatever, toward anyone. Indeed, like David the Psalmist, who said he 'hated every false way', we have become very concerned for those who have been subjected for so long, to things that are simply NOT TRUE. While Satan is being successful in keeping God's children apart from one another, because of his lies being accepted as TRUTH, the Body of Christ is kept 'dismembered'.

As the result, lovely people are blindly ignoring many of their brothers and sisters in whom Christ is living, which actually is a denial of Christ's body in favour of blindly accepting Satan's lies in substitution.

Satan knows that if he fails to keep God's children apart, they will become ONE in the SPIRIT and LOVE of their Saviour. If they love one another as Jesus loves them, "the world will KNOW that thou hast SENT ME," Jesus said. (John 17:23). That will be fatal to all of Satan's plans to keep us humans in bondage to HIS lying ways.

On the other hand, if you feed lies to people who believe that the lies are the TRUTH, they will go to great lengths to perform what they believe to be the will of God in all sincerity. Even as Jesus warned His disciples, that there could be people who would KILL the disciples, thinking they were doing God service. (John 16:2)

Do you know that there have been those who have been 'dis-fellowshipped', and have not been worthy of such treatment and have died brokenhearted? The workers believed they were serving God faithfully in so doing, though in actual fact they were protecting their spurious authority over them.

Dear brothers and sisters, you who have been TAUGHT to reject us because we left the meetings – even though we know that we have sought to serve God faithfully ever since, and still do, by His grace. We appeal to you all to consider well the direction in which you have been and are being led.

I remember Mr. Isaachsen once telling me, that if a Private saw that his superior Officer was leading his troops into an ambush, although obedience to his orders were his first priority, his responsibility was to inform the Officer that he had made a mistake, at the risk of being punished for insubordination.

I can assure you that it is no 'big deal' what people think of me in my attempt to point out the mistakes of 'The Way'. My responsibility is to stand true and faithful, first to Jesus my precious Lord and Saviour, then to you, my dear brothers and sisters in Jesus. It is simply in discharge of my duty to my Heavenly Father and in His Kingdom's interests, daily sighting the path set before me by His Word and the Holy Spirit.

We remember many of you before His throne of grace, and always shall. Let us remember too, we are ONE in the bonds of His love.

Ephesians 4 says, "Speaking the truth in love, grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

The Father's vision of all the members of Christ's body is that we should be one. Let us agree to the fulfillment of His loving heart's desire. Those who belong to Jesus, belong to those who belong to Jesus and it is the oneness Jesus prayed for in John 17.

**THERE IS NO STANDARD MORE DEMANDING THAN TRUTH!**

The question which must be answered is, "Does 'The Truth' or 'The Way', stand up to being compared with the Bible?" NO, it does not, because it CANNOT! It falls at the first hurdle – HONESTY. That quality, let alone righteousness, pure love, and mercy disqualifies it from being God-ordained.

The blatant LIE regarding its ORIGIN and the consequent untruth and unreality, that one can ONLY become saved through hearing the 'Living Witness' version of the gospel, would effectively negate God's sovereign right to Himself (to) lead a soul into His Salvation.

And what about their refusal to fellowship with other believers? Up to 1904 when the 'Living Witness' doctrine was introduced, the preachers would fellowship with Christians of other groups whenever it suited them.

When a senior worker visiting us in the 60's was reminded of this fact, and asked why they could not now fellowship with other Christians, he could not or would not answer the question.

The Celibacy law was introduced in 1903, so new preachers entering the work had to be single. There were however a few married workers who entered 'the work' before this time, who were still with us in the early 40's, namely **Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Beattie, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson McClung.**

Celibacy gave the new preachers no option to marry as Jesus had taught in Matthew 19. To be allowed to preach, they had to remain single, and this further denial of truth as expounded by Jesus, placed all those who NEEDED to marry in a position where they were subjected to temptation and sin. This need NEVER have happened had 'The Truth' been true to its name, but the senior workers, by human reasoning, thought that 'the greater the sacrifice' the more like Jesus they would become.

God says that OBEDIENCE is BETTER than sacrifice.

Dear Friends, I have been a long time coming with these words. I implore you everyone – and workers too, to take heed to yourselves concerning what you teach and believe as TRUTH – for whatever reason. ONLY what originates in God's heart, and expresses the love and righteousness of Christ through ours, to the GLORY of GOD, can be expected to survive the JUDGEMENT.

God searches out the thoughts, intents and motives of our hearts. Let Jesus, the REAL TRUTH, be our covering on that day and NOW.

Only sacrifices made for the sake of THE TRUTH as it is in Jesus can be honoured and rewarded of God. Anything other than that of Godly origin, derives it's inspiration from Satan, as Peter found out. (Matthew 16:23)

Voluntary sacrifices believed to have been the sanction of God, but really the consequence of even the best of human reasoning, are REJECTED by God. Be mindful that the Holy Spirit does not employ or lead by the changing shades of human opinion.

"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16:15). In contrast the Word also says, "Man shall live by every word of God." (Luke 4:4). Jesus said, "Those who would enter the kingdom of heaven, are those who DO THE WILL of my FATHER which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21).

In Matthew 7 Jesus said, "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and in your name cast out devils, and in you name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me you that work iniquity."

Some of the people of Matthew 7 will tell of the few scriptural things they have done, but NOTHING about the sayings of Jesus they had failed to do. Obviously, they had done OTHER THINGS – of their own will, and Jesus will call them workers of iniquity, because of that. It is obvious also that whatever the other things actually were, in some way these denied the words and the Spirit of Christ, the Truth and Righteousness of God, and earned His rejection as being iniquitous.

So, dear ones, let us buy the truth, and sell it not. Let us stand and be COUNTED for Jesus sake, and for our brothers' and sisters' sake, and for TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS sake. Let the TRUTH make you FREE.

Being set free, we can love those dear people we have always longed to see come to Jesus, and share our knowledge and experience of His love with them.

Yes, we are free! Christ has made us free.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT

The baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit, are terms (and the actual experience and outworking of) which the workers and people of 'The Way' seemingly know nothing about.

Had they knowledge and experience of these, they would have possessed the spiritual elements vital to their ability to perform Jesus' command to, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils and heal all manner of sickness and disease". THIS part of Jesus' purpose in first sending out the twelve disciples as in Matthew 10, has always been MISSING from the ministry of the Workers in 'The Way'. Also, they would have been placed in the POWERFUL position of being enabled to rightly judge and reject the errors to which Satan had subjected their ministry and lives.

"Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost". (John 1:33). Upon his return to the Father, Jesus commenced this ministry at Pentecost. See Acts 1:5 & 2:4. On the other hand, the 'born-again' experience which all partake of at the time of believing in, and receiving Christ as their Saviour and Lord – together with heart repentance for past sins committed, and his forgiveness of these – produces a spiritual 'New Creation'. As love and faith combine in one's obedience to Christ, the Holy Spirit brings forth the fruit of the Spirit, in the life of the new member of the 'body of Christ'.

Apart from the 'born-again' experience, the workers always regarded that anything more than these, had ceased with the demise of the apostles, and any manifestation of the gifts NOW, to be of the devil! They do this even though Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians about gifts of the Spirit, and the order of expression of these, both to one's own personal edification and that of the body of Christ.

Any Christian (and there are some) who believes that the baptism and gifts of the Spirit are not applicable to the lives of God's children today – as in Bible days – are in effect saying that what the Holy Spirit gave to the body of Christ for it's edification was only 'short term' and would not be available to ALL members after the passing of the apostles.

The FACT is, that whatever was made available to the FIRST group of believers by the Holy Spirit, will STILL be available until the end of the Church age. Listen to the word of God, 'Then Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to ALL who are afar off even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Our dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in China, whose ministry is so often attended by the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in healings and people being raised from the dead, continually give thanks to God for His love and mercy. They certainly know their God – and He knows them!

#### THE BODY OF CHRIST

There can be no doubt about it. On the Day of Judgement, many Workers who knowingly preached a lie will be called to account, not only for the lie they have been privy to, but for the disastrous affect it has had upon the Body of Christ. It will continue to have this affect until the Workers responsible repent of their iniquity, and declare the TRUTH to those professing people in 'The Way', so setting THEM free to acknowledge that they are equal fellow members in the Body of Christ, together with all others who are born-again.

They will then be at liberty to recognise and appreciate their brothers and sisters who have always been held at arms length as poor deceived sinners. This of course, is another damnable lie the Workers have taught them to entertain against dear people who actually love and trust their Lord enough to obey him.

In John 17:21, Jesus prayed the Father that ALL may be one; "as Thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou had sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou had sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

How His heart must ache! For some years now, we have witnessed the desire and efforts of truly born-again Christians to recognise one another in a closer way, and have fellowship together whenever they can. Many barriers have been broken down by the love of God in His people, and THAT is something the Holy Spirit delights in! It is Jesus in the midst of those for whom he so cruelly died.

We all know why the Jews did not recognise their Messiah when he stood in their midst. They served God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him and they MISSED him. What did the Holy Spirit say about THAT situation? "Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

I deeply regret that it has taken so long for me to put this article together for you, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, whose lives have been so greatly affected by what had seemed to us all, to be the very TRUTH of God. Like myself, you came under the control of concepts that we had sincerely and honestly accepted at their face value, unaware of their hidden source.

We neither recognised nor knew from whom they had originated, because they had ALL SEEMED SO GENUINE AND THE VERY VOICE OF GOD TO OUR OPEN AND RECEPTIVE HEARTS. We trusted the preachers at FACE VALUE as well, believing they had brought us to the ULTIMATE and ONLY way out of Satanic darkness – into the Pure and Holy light of Jesus, God's dear Son.

Jesus is Himself THE WAY, and THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE, whom to have in our heart alone is our ONLY hope of GLORY (Colossians 1:27). But a 'Way' was presented to us and called 'the Truth' and having been made to believe it was God's 'way' of salvation, we fell for it! We eventually found we had been 'blinkered' by our trusted preachers.

When I first heard the two homeless preachers explain 'The Way' of Jesus, I thought I was being led into his truth. Many familiar bible verses were used and Jesus' name was always a pleasure to hear. What I did not know or recognise was the fact that bible quotations were being used to 'blinker' or restrict me from recognising that a Way that was NOT Bible, was being skillfully introduced.

The original preachers in 'The Way' had made concrete decisions which they had instituted as 'the truth', insisting that all new and young preachers accept them without question and teach them. These errors – or lies – were given the same authority as the Word of God, to be spoken in the name of Jesus – THE TRUTH. Oh the shame and seriousness of it all. Remember, Jesus said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned". (Matthew 12:37.)

Multitudes of preachers have subsequently themselves believed the lies, and taught them as truths, having received them from such trusted 'servants of God' in whom they had the utmost confidence! Addie K. was one such deceived person, who taught me in ignorance, the same lies which then deceived me.

### FALLACIES THAT MAKE UP THE SO-CALLED 'TRUTH'.

The untrue and deceptive teaching that the so-called 'TRUTH' came right down from the time Jesus sent out the first preachers.

The preachers mediatorial role of being the ONLY means by which sinners can be saved.

Enforced celibacy of preachers in contradiction of Jesus' teaching of Matthew 19 and of Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 and 1 Corinthians 9:5.

If a preacher marries he 'diminishes his sacrifice', and is then automatically disqualified from 'the work', no matter how much his heart is in helping souls to get salvation.

The ONLY people who are saved, and who therefore are Christians, are those who have HEARD and RESPONDED to the message preached by the TWO TRUE PREACHERS.

ALL people who have never heard the 'two and two' preachers' message are STILL lost sinners no matter how sincere, or how much their confession of faith in Jesus Christ is according to the Word of God. *The servants of God are YOUR SALVATION. You can 'TRUST YOUR SOULS' to the servants of God.*

### JESUS IS NOT GOD – Jesus IS God

I have never heard the workers say that Jesus is not God. In the USA however, workers put a brother out of the meetings because of his having said that Jesus is God.

As the Scriptures declare that Jesus is the Son of God, the Creator of all things created, and that He (being God) raised himself from the dead, it is a MUST that the question be settled from the Word of God.

Jesus said, "I and my Father are One" (John 10:30). Again, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also". (John 14:9). Then, "The Father is greater than I". (John 14:28).

I do not profess to know all about God, but a study of God's Word definitely places Jesus in His scriptural role of deity. I should mention that scriptures also show the Father and the Holy Spirit as being involved in Jesus' resurrection.

Jehovah Witnesses declare that Jesus was entirely a created being, which is not correct. I have a cassette which simply shows from the Word of God that Jesus is indeed God, as is the Father, and for good measure, the Holy Spirit is also called God. Many Jehovah's Witnesses have been delivered from their errors, through hearing scriptural proof of Jesus deity.

## IN RETROSPECT

Over the years, many so-called Christian religions have been started, and many of their founders have fondly called their particular version, 'The Truth'.

They could not have chosen a name requiring more Biblical support than this to be consistent. Anything less than total scriptural equality in belief and practice, would at once prove 'the truth' to be just another sham, fraud, substitute – call it what you will – with all its inconsistencies, shortcomings, excesses and faults.

Biblical truth on the other hand makes those people free, who are submitted to it (Jesus is the TRUTH), because they carry the IRREFUTABLE evidence that they are the children of God. They have the Spirit of Truth, being LED by the same Holy Spirit in accord with the Word of God.

Workers and friends in 'The Way' have always been isolated from what God is actually doing in lives of people outside of 'The Way'. They have been purposely led to believe that apart from themselves, the Holy Spirit DOES NOT and CANNOT dwell in the lives of any others who have not fulfilled the conditions ORIGINATED by the early workers.

I feel moved to append some startling and UNDENIABLE FACTS of God sovereignly at work in lives of people who BELIEVE in Jesus, and who bring forth the FRUITS of such Bible required faith. (See Addendum 1, 'The Christian Church in China'.) It is IMPOSSIBLE however for the Workers to accept them as fellow bible believing Christians because that would negate their fondly held ORIGINS CONCEPT, that they alone possess the TRUTH, and the SPIRITUAL POWER to introduce lost people to Christ.

As far as I am concerned, my love of TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS and the glory and honour of my precious Saviour Jesus, and YOU, is sufficient motivation to lay before you what the Lord has made known to me. I place in your hands what He has responsibly placed in mine. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit shall reveal YOUR responsibility to the Lord and your fellow professing brothers and sisters in Christ.

DO beware of the 'FEAR of MAN' and the 'FAVOUR of MEN'. Sadly, this has accounted for the spiritual downfall of many unwary people, who by no means would have CHOSEN to have been side-tracked from God's will for their lives.

## A NEW DOCTRINE?

It seems there is now word getting around that over the centuries 'The Way' had become lost, obscured or whatever. So at the turn of the century, God raised up these preachers to restore 'The Way' under which the disciples went out to preach as in Matthew 10.

Oh, if only **Addie Kuchenmeister** could have heard that, and whatever would all the other workers have said? **Peter McGorum, Herbert Bland, Walter Frank, Alice Sargent, Ada Cederman**, to name a few who all believed and taught what they had in turn been taught by those through whom they had professed. Nice, sincere people – how we loved them. None of the friends would ever dare to contradict what all the workers taught us down through the century, would they?

Obviously, the REAL, TRUE FACTS are becoming an embarrassment to today's preachers, as the falseness of their position is so easily proved.

Dear ones, if we would judge ourselves today, and make amends to God and also to our brothers and sisters whom we have robbed and misled, He will have mercy and FORGIVE. Why, or for what reason would any of us wish to hold back, and make a test case of ourselves at the Judgement? There is just NO WAY back, but right now we can order our judgement to be according to the love and mercy of God, by repentance, confession and obedience and ALL who have been wronged, will bless you in the name of the Lord.

We love you all. The Lord Jesus bless you ABUNDANTLY.

Vern and Nellie Russell

6 Taupata St

Castlecliff

WANGANUI, New Zealand

"When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" which we appropriated to ourselves by repentance and faith, and being forgiven of our sins, we became Children of God by New Birth.

What a pleasure to now be indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, whose continual delight is to express Himself through our yielded will to LOVE, to TRUST and OBEY Him.

With RECONCILIATION and full acceptance as Children of God being an accomplished 'once for all time fact', the 'Much more' of Rom 5:10 becomes the continual and daily outworking of the Spirit of Christ within, as He takes our yielded members, through which to express His righteousness, and share His love with all. To do this, we are WHOLLY dependent upon Christ from Whom we derive the POWER to BE Christians. We were NEVER intended to copy or to imitate His example instead, for such would be 'self-righteousness'.

There is no substitute for 'Christ in you, your ONLY HOPE of Glory' Col. 1. 27. This is what being 'saved by His LIFE' is all about, and Christ's presence within, in ACTION, SAVES and PRESERVES us from the DESTRUCTIVE elements of CHANGING MOODS so HUMAN, to which we had been SUBJECT as one time SINNERS. Paul was so right, when he said, 'I live, yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME. Ga1. 2:20.

## ADDENDUM 1

## THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN CHINA

In 1949 China came under Communistic rule under Chairman Mao Tse-tung, a program of extermination of all things Christian was instituted. Pastors were jailed, and churches were closed. Bibles were burned, and Christians were forbidden to meet in fellowship. Indeed, a time of terror. It was estimated that there was one million Christians in China at that time. In 1993 the Chinese Government estimates that there are 100 million although Christian sources make the more conservative estimate of 75 million. A sore point with the government is that there are more Christians in China than Communist Party members!

Under the new and harsh conditions imposed by the Communists, the Christian church has thrived, and God has led these dear, needy people into an eternal relationship with Himself, through Jesus Christ their Lord.

The Christian experience in China today resembles that of Christians in the book of Acts and Hebrews 11. The similarity is truly AMAZING, with even very young Christians faithfully preaching the glorious Gospel of Christ. As the Word says, "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." (Mark 16:20). These dear brothers and sisters in Christ preached the Gospel the same as in the book of Acts, with the SAME results as the preachers experienced therein, including martyrdom, beatings, tortures and imprisonments.

There has always been a great shortage of Bibles, and people are coming to Jesus in such vast numbers each day. In response, Christians from all over the world regularly almost every day make the journey to Hong Kong for the purpose of taking Bibles across the border into China.

Nellie and I have made quite a few day trips into China for this purpose. With our fellow 'Bible-donkeys' we worked with the Asian Outreach Mission which supplied the Bibles, and cooperates with other churches and missions geared to meet the great need among our Christian friends. Revival Christian Church in Kowloon, pastored by Dennis Balcombe is one them.

Recently, Dennis has translated a book written by a Chinese Christian in China. Chinese Christians tell their story through blood and tears. Their brave and fearless exploits in the faithful preaching of Christ our Saviour and Lord and King -the mighty Deliverer – with huge crowds of now joyful people stepping out in faith and love to receive and obey him. One's heart is lifted heavenward with joy and praise and gratitude to HIM who is at the centre of it all. Then we read of the terrible sufferings inflicted upon them in Satan's foul attempts to silence them, but what do we see? Suffering people smiling at their captors as they exhort them to repent and believe in Jesus, which unleashes tirades of cursing upon themselves, together with fearful beatings in renewed violence.

They rejoice in HIM who has counted them worthy to have FELLOWSHIP with Him in His sufferings. As we read the book, our joy and tears mingle with theirs.

**The following is a summary by Dennis Balcombe of his book '*Lilies amongst Thorns*'.**

### Part 1. The Cedar of Lebanon.

This chapter deals with a stalwart of the faith, Miao Zizhong. Brother Miao was a relative of a key contact in Zhejiang Province. Though greatly persecuted, he served the Lord faithfully, and went to his reward in 1989. Miao spent 15 years in a labour reform camp in Northern Heilongjiang Province, and the Lord miraculously spared his life. A deadly plague swept the prison. Lying in the prison morgue barely breathing, and on the point of death God sent His angel. He instantly healed him. Most of the inmates had died from cold or their wounds. His release from this prison camp did not mean the end of his troubles though. He faced even more persecution when he returned to his home village. But God protected his servant and Miao did the work of an evangelist in the rural districts of Zhejiang and pioneered many church groups.

### Part 2. The Heavenly Man.

This is one of the most amazing testimonies to have come out of China. As a young man, Brother Yun prayed fervently for a Bible. The Lord supernaturally provided him with one. Yun lost no time in memorising scripture. He shared the word in house churches until 1984 when he was imprisoned for the Gospel's sake. His sentence? FOUR YEARS. In prison he fasted and prayed for revival. For 74 days he neither ate nor drank water! To this day many officials speak of this "medical miracle". The Lord preserved him and eventually revival broke out in the prison, turning it upside down! Hardened criminals, a catholic priest and scores of ordinary prisoners turned to Christ, and are today evangelists. We have worked closely with him for many years and he has been used of God in praying for hundreds to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As soon as he was released from jail, he went back to preaching the Gospel! He is now once more imprisoned in Henan Province for preaching activities in Sichuan.

### Part 3. The Mother Who Gave Birth to Many Children in Prison.

God uses ordinary people. Sister Chan was such a one. A simple woman, she served the Lord fervently. Major miracles of healing and deliverance from death are not uncommon in Henan, and Sister Chan saw three relatives come back to life. However, she and some believers had prayed for a terminal cancer patient, but she later died. Accused of praying the person to death, Sister Chan was thrown into prison. However, her term behind bars was a tremendous testimony of how God used her, and made her a victorious Christian in very harsh circumstances. Bibles were smuggled into the prison and copied by hand and God's Spirit brought a mighty revival to this prison of 4,000 hardened women criminals. Hundreds were swept into the Kingdom of God. I have known her for many years, and she is today still active and faithfully preaching Jesus in Henan.

### Part 4. The Lily Among The Thorns.

This is the story of a young teenager on fire for God. Sister Sheng was called to preach at 17 years old, and she led evangelistic teams of mostly young preachers to another county. Through powerful preaching, witnessing and miraculous healings, more than 10,000 people showed up at one meeting. There was great revival in Fangcheng county.

Many in the west have heard about the huge gathering and resulting persecution in Fangcheng county several years ago but few know the story behind this amazing event. You will weep as you read of the torture and suffering these innocent young people endured for Christ, and will rejoice when you read of the subsequent revival. Hers is also a tale of prison, persecution, courage and faith in Jesus. Her testimony shows the way the Lord is mightily using teenagers and young people to evangelise China.

### Part 5. The Execution.

It has been two years since I met Xiaoxiu in a city in Henan Province. She was only 19 then. Her testimony is well known all over China. Hers was a happy family until tragedy struck seemingly over night when she was only 16 years old. Her mother and brother were executed by firing squad, and other members of her family were sentenced to long prison terms. Their crime? They had simply prayed for her sister-in-law who was terminally ill. However, she succumbed to the disease and Xiaoxiu's family were accused of murdering her. They were victims of the "anti-crime" and "spiritual pollution" campaigns of that time. The sufferings of this one family cannot be imagined. It is one of the worst cases of persecution leading to martyrdom in recent years. But it has inspired thousands of young people to give themselves to ministry and Xiaoxiu is today preaching the Gospel.

### Part 6. The Soldier of Jesus Christ.

Brother Qinlu experienced a most amazing conversion. At one time he was made a leader of the production brigade. Like Joseph he was promoted to a position of leadership, and for nearly two years used his official position to establish churches. As a Spirit filled man, God performed mighty miracles through him! Small amounts of food was multiplied to feed hundreds of preachers. He has an amazing ministry but also knows what persecution means. He is today serving the Lord in Henan, operating in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### Part 7. Of whom the World Was Not Worthy.

Brothers Ming and Jian have been my close friends for many years and this testimony is linked to that of Yun's (The Heavenly Man). Read what it means to be the wife or children of a preacher on the run in China. Learn about the physical and psychological torture "prisoners of conscience" in China have to endure. Read how these country preachers, "of whom the world was not worthy" were released from prison to raise the dead and perform great miracles. Brother Jian has just been released recently from prison, his sentence of three years miraculously cut to a little over one!

### MATURING OF THE SEED SOWN IN BLOOD AND TEARS

This section is the most relevant to the work we are involved in. Accounts include recent events and it documents the history of Christianity in China in a nutshell. Special emphasis is placed on the great revivals that have been sweeping many parts of China during the last few years. Gifts of the Spirit, healings and miracles, praise and worship are keys to the revival. This is also intricately linked to the ministry of Revival Christian Church into China since 1979. If you are one of the thousands who have participated or supported this ministry, or that of other ministries working in China, you need to read this account. Those who are receiving Bibles are changing China from within. The result of taking in Bibles and teaching materials on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, praise and worship, is that it has greatly strengthened the Chinese church. This has been one of the most important aspects of our ministry to China in recent years. If you have not come or supported this work, please read this book! Yes, over one billion in China have yet to be reached with the Gospel but as THE BODY OF CHRIST around the world works with the Chinese Church as described in this book, the task will be accomplished.

'*Lilies amongst Thorns*' is available from Dennis Balcombe, Revival Christian Church, 154 Prince Edward Road, 4th floor Kowloon, Hong Kong.

### ADDENDUM 2

#### THE SECRET SECT (by Douglas Parker) NOTE: This book is out of print.

Douglas Parker had been accepted for 'the work.' He had amassed a large sum of money. His parents had assisted him in business and he decided to give them a trip overseas out of gratitude. The overseeing worker in his state demanded that none of the money be spent in this manner. New, young workers had to give their money to the poor (the workers). This opened Douglas' eyes to the spirit behind 'The Way.'

He then set out to learn as much as he could about the origins of 'The Way,' and just what it represented. He traced 'The Way' to its source in Ireland, learning how, when and by whom it was started. Going to the area of its birth he found plenty of newspaper articles, photos etc., still obtainable so many years later.

There were many interviews, many letters etc. and volumes of researching to be done. At last Douglas and his wife, Helen, decided they should make an exposure of many hidden things that even few friends in 'The Way' are aware of.

'The Way' did not live up to its name, and it fell very far short of 'the truth' it is supposed to be.

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NOTE: Vern C. Russell passed away December 26, 2012, aged 97.

\*Joe Kerr left the work in 1916. He wrote in this letter that he left "The Testimony" about 39 years ago – which would indicate that he wrote this letter sometime around 1955. Joe married sister worker Barbara Baxter in 1915; they were excommunicated in South Africa

\**The Secret Sect* book is out of print.

"*Preserving the Truth* by Cherie Kropp-Ehrig covers much of the same material

**[Click Here to read more about Joe Kerr on TTT](#)**