

Advocates Public Letter to All Overseers Worldwide

Jun 4

WINGS Note: The CSA crisis has led many people to search scripture and reconsider foundational traditions of the fellowship. Some proposed paths forward include more open communication between friends and workers via newsletters and forum discussions, and involvement of younger workers, sister workers, and friends in all levels of decision making in the church. Advocates for the Truth, a group formed in March 2023 by former members and survivors of abuse and a private investigator, has been collecting details of accused CSA perpetrators. Advocates for the Truth has issued the following letter calling for current overseers to step down.

WINGS does not take any position on general issues that have been raised recently regarding doctrine, rules, except to the extent that they foster or hide CSA.

Jun 2

To All Overseers Worldwide,

On March 24, 2023, we established a hotline on behalf of Dean Bruer victims. In just ten weeks, our hotline has revealed over 400 perpetrators in the Truth: Overseers, Workers, Elders and Friends. We continue to receive new allegations each day. The volume is utterly shocking to us. However, the allegations should not be shocking to you and many of the Workers. You are already well aware – and in most instances have been aware for decades – of the pedophiles and perpetrators in your midst. Almost ALL of the pedophiles and perpetrators brought to our attention are already known to you. For ten weeks, we have reached out and communicated the massive crisis and path of destruction in your community. We have been met with silence, complicity, stonewalling, gaslighting, and outright refusal to listen to the pleas of decades of survivors.

This is completely unacceptable to us, the members of your community, and society as a whole. We ask you to do the right thing and step down from your places of authority and leadership.

There is no hiding or turning back from what we now know. The system that you, the Overseers, have been using for decades to mitigate criminal child sex abuse and sex crime cases is deceitful, complicit, illegal, and autocratic. For generations upon generations,

countless lives have been ravaged emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically by the failure of your system and your lack of leadership and integrity. Trust in your authority has been completely broken. This is not hyperbole; this is real, this is palpable. This is the outcry we are hearing from survivors, families, and Friends in the Truth.

Each of you has participated in coverups, minimized crimes, or committed criminal acts yourself. Many of you are legally culpable. Your behavior has harmed survivors and continues to put children and adults in the fellowship in the presence of sexual criminals to this day. For years, your system has coddled, enabled, and promoted perpetrators while repeatedly victim shaming and victim blaming. The perpetrators and pedophiles have received therapy paid for by you, the Overseers, and you have done nothing for the countless survivors of those perpetrators. To this day, you are not exercising a system to hold child sex abusers and sex criminals accountable in the Truth. We have learned in the last ten weeks that the devastation of child sex abuse and sex crimes in the Truth is worldwide and systemic – a fact that each of you have obviously been aware of.

Instead, offending Workers and Friends are shielded by your leadership. Workers with allegations have been sent to other geographical areas, enabling them to continue their behavior at will. Many of the Friends who have committed sex crimes have been given the privilege and status of Eldership with meetings in their homes. Notably, the offenses of predators and perpetrators have been described by the Overseers as “immoral” instead of “criminal.”

Some Friends and Workers that have spoken out about abuse—their own or that of others—have, as a result, been sent to other countries, asked to leave the Work, or even put out of the Fellowship . This corrupt and neglectful response that has been sanctioned by each of you for so many years has never been acceptable and will no longer be tolerated by uncompromising Workers, Friends, concerned citizens and law enforcement. Your complicity, deceit, and behavior for the past ten weeks has shown you are either unable or unwilling to change. It is vital for the safety and rebuilding of the community for each and every one of you to step down.

Matthew 16:6 states: “Beware of the leaven of the pharisees.” You, as the Overseers, have preached virtues, high morals, and honesty while practicing the opposite and asking for the community’s utter and complete trust in return. That trust has been irreparably broken.

As perpetrators and their victims have been uncovered, the sheer numbers of which have been a deluge on our community, you’ve each been given the opportunity to take accountability for your actions and your contribution to such suffering. Instead, we have seen letter after letter skirting responsibility, sweeping the pain of those whose trust you’ve conscripted under the rug. You’ve repeatedly asked for patience from a community you

continue to betray and deceive. We fully expect more of the same after the publication of this letter.

Consider the enormity of the consequences of your abuse and complicity:

- Religious and psychological trauma by asking the survivor to be re-traumatized by the perpetrator at Meetings and Conventions.
- Loss of family for the survivor by taking a stand and not having community or family support.
- Monetary loss due to financial hardship from c-PTSD.
- Life in a mental health facility
- Comorbidity in conjunction to diminishing mental health.
- Social isolation
- Psychological disturbances
- Nightmares
- Complex-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Hyperarousal
- Hypoarousal
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Addiction
- Eating disorders
- Relationship loss
- Intergenerational trauma

- Suicide

It is our belief that no recourse could adequately restore the community's trust in you. Each of you, as is evident by your past and present actions and abuse of power, have proven that you are unfit to be Overseers.

In the past ten weeks, countless cases of child sex abuse have been reported to law enforcement in multiple countries. Those reports include numerous instances of you, as mandatory reporters, failing to report sex crimes against children.

Thus, at this time, we formally ask that you publicly submit your resignation to all of the Workers, Elders and Friends across your respective area, with first and last name, by June 8, 2023.

In Transparency,

Cynthia Liles, Sheri Autrey, and Lauren Rohs

(503) 386-4634 in the US/+1 (503) 334-6866

internationally advocatesforthetruth@gmail.com

Advocatesforthetruth.com