

GOD'S ONLY RIGHT/TRUE WAY?

WHEN DID MEETINGS BECOME GOD'S ONLY RIGHT/TRUE WAY?

It wasn't always so...

THE BIRTH OF EXCLUSIVITY

The Living Witness Doctrine (aka LWD)

By Cherie Kropp

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DID YOU KNOW THAT THE WORKERS...

have not always believed and taught that the 2x2 church was God's only true way?
have not always believed all other Christian preachers and evangelists were false?
have not always believed all church buildings were false churches?
have not always believed all other Christians were sincerely wrong and bound for hell?
have not always held Sunday morning meetings?
have not always baptized and re-baptized?

AT FIRST, in the Early Days, the workers were primarily evangelists or revivalist; their mission was to save souls. They were not a church or a sect. They had no established church meetings in homes. They did not serve communion/the emblems or baptize. They claimed their mission was *unsectarian* (not a sect and not associated with any particular sect or church). They took no official name and were nicknamed *Tramp Preachers, Go-Preachers, Dippers*, etc. Alfred Magowan, an early worker, described the mission of the early workers:

"We had only one commission and that was to make disciples as we had been made; and we had only one authority, viz., if the Lord was with us, we would so live and speak that He would

use us in getting people saved. And as they listened to us they would recognize the voice of Him because of the anointing. **That was the simple outline in the days of our beginning.**

*"There were no regulations and no asserting of authority. The Lord had mercifully set us free in spirit to worship and serve him under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through a good conscience; and there was neither machinery nor any of those things that religious people think necessary and which are necessary in sects under human control. There was nothing in the vision we had of 'the way in Jesus' that would have led us towards another kind of sectarianism, **nor did we ever anticipate a time when we would become a strong people in an evil world.**"*

(

[January 21, 1931](#)

Letter by Alfred Magowan to Wilson McClung, both early workers)

We believed that we were the last hope of the world and that ours was an honest-hearted revolt. We set out to form a brotherhood where all would be equal. We wanted to break from all tradition and become a people neither Catholic nor Protestant, with no regulations, no authority, no machinery or human control, to be free to serve God and make people free like ourselves. We put all worldly ambition behind us, none of this world's satisfactions or regards held an attraction, we had no theology to propound, no congregations to please, we saw ourselves as workers but not bosses. (Reminiscences of Alfred Magowan, November 9, 1953; Secret Sect by Doug Parker, Page 35)

1. THEIR ORIGINAL FOUNDATION WAS FAITH LINES: The method of ministers going two and two without a home or guaranteed financial support came together gradually over time.

In 1898 a Scotsman named Wm. Irvine and an Irishman named John Long studied Matthew 10:8-10:

"...freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat."

Here is the definition from John Long, the first early worker to try *Faith Lines*: **"Faith Lines** is a preacher going forth without any fixed or stated salary, neither any public collections at meetings, but just trusting in God to put it into the hearts of God's people to give to the support of them who ministered in Spiritual things. If more came in than necessary, learning to abound; if less, learning to suffer lack..."

(John Long's Journal

[January, 1899](#)

)

They wondered if God intended for Jesus' instructions in Matt 10 to not only be for the disciples on their temporary missions to the Jews, but to also be universally carried out for all time. Would God provide for men in the 19

th

century to go preach as Jesus sent the twelve Apostles--solely on "*Faith Lines?*"

They began to experiment with the concept of serving the Lord solely on ***Faith Lines***. In January, 1899, John Long launched out preaching solely on Faith Lines.

In October, 1899, Irvine took some young male converts on a pilot mission to Scotland with their bicycles.

They preached without any financial support arrangements and their needs were adequately met. They

were successful in winning some converts

Because their experimental mission went well, they concluded it was God's will for the Matthew 10 method to continue to be used to spread the gospel.

From 1899 to 1903, more and more converts listened to Wm Irvine preach and were moved to go preach on *Faith Lines*, using the Matthew 10 method as their guide. Some preached independently, some with Todd's Mission, and some with John Long or Wm Irvine.

The workers priority was going out preaching on

Faith Lines,

trusting God to provide for their needs. Their fundamental basic of

Faith Lines

was what set their ministry apart from others.

They never asked for money.

At this time, there were no fellowship meetings in homes or baptisms or communion. Some of the early workers and friends believed they were saved before they met Wm Irvine or his workers, via their original personal salvation experiences.

Others professed through Wm Irvine.

At that time they accepted other Protestant pastors or preachers, Christians and churches as fellow Christians, their brothers and sisters in Christ. It was not uncommon for the workers to invite outside preachers to speak in their meetings and they attended the Keswick Conventions.

In their Early Years, there were no Sunday morning meetings. The choice was *left up to their new converts as to where they worshipped*.

In other words, the first workers and saints continued worshipping in the denominations where they were members, or the Protestant church of their choice.

"At this time we believed that all who were born anew including ourselves, in the denominations, were children of God, needing to become continuing disciples..."

(Ed Cooney
[Letter to Alice Flett](#))

The workers did not always view their church as *"God's only right/true way;"* and themselves as *"God's only true servants and saints;"* and all other religious bodies, Christians and ministers as *"false."*

Newspapers frequently reported that the workers were highly critical of other churches, pastors and Christians...but they didn't (yet) preach they were all false and going to hell.

2. THEN THEY ORGANIZED: In 1903, Irvine held a three week workers' convention on Willie Gill's farm in Rathmolyon, Ireland, and organized a new movement/sect. Reportedly, there were about 70 workers present, the oldest being in their early thirties, including Wm. Irvine, Eddie Cooney and Willie Gill; and the rest were in their early twenties. Irvine laid down the values and standards to be kept. The workers pooled their money into a common purse, took vows of celibacy and agreed to a strict form of asceticism.

Their teachings (doctrine), format and traditions evolved over time. There was no complete *"revelation"* or set of plans for assembling a church given to Wm Irvine all at one time. It wasn't like when God gave Noah the complete, precise plans for building the ark; or Moses for the tabernacle or David the temple. Rather, the church Wm Irvine founded was formed over time as the need arose. It was a work in progress. Cooney called it *"groping their way."*

To this day the *Faith Lines* concept of Matthew 10 is a basic, fundamental, integral doctrine of the 2x2 church. It is unthinkable that any worker would ever ask for money and to do so would be grounds for being expelled from the ministry.

3. THEN THEY ADDED MEETINGS and BAPTISM: Up until this time *"they did not teach the ordinances of Believer's Baptism, and the Lord's supper. The cause of this was they maintained their mission to be unsectarian..."*

(John Long's Journal,
[September, 1899](#)
)

1902 brought about some big changes. The workers began to baptize new converts by immersion, which was an uncommon practice at that time.

It aroused much curiosity, onlookers and newspaper reports. They earned the nickname "Dippers."

They began to separate their converts from the Christian churches of their choice which they had been attending and formed Sunday fellowship meetings in homes. Meeting leaders, also called "elders" or "bishops" were appointed. The meetings included hymns, prayers, testimonies and the breaking of bread.

As early worker Jack Carroll often preached: "*The church in the home and the preacher without a home are two of the fundamentals of the faith of Jesus.*"

(Early Worker

[Jack Carroll, Bakersfield 1946](#)

, Five things that are fundamental)

However, this wasn't always the way they fellowshiped. Baptism by immersion and meetings in the home were two fundamental doctrines that were added to their original fundamental Faith Lines doctrine.

1905:

John Long wrote in

"*At that*

convention, William Irvine, the recognized leader of the Go Preacher mission, was unduly severe on me

...They blamed me for not separating my converts...And no matter what fruit or success attended my missions, they would give no credit unless converts were separated from their respective places of worship...."

(

[John Long's Journal](#)

, July, 1905)

4. THEN THEY BEGAN CONDEMNING the CLERGY: From their beginning, Irvine and his workers were highly critical of other pastors, clergymen and churches--but they had not gone so far as to state openly that they were going to hell.

That would change.

At the July, 1905, Convention at Crocknacrieve, a young early worker named **Joe Kerr**, who was about 24 years old at the time "

came to the conclusion that there are no clergymen saved.

Without any charitable consideration of the conscience or opinion of others,

he preached it at that convention.□ Irvine defended him,

but

Edward Cooney

opposed him and tried to prove that John Wesley was a born again man.

(From:
[John Long's Journal](#)
, July, 1905)

John Long wrote: *"I have no doubt that God used **William Irvine** to witness against clericalism; but in doing so he ran into the opposite, in going beyond truth when he preached that every clergyman is a false prophet and unsaved..."*

He
[Wm Irvine]
remained that year in the British Isles, and everywhere he went, he preached that the clergy were unsaved men going to Hell.

(John Long's Journal,
[June 1907](#)
)

At the 1906 Crocknacrieve Convention... *"Edward Cooney emphasized RE-baptism into their fellowship; which was the beginning of refusing fellowship with Christians of all other denominations; and raising a sectarian barrier which made their fellowship exclusive and sectarian"* (

[John Long's Journal](#)
, July, 1906).

5. THEN THEY ADOPTED THE LIVING WITNESS DOCTRINE: The teaching and belief that a person can only obtain eternal salvation by hearing the gospel and professing through a Worker is sometimes referred to as the *"Living Witness Doctrine"* (aka LWD).

This theory was published in 1890 in a book titled *"Natural Law in the Spiritual World"* by Henry Drummond in his

Chapter: Biogenesis.

Joe Kerr* is generally recognized as being the one who initially proposed to Irvine that Drummond's LWD theory could apply to Irvine's ministry.

Drummond drew a comparison between a Christian's natural life and spiritual life. He reduced these theories to an **EITHER-OR** proposition: **EITHER** (1) spiritual life could be generated spontaneously, without the help of man, (i.e. just by reading the Bible, through the Holy Spirit's dealing, praying/speaking, etc.) **OR** (2)

spiritual life could only come from another spiritual life (one must hear and profess through another born again Christian.) Viewpoint No. 2 is referred to as the

"Living Witness Doctrine."

The two theories are mutually exclusive

. One cannot believe in spontaneous generation AND accept

*"that life can
only
come from pre-existing spiritual life."*

The "**Living Witness Doctrine**" theory is that "**Life begets life.**" What occurs in natural life also occurs in spiritual life. There can be no life without a previous life.

Every living thing has an ancestry and "

without life, there can be no life."

In nature, animals and plants reproduce with like kind.

Applying this to spiritual life: spiritual sheep can only be reproduced from spiritual sheep. Sheep succession never runs to goats. Man can only receive spiritual life from another spiritual life/witness.

Applying the LWD theory to Irvine's movement, only those who profess through Wm. Irvine and/or one of his workers (a living witness) can possibly be saved and receive eternal life. Irvine was the

"Spiritual Adam"

through whom all successive workers were born again.

This restricts salvation to those who enter through

"the door"

held open by Irvine, his workers and/or their successors.

The Living Witness Doctrine was a theory reasoned out by man and does not have a Biblical foundation. No verse in the Bible indicates salvation is restricted to "*one way*" that wasn't referring to Jesus as

"the way."

6. THEN THEIR METHOD CAME TO BE "GOD'S ONLY TRUE WAY": Using Romans 10:14, "

how

shall

they

hear

without a preacher?"

they carried the LWD forward and decided that no one could be saved and receive eternal life unless they heard and accepted the gospel from Wm. Irvine or a worker in fellowship with him.

Adoption of the LWD also excluded the friends or laity from being able to bring people to Christ.

Because Irvine's workers believed they were the only ones on earth truly following the Matthew 10 pattern for ministers (according to Irvine's standards and interpretation), they concluded that they were God's ONLY true ministers and church on earth. In turn, this meant that all other churches, pastors and Christians were false. They unchristianized the Christians.

*"The definite article ["the"] used in such a narrow way as **The** truth, **The** way, **The** Testimony, etc. unto the exclusion of all other sects and missions outside their own became at that time very common."*

They 'unChristianized' all Christians outside themselves; and refused fellowship with them

, and I could not go that length conscientiously..."

(
[John Long's Journal](#)
, June, 1901)

It became mandatory for all workers to believe, teach and enforce the belief they were God's only true ministers on earth because they alone had "*paid the price*" and were willing to preach in the sacrificial manner Jesus instructed the twelve in Matthew 10, and that salvation was only available through them. Irvin
e's workers had the monopoly on salvation.

They did not believe Jesus' Matthew 10 instructions were intended only for the Apostles for particular short missions, nor did they take into account that Jesus rescinded these instructions in Luke 22:35-36. They also disregarded Jesus' discourse on sectarianism in Luke 9:49-50 (KJV)

*"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, **because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.**"*

Jesu

s also said: "

And

other

sheep

I have, which are not of this fold..."

(John 10:16)

However, not all workers accepted this change of belief. John Long was publicly excommunicated for not going along with it in 1907.

John Hardie also

struggled with it at first but appeared to resign himself to it later.

Though Ed Cooney, the second most prominent worker in Irvine's movement, went along with the LWD for awhile. However, after Wm Irvine was excommunicated in 1914, he renounced the

LWD and returned to what they originally believed and taught for their first four years before the LWD was added.

Eventually Ed Cooney was put out of the fellowship for not believing and teaching the LWD. He explained:

"Then two heresies arose amongst us, started largely by Joseph Kerr, who said no one could be saved who had not met William Irvine or some of those in fellowship with him. Others held that only through sister or brother workers could any be saved, and that these workers must be William Irvine's associates. In 1914, I declared that I had returned to the true gospel William Irvine and I with others preached for some four years before these heresies were introduced."

(Ed Cooney's [Letter to Alice Flett](#), circa 1930)

7. THEN IRVINE'S EXPERIMENT BECAME A REVELATION: Irvine and his converts reasoned that Irvine had been called, raised up and used by God to restore the methods and ministry of the New Testament church. Cooney wrote

: God called William Irvine and others of us to rebuild Jerusalem."

([May, 1930](#)

Letter from Ed Cooney to Dear Sister)

IF this was true, then they reasoned that God had given Irvine a *revelation*. The definition of a "prophet" is one

who receives a message or revelation from God.

If God had truly given Irvine a message or revelation to start the 2x2 ministry and church, then Irvine fit the definition of a prophet.

There are two kinds of prophets, true and false. The Israelites asked in Deut 18:21-22: *"How may we know the word which the Lord has NOT spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously."*

A prophet was proved by the Test of Time. A true prophet only made 100% accurate statements and predictions.

Later in life, Irvine made prophecies that did not come true. He predicted the Apostle John would return and he and Irvine would be the Two Witnesses (prophets) in Revelation 11:1-11 who are to witness for 1,260 days preparing for Jesus' return. After they are killed their bodies are to be displayed in Jerusalem for 3-1/2 days, after which they will rise again and ascend up into Heaven. However, Irvine died in 1947 of throat cancer without this coming true.

Was Irvine a true prophet?

8. THEN IRVINE EXCOMMUNICATED JOHN LONG: John Long was a very dedicated worker for the first ten years of the movement. Ir

vine used his authority to excommunicate John Long, his long time fellow helper who was with him from the very beginning of the movement (1897-1907).

From the platform of the 1907 Croknacrieve convention, Irvine made a public example of John Long, leaving no doubt in the minds of his audience regarding what would happen to any worker who did not accept and teach that Irvine's method was God's Only True Way and all other churches and ministers were false.

When John Long, a former Methodist, refused to agree that

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was not saved and that there are no saved clergymen, it was

"the saddest event and most painful, trying and unexpected that I met with during my life's experience; namely having to leave the Go-Preacher fellowship; which God used me so much in, FROM ITS BEGINNING, ten years ago."

(Source: John Long's

[Journal, 1907](#)

).

Thus, in 1907, it became mandatory for workers to believe and teach the Living Witness Doctrine, and for their converts to disassociate from their churches and instead to meet in designated elder's homes for worship. Also mandatory that all workers believe and teach that eternal life could only be obtained through (1) hearing, believing and professing through Irvine or a worker who professed through him--or his/her successor and (2) following the method Irvine started--even though Wm. Irvine professed in 1893 through Presbyterian minister, Rev. John McNeill.

Their change of doctrine and belief in their exclusivity was worldwide.

The Enniskillen Ireland newspaper, the Impartial Reporter, had this to say about their change in beliefs: **"Change of doctrine has made things different for many, especially for those who were not originally converts of Mr. Wm Irvine or Mr. Edward Cooney because unless you hear or believe through a Tramp Preacher, they say there can be no possibility of spiritual divine life, past present or future...in other words, derivation or successive Christianity is now re-established via William Irvine and Edward Cooney only. This is all the more remarkable and contradictory since William Irvine has a great difficulty to determine his own spiritual Father, and he professedly the great grandfa-ther of all!** Some say it was the Rev. John M'Neill; some say Wm. Irvine's sister was the means of spiritual life to him, and some are not very sure, but since Thomas was a doubting Apostle, they are contented to be a brother of his..."

(Impartial

Reporter, [August 25, 1910](#)

)

For roughly 15 to 17 years, (1897 to 1914), from the time William Irvine was 34 to 51 years old, he ruled over the new movement which started from his experimenting with the Faith Lines concept. It's quite a leap to conclude that a ministry that only started in 1897 is God's only

true/right way on earth.

9. CURRENTLY THEY BELIEVE their way or method is God's only true way on earth. That without the

true

ministry (the workers), there would be no

true

church.

All other churches are

"false"

churches. Therefore, everyone who is not following their methods for worship and ministry will go to hell upon their death. This includes all Christians in other churches.

However, few insiders will admit to an outsider that they believe this.

When pressed, they often attempt to evade the question.

However, it is mentioned in testimony meetings and taught to succeeding generations by professing parents and grandparents.

This was easier to believe and accept before the actual history about Irvine founding the 2x2 church and ministry became so available on the internet. Now that there is documentation showing that the physical 2x2 church actually started around the turn of the 19

th

century and that it didn't actually start when Jesus sent out His 12 Apostles on the Shores of Galilee.

It hasn't been handed down from Apostle to worker to worker until the present.

When tracing workers back from the present, the line goes right back to Wm Irvine and no further.

NOW THEY HAVE BEGUN TO EMPHASIZE that their church is currently the *closest* restoration on earth to the original primitive New Testament church--according to their definition of the word

rest.

"clo

Beware of anyone who states their church/ministry is the closest way to the New Testament church.

WHAT IS GOD'S ONLY RIGHT/TRUE WAY?

God's only way is Jesus. Jesus only, Jesus always. Jesus is the only door or entrance to eternal life and God the Father. There is no other way.

Jesus plainly said: "I am way, the truth, and the life;
no man cometh unto the Father, but by me
" (John 14:6).

"
I
am
the
door
:
by me
i
f any man enter
i
n, he shall be saved..."
(John 10:9).

Jesus also said: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, **that
whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**"
(
John 3:16).

The door to eternal life is belief in Jesus--not any man, priest or the workers. God's only way is
Jesus, and whoever believes in him will be saved.
Romans 8:9-10
"

**That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart
that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is
made unto salvation."**

Beware of anyone who insinuates that a particular way, method, system or church is God's only
right way. They usurp Jesus as the sole means of salvation and the sole intermediary between
God and man and limit the power of the Holy Spirit. There is only one way, and it is
through the savior Jesus Christ. J

Jesus said:
"No man cometh to the Father but by me."

Anyone teaching:

"No one can be saved but by us"

is leading you on.

Man can be saved without the help of any other human; e.g. through reading the scriptures, (Timothy) by submitting to Jesus in their heart.

God didn't restrict his way to a particular group/church who strives to imitate the NT primitive church. No other way, method or church that man creates can trump Jesus' authority. No church or ministry has a franchise on the way to heaven.

God's only way is Jesus only, Jesus always.

Salvation is not a method—Salvation is a MAN--THE man Christ Jesus.

Jesus' Life and Message is what saves—not a particular 2x2 Method of preaching and worship in homes.

It's the message - not the method.

[Click Here](#) to read unabridged version of this account on TTT.

*Joe Kerr was excommunicated in 1916. He wrote: *"I gave instances such as that found in Acts 8-35, how the Lord sent Philip to preach to the eunuch but while I emphasized the need of a preacher, it did not mean that the preacher had to be one of us."*

The idea that the preacher had to be William Irvine or one of his disciples was added to their doctrine after I had delivered my part.

"The mistake I made in my ignorance was that I failed to take into account the sovereignty of God -- God who could speak from heaven and save one, as He saved Paul, Acts 9. He could save Timothy through reading of the Scriptures, 2 Timothy 3-15. I forgot that the greatest preacher that the Lord had was the firmament of heaven, and that there was no place in the universe where the voice of that preacher cannot be heard, Psalms 19-1 to 4. That is the preacher to whom Paul was referring in Romans 10-14 when he asked, "How could they hear without a preacher?" For he immediately quotes from that Psalm; Romans 10-18.

*"When I saw the mistake I made, I tried to correct it, but it was too late! It was something new for people who had not been in the habit of thinking for themselves, and so off they set with it to the ends of the earth. **Then it grew until they had it that the preacher had to be one Testimony, and one who had either professed through William Irvine, or one of his direct descent.***

*"I could not have preached that, for **I believe I was saved before I met the 'Testimony' and I know that William Irvine had professed through the Rev. John McNeil.***

So that theory could no more hold water than the one that says the Pope was a direct descendent of Peter."

By Cherie Kropp