

Letter written to 2x2 –church List. Dated 19 March 1997.

I have agreed to post this anonymously:

The subject of sexual abuse in the 'truth' interests me a great deal. I am a recovering third generation 'truther'- and I know from personal and intimate experience that there was extensive sexual abuse in our family.

Being in the 'truth' I instinctively 'knew' as a child that I was to blame- for being a victim- and that I was full of sin and that what was happening was wrong. There was no one that I felt I could talk to about what was happening to me, my brothers and my sister. I knew of no way out of this trap. I didn't have the language to express it-especially at first when I was so young. It is difficult to discuss the topic of sexual abuse as one does not want to hurt family members by disclosures - so one keeps quiet. I was abused for many years - ages 4 through 13 years. I told first at age 4 - and I was laughed at and scorned for bringing up the topic - and I brought it up in conversation-typical for a 4 year old- and I learned not to discuss that type of thing again.

As I grew older and was able to study the dynamics and implications of sexual abuse, I understood more and more about what happened to me. I feel that my brothers and sisters and I were all victims of 'the system - i.e. the truth' - a closed system in which women and children bear the brunt of the oppression. Women and children are 'third class citizens' in the truth- in the sense that they are the ones who suffer the most by the rules, written and unwritten, that are put forth by the workers and elders. They are the ones whose voices are not heard- this is typical of cults and other closed systems. This abuse has affected our family for years. The coverup has been extensive.

I am now a woman in my middle adult years - and I can remember these things from age 4 years on - and how it felt-and what I thought - the guilt, the shame, etc. As a young person, feeling guilty for what happened to me - I realized I could never be good enough to be in the truth- because this was obviously my fault. Later, I realized how the system of the 'truth' perpetuated what happened to me - and that this had also probably happened to others. I can honestly say that the abuse has affected me at all stages of my life. It is something that is always there and continually has an effect on the way I think about myself, my relationships to others, how I see myself as a parent, a person. The dynamics of this abuse are overwhelming. I wonder what my family - my relationships would have been like without its presence.

I also know of situations where workers/elders who have had 'problems' with their sexuality - and the situations are quite 'hush-hush'. There is more concern about it being covered up and making sure that it is not known to the general population (what would people think) than there is concern that the victim be afforded peace of mind and justice or that the perpetrator be brought to justice and afforded some help.