

Dear Ministry of the Move:

This letter is being written to you by a group of individuals who have been communicating regularly on the Sam Fife/Move Yahoo Website. The Sam Fife/Move Yahoo group was established in October 2005 with this statement of purpose: "This Yahoo group is dedicated to bringing together people associated (past or present) with 'The Move'". "The Move", as it later came to be called, was started in the late 1960's by Sam Fife.

The purpose of this group is to connect with other people and respectfully discuss issues related to The Move."

The website currently has 317 members who have collectively written more than seven thousand messages since its inception. These messages describe both positive and negative experiences in the Move and with its ministers. The messages have been primarily written by individuals who were once members of the rank and file and rarely by those who held leadership positions. Very few individuals who are currently participating in the Move post messages but there have been a few who do so quite regularly and we have appreciated their input. We welcome more participation from current members of the Move.

While we understand each individual body group, farm or community has been careful to maintain its own separate name and/or or legal identity (as a non-profit organization), the term "Move" is used in this letter as it has been used by the members of the Move over the years—that is, to refer to all affiliated body groups, farms and communities, as a whole.

Please understand that the authors of this letter do not profess to speak for all the members of the web site, as the site is made up of a diverse group of believers and non-believers. However all of the authors of this letter have participated, at some time in our lives, in the Move. We have all left the Move and have since reflected on our experiences. The Yahoo website has provided a open forum in which we could share our life stories and our own unique conclusions about the Move and its message.

We have learned much from each other. As mature adults we have gained a deeper appreciation for our walk, our beliefs and our history.

Many stories told by past members of the Move shed light on what daily life was like for the average person on an end time farm but others tell of experiences in the Move that are troubling to read. It is because of the troubling nature of these posts that the authors of this letter determined to write to the leadership of the Move. It is the purpose of this letter to invite you, as a leader of the Move, to join us in a thoughtful dialogue about a number of issues.

It is our great hope that our words will awaken in you a tender receptivity to hearing the voices of those who have left your fellowship and that, after listening, you will understand why many felt compelled to leave. We hope our words will quicken in you a renewed sense of your self as a seeker of the truth and, that as such, you thoughtfully re-examine your vision. We ask that you consecrate your self to the open examination the issues that are the foundation of a Christian life and ministry. We ask you *as Christians* to come and reason together with us in love.

This letter will serve as a summary of the issues we would like to discuss with you. We are concerned that the foundational teachings of the Move led to a decision making process in which options that were expedient carried more weight than options that would have been more loving or just. By this we mean that the leadership of the Move in some cases chose to act in ways that fit the urgency of the end time message with little regard for the long term impact of their decisions on the lives of specific individuals.

However imminent the end of the age appeared forty some years ago it has been made abundantly clear that the events of the world have not transpired as the leadership of the Move foretold. Similarly, the wilderness message is with out visible fulfillment.

You taught that the work of the ministry was to bring forth a generation who would walk as Christ on the earth yet what is the fruit of your ministry?

Where are the 'Manifested Sons' so many have given their lives to bring forth? We believe it is time for you to look at the long term results of your teachings and consider whether these teachings are grounded in the Christian faith.

Attached to this letter are two statements which discuss the doctrinal foundations of the Move in comparison to the doctrines of traditional historical Christianity. We ask that you read these statements and consider the possibility that instead of leading the people of God in the Move into a deeper spirituality, the leadership of the Move have in fact led the people progressively away from the message of the New Testament. Consider all that has come about as a result of your work and your message as you contemplate this possibility.

The Fruit of your Ministry can be seen in the lives of those who have left the move as much as it is in the lives those who have stayed faithful to you. While we do not doubt that the intent of those in leadership was to make decisions which were for the good of the group and for the preservation of the Move, the website reveals that many individual lives were damaged rather than healed as a result of their time in the Move.

From our perspective, the First Fruit of the Move is a generation whose faith has been fractured and whose hearts need healing. We believe that one step in that healing is for the ministry of the Move to openly consider these individual claims of abuse and to acknowledge that their emotional and spiritual injury has gone untreated and unabated all these years. It is our view that the gifts of ministry were given to edify the church and that an open review of past mistakes would help heal lives and so strengthen the church.

We appeal to you to listen respectfully to the claims made in these stories and to respond as the ministry of a loving God. Some of the stories contain serious accusations. We are concerned because of the intensity of pain these individuals experienced in the past and, for some, continue to experience. We are concerned because most reports indicate that the Ministry or at least some of the Father Ministry were aware of these incidents and participated in what appears to be a systematic cover up of these events. We are concerned because this cover up seems to have been put in place in order to conceal from the overall body of the Move the nature of these events and to shield those involved from the moral and legal consequences of their behavior.

For this sort of concealment to take place in a Christian organization, let alone one that claims to be perfecting saints and bringing forth the manifested sons of God to rule the earth, is shocking and deeply grieving. Our Lord said that it would be better for a millstone to be hung around an individual's neck than for them to harm one of God's little ones. If we remain silent regarding these stories of pain and despair, we too participate in the cover up. Thus a spiritual and moral obligation rests on us to question you regarding these stories.

Individuals writing on the Yahoo website have claimed that, both on end time farms and in city bodies, *specific individuals* in leadership positions in the Move have engaged in *sexual misconduct* and other men in the Move have perpetrated *sexual assault*. Rather than condemning and reporting this deviant behavior and criminal conduct, it appears it was covered up by the ministry.

These accounts have been related as first hand personal experiences and as stories told in strictest confidence to listeners who remain heartsick at their inability to speak on behalf of the victims. These accounts tell of the rape and fondling of children, the violation of innocents who growing up on the farm were taught to

respect authority and comply with adult directives.

We wonder *why charges were not filed* and why the *children were admonished to forgive and to never talk about it*. How can this be a covering providing healing and safety?

Other accounts describe what they consider to be *financial exploitation* in the establishment and operation of the farms. These accounts report broken promises, *financial extortion*, and financial dealings which limited individuals from participating in decisions for their own future. These accounts are more than claims related to unpaid labor but involve issues of fiscal trust and honesty. They include statements from people who felt trapped on farms by practices and policies which governed the farm. For example, the fact that those in leadership frowned on or prohibited women from being employed outside of the farm or the fact that farms mandated a set level of giving when that level precluded an individual saving for their own future needs.

The complaints of mistreatment refer not just to eldership decisions but *indicate an absence of moral leadership* from the father ministry when the individual sought their help. We are asking the ministry review the history of the Move and where there are grievances related to the finances of the farms, to establish an open forum in which such grievances can be discussed and resolved, morally if not lovingly. We encourage the ministry to set up a process by which those who desire to leave the farm are given some form of compensation in recognition for their years of service to the farm or failing this, that support adequate to sustaining their lives for six months be provided to them. If such support is considered to be out of the question, could you tell us why?

Many accounts relate instances in which the leadership of the farm or community exercised power in a manner which inflicted emotional pain in order to maintain control over others. Compliance to the order was elevated as a demonstration of spirituality and commitment. Questions were dealt with as selfishness or

soulfulness. In these accounts what stands out most is the fact that there was an apparent lack of checks and balances in the government of the group to prevent some leadership from using their positions in an abusive manner.

Abuses of power can happen in any human organization, no matter what its function. Our question is why none of those who urged submission to a covering made provision for the possibility that some might abuse their position of authority as "covering." Were you just hoping for the best or did you really think that anyone who complained was in error? Did you believe that suffering was good for the soul and so allowed suffering to be inflicted as a mechanism for change? Why does it seem that a blind eye has been turned to those who have left injured by the Move? Why is there no attempt to become reconciled with these members of the body?

The last moral question we will raise has to do with those who question the Move and its doctrines from within. While in the Move, some of us experienced an atmosphere of fear, constraint, and subjugation. Expressing heartfelt questions or concerns about the Move was taboo. Such questions or concerns were seen as threatening and dealt with as an act of discord. It seemed as though the questioner was seen only as rebellious, selfish, or deceived. No question was received as though it were a legitimate concern.

Those who raised questions were subject to social ostracism or other emotionally damaging measures which seemed to use coercion to maintain control over the individual. Many of those who post on the site also express that this narrowness or closed mindedness of the leadership contributed to their leaving the Move to seek a spiritual life in a less confined or confining place.

It is our belief that churches which allow for the open examination of their tenets of faith are healthy and experience periodic renewal. We have found that examining questions can

produce clarity in the expression of doctrine and can serve to confirm the correctness of one's conclusions. We do not see this openness in the Move and are concerned that you are suppressing a source of vitality and growth.

In addition to the issues we have already raised, we would ask:

- 1.) Have the doctrinal foundations of the Move been openly examined and revised in the recent past? If so, what was the process, forum and outcome of the examination?
- 2.) How are doctrinal disagreements or dissension between and among the members of the ministry handled?
- 3.) How would an individual participating in the Move currently raise questions and get an official answer regarding the teachings and practices of the overall Move?
- 4.) If you choose not to answer our questions, could you explain why you would choose not to do so?

We appreciate the time you took to read this letter. We hope that we have not unwittingly offended you. We ask that you direct any comments or answers to our questions to the Yahoo group address:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sam_fife

We want to reiterate that our motivation in raising these issues is a desire to see you and those you lead experience the fullness of the grace and love of God in your lives. We look forward to an ongoing dialogue about our faith and our questions.

May the God of love guide us all in truth.
In Him,

Julie Leland Biggerstaff
Ross W. Bracewell
Micheal Martella
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This letter has been sent to the following people:

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The Christianity of the "Move" of God

Respectfully submitted by

Ross W. Bracewell

Throughout the history of the Christian Church, beginning even in the first century there were those who sought to clarify, alter or add to the message of the good news because they felt they had a deeper understanding of the mystery of God than their fellow believers. During the transition period between the Old and New Testament some Jews first heard and believed the message of John the Baptist. A few of these new believers did not learn about Jesus until they had spread the message of John's Baptism to several others. Later, both the evangelists and those they had preached to, had to be advised of the fullness of the message revealed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This development is understandable in the early days of the Church.

Some theologians might argue that Paul understood the New Covenant in a more profound way than some of the earlier apostles. He was the apostle whose writings clarify the revelation of the Body of Christ and the relation between Jew and Gentile. He did have a unique position in the Jewish religion and he most assuredly did exhaustive studies of the Old Testament examining all the prophecies that abound in the Books of the prophets.

However, we read that Peter endorsed the writings of Paul and acknowledged them as consistent with his own understanding. Although some of the writings of Paul might be a little hard to understand they do not deviate from the central message. Once the New Testament was established we then see a number of warnings in the epistles about those who would come into the Church to lead true believers astray into false doctrines.

During the reformation period of the 1500's and the 1600's we know that many courageous men and women were willing to lay down their life to oppose the errors that had crept in over the previous centuries and corrupted the Roman Catholic Church.

They willingly paid the ultimate price because they were trusting in the God of resurrection life who was clearly revealed in the New Testament record.

When an individual like Sam Fife arrives on the scene in the middle of the 20th century to bring forth a new revelation for the Church of Jesus Christ it may not be immediately determined who sent him.

God may have sent him to oppose errors in the Church that have caused the faithful to stray from the truth. It is also possible that the enemy intended to use him to introduce error into the Church to lead many saints into deception. Time alone is very often the only thing that reveals the purposes of God and the schemes of the enemy.

What we can and must do is search the Word of God comparing any new concepts that are being taught with the clear teaching of God's written Word.

The Word, which has been with us since the first century, must be our final authority, guiding our decision as to what or who we will follow. It is not the intention or scope of this document to examine all the complexities of the doctrine of the Move. We want to simply highlight a fact that is well-known by any serious student of both Church history and the history of the Move itself. When Sam Fife went to Baptist seminary he was taught a particular viewpoint or understanding of eschatology (view of the end-times) that was only introduced into the Church in the early 1800's and was not taught previously by any Biblical scholar of consequence.

The idea of a future seven year tribulation and a future physical

1,000 year reign of Christ in Jerusalem was first introduced by John Darby to a small group of believers in England in the 1830's. In order to explain why other theologians had not taught this doctrine previously in Church history, Darby also taught that God had hidden this "truth" from previous generations because it was not His time to reveal it. While some recognized this new doctrine as false and perverse others accepted the concept of progressive revelation. Progressive revelation is a philosophy that God only reveals His truth and purposes in a progressive manner such that earlier Christians are not able to understand certain prophecies that will not be fulfilled in their lifetime. Of course, John Darby in 1830 was anticipating that the return of the Lord was very imminent and would most certainly occur while he was on this earth. The fact that God supposedly revealed these things to him before their correct time of fulfillment raises a question concerning the timing of God since the end obviously did not come as soon as Darby expected.

The authority that many preachers enjoy is often based on the absolute assurance in their message that they know what the future holds. Once the congregation or following has been established it usually does not matter whether they were right or wrong. Belonging to the fellowship may have other benefits that keep each member of the flock a part of the herd.

A belief in progressive revelation is directly in opposition to the revelation in the New Testament that God has revealed His Word once and for all through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the first century. An individual believer who is not convinced the New Testament writings are able to be understood by the earnest seeker of truth but believes the NT can speak different truths to different generations of the Church, does not have solid ground to stand on. If the God that you worship is progressively giving new revelations, possibly in each new generation or every few hundred years, there is no solid foundation of ultimate truth you can stand on. You also cannot judge any of these new revelations by any standard of truth,

because truth is in a constant state of flux.

While studying for the ministry in New Orleans Baptist Seminary Sam was taught a unique perspective of the last days that was only introduced in 1830. Neither he nor other students in Bible Colleges or seminaries of that day were told how new the doctrine was or how radically it differed from historic Christian teaching. Sam readily admitted that he first preached every aspect of dispensational pre-millennialism as taught in the seminary in his early years in the ministry. He later determined that God gave him a higher revelation and it was his altered or modified revelation or personal end-time vision that became the basis of the origins of the Move. Whether Sam realized it himself or not, he was accepting the concept of progressive revelation at the same time he was accepting an approach to eschatology that was only introduced in 1830.

It might have proved to be very illuminating, not to say interesting, if when Sam introduced his understanding of the end-times he always first stated what he had learned in the Baptist Seminary and believed for many years as a Baptist Church pastor. What if he pointed out that what he was taught in seminary was a new concept first introduced in the 1830's? What if he declared that he realized the revelation given in the 1830's was not really completely correct and God had given him a new interpretation of that end times concept? What if he also stated that he wanted you to believe in progressive revelation even when his astounding revelations of the end-times were not fulfilled? What if he asked you to hang in when the revelation given to him was proven to be not really completely correct and wait for a new revelation from Buddy to take you the next step of the way?

The philosophy of progressive revelation is what the Jews who rejected Christ resorted to in the second century. When the temple was destroyed their ability to worship and follow the ordinances of the Old Covenant were also incapacitated. In order to survive and maintain their position as leaders in their defunct religion, Rabbis

of that time developed and wrote a mystical interpretation of the Old Testament known as the Kabala. Over the last 19 centuries different Rabbis have come to prominence through their ability to win followers by their elaborate spiritual explanations of the OT.

The written word of the OT has become a springboard into the mystical world which has no known boundaries.

Most Christians have no idea how Jewish revelations of the end-times have changed over the years as one Rabbi after another died without his prophetic expectations being fulfilled. Today the most common thread of belief among Jewish mystics is that the reason the Messiah has not come yet is because the Jewish people have not prepared themselves enough to allow him to come.

In a similar manner both the OT and NT have become springboards into the mystical spiritual world for several Christian groups dating from the 1830's.

After this false doctrine of the end-times was first introduced in the 1830's you can trace the development of more than one sect that initially believed in the doctrine as presented by Darby and then later modified it with their own particular twist. The Jehovah's Witnesses were one of those, like the Move, that adjusted the 144,000 Jewish male virgins to be referring to a select, elect company from their ranks that would be a little more spiritual than others and be able to qualify for more in the coming kingdom.

Many of us who have left the Move did so because we could no longer worship in association or under the covering of those who were operating in the realm of progressive revelation and we have decided to return to a trust in the clear teachings of the Word of God as believed in the historic Christian Church. We accept the reality that we approach the scriptures from an entirely different perspective and therefore realize that challenging the theology of the Move that is taught by the leading ministry in the Move would

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Are the Foundational Teachings of the Move Consistent with Christian Doctrine?

Submitted with gracious respect by
Julie Leland Biggerstaff

This statement is being written by a self confessed committed Christian who has spent a good part of her adult life in serious study of the bible in both academic and religious settings. Academicians might consider me an armchair scholar but the churches in which I have fellowshiped, both before and after the Move, would bear witness to the depth and quality of my knowledge of the Word and Christian doctrine. I say this to you so that you do not dismiss my concerns as those of fervent but untried youth.

It is the purpose of this statement to describe to you why I have come to the conclusion that the foundational teachings of the Move contain errors that are leading followers of the Move away from Christianity. I will review what I consider basic tenets of the Christian faith in order to explain what I see as errors in the teachings of the Move and why I consider its' central message to be un-Christian.

My beliefs regarding Christianity can be described as moderately Evangelical. I hold that the Bible is the story of God and His relationship with His creation. I also believe that God is good and that the relationship He desires to have with humanity is one of loving union. I believe the central tenet of Christianity is that an individual's right standing in relationship to and with God is possible only by their acceptance by faith of the salvation offered through the grace of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus. I

accept as true the precept that the new life, born at the moment of that acceptance, must be lived out in love with God and with other human beings in order to attain maturity and so fulfill the purposes of God.

Sound doctrine holds that God is the author and finisher of our faith. In this light our righteousness is seen as a result of His work in our hearts and lives.

The mechanism of change in the human heart is the individual's relationship with God. Communion with God brings forth the fruit of righteousness in human life through a process of growth and maturation. (*Ephesians 3: 14-19, 2Corinthians 3:18 and Ephesians 4:15-16*)

Such doctrine focuses on God's love and nurturance of His offspring and the life that emerges from the relationship between the human and the divine. I believe that the message of Jesus was that the spiritual kingdom of God was being established on earth through His sacrifice on the cross and His triumph over the grave. Jesus is the gate through which all of humanity may enter into the kingdom of God now and always, because His Kingdom is spiritual and eternal. Jesus' promise to return to the earth will be fulfilled in God's time, which is unknown and unknowable to human beings.

Our concern should be to live in Him and to follow His commandment, which was to love Him and each other.

These basic fundamental tenets of Christianity have been the bedrock of the faith from the beginning. Yet the doctrines of the Move appear to me to attempt to add to these foundations a deeper and overarching revelation which comes from a consideration of the end times. I see this eschatological approach to understanding the bible and the teachings of our Lord as misleading in a number of significant ways.

First it changes the purpose of the relationship between God and humanity from being a manifestation of the nature of God to being the mechanism through which God establishes or re-establishes His authority over the earth.

Secondly, by emphasizing the perfecting of the saints as the work of the ministry, the message diminishes the importance of the transformational relationship between God and the individual.

Thirdly, when the focus of a ministry is to bring about human perfection rather than a living relationship, then God's intention in the New Testament is thwarted.

The Gospel teaches that Jesus' death on the cross gave humanity access to a personal relationship with God and that this relationship is transformational in nature. The experience of knowing and being changed by the Love of God brings us to fulfillment in God, not just to submission to His authority. (Ephesians 3:14-20)

The righteousness which we have as Christians is a result of God's transformation of our hearts, enabling us to will and do His pleasure. (Philippians 2: 13).

God's work in the heart and mind of the individual is done lovingly and is done for His purposes and for His glory. The Move teaches that it is the work of the ministry to perfect the church in order to bring forth a many-membered man-child to rule and reign on earth.

In this line of thinking the corporate overtakes and supersedes the individual as the locus of the change toward a spiritual life. This teaching also seems to portray that the ascension to a position of authority is the goal of Jesus' relationship with the church. It is my contention that the completed work of Christ is the reunion of humanity with God, a generation who have chosen to stay in relationship with God, to learn His ways and to be transformed by

His working in their innermost being.

The central message of the New Testament is that the work of the ministry is to nurture growth in order that all the individuals in the church can nurture growth, and so minister one to another in a mutual/reciprocal way. The goal of the growth and the maturation process is to be able to relate to God as full grown sons, not as the children of God.

The final purpose of being alive in God is to be able to express the nature of God as Jesus did living as the mature offspring of God.

Those who are mature are those who have come to the fullest expression of their nature as God intended in the beginning of creation. We would be no longer children who are like servants and must obey by reasons of power and authority but instead we live in God by reason of similar natures and relationship.

Christianity teaches that Jesus is the only mediator between humanity and God. The veil was rent in the temple at Jesus' death to signify that access to God was available for the individual believer without the mediation of the priesthood. This rending was necessary for the individual to understand they had the right to enter into personal worship and communion with the Creator just as Adam had before the fall.

The bible teaches that spiritual growth is attained through communion with God and that it is God's desire to have human beings choose to enter into that relationship with Him. A simple example of how relationship supersedes doctrinal practice is the account of Enoch who walked with God and was no more. The simple beautiful truth is that those individuals who draw close to God are drawn into Him. There is no deeper revelation.

The eschatology taught in the Move, with its' emphasis on

preparing the church for union with Christ in order to rule and reign over an earthly kingdom, sets the groundwork for the elevation of the fivefold ministry from a position of service to the church to a position of authority over the church and over the lives of individuals within the church. If you believe, as the Move does (did), that the "man-child" company is going to bring in the 1000 year reign of Christ etc. and that the second coming is in and through this select elect manifested sons company then following this line of "logic" you can easily come to the conclusion that the father ministry of the Move are the most important people in the world. This elevation of the father ministry as more gifted and anointed than any other member of the church negates the possibility of mutuality of ministry within the body of Christ and so inhibits the maturation process for all believers.

The view of ministry as exercising power rather than the nurturing of growth has been solidified in the Move through the teaching and practices regarding the need for a "covering". The scripture which says that the human heart is deceitful above all things has been used to teach individuals to distrust their own spiritual leadings and to rely on those who have assumed positions of power over them to discern what is the perfect will of God for them. The process of sending out for visions for confirmation of a personal leading is tantamount to saying the individual must have the ministry to mediate between them and God. This is a corruption of the idea of ministry to the church and thwarts the purposes of God in establishing an open personal relationship with each believer.

The form of Dominion Theology taught in the Move does not just encourage an hierarchical approach to relationships within the Move but encourages an *elitist approach to relationships* with all other human beings. The Move teaches that *their revelation is deeper, their ministry more anointed, their form of church life more powerful* than any other in the Christian world. The vision which reveals a future of ruling and reigning invites the followers of the

Move to believe that the importance of their task as end timers suspends such natural standards as basic human morality and the laws of the land. The grandness of the end time vision seems to be blinding many to the simplest and deepest principles of the Christian faith, accepting grace and living in love.

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This attachment is a word for word copy of two postings submitted to the site which combined tells an incredible tale of life in the Move. The author gave permission for his story to be included with our letter as an example of a very troubling story. This permission was granted with this caveat "*Just know that I do not want anything from anyone---no FM contact, no feeble apologies--nothing.*" This is just one of many stories we have read. We are thankful that this man has the emotional strength and freedom to allow his story to be told because so many others do not.

The Jason Schmidt Story:

Hey!

I have been reading all the posts here for just over a week now, and have been greatly enjoying it. It is amazing to me how many of us have reached the same conclusions and have similar likes/dislikes now that we are exMove-ites. Here are a few of the weirder things in common I have noticed within the ex-Move-ites I know in person and keep up with:

1) We all have a large stockpile of top-of-the-line toilet paper in our houses, so we'll never again EVER have to endure anything but the best.

2) Same goes for kleenex--boxes in every room of the house, extras in the cabinet.

3) Cheese. Store-bought cheese. Always.

4) A twisted sense of humor, and the love of comedy. I personally have over 200 comedy CDs, and go to comedy shows often.

There are more, and my wife is usually the one to notice them. She is not from the Move, so she really picks up when we go to someone's house and all their idiosyncrasies match mine.

Here are a few that as of right now are unique to me:

1) I have no sideburns. Like, REALLY no sideburns. I shave too high, up above the ear. One farm I was at REQUIRED sideburns, and that was fine.

The next farm I lived at KNEW sideburns were hiding demons, so they HAD to go. They actually had a woman, on my first day there, shave my sideburns and even some forehead hair, right off. I had to maintain that for years, and frequently was called into elders meeting for not obeying it. So now I cannot let the hair grow, it drives me crazy.

2) That same farm had a very, very strict "no shirts with writing/pictures/anything on them" policy. If someone had such a shirt, they were forced to wear it inside-out. And they did. And it looked RIDICULOUS! Because I was not going to wear inside-out clothes like a retard, I quickly rid myself of all offending shirts.

To this day, I cannot wear anything with writing on it, or even a t-shirt with a pocket. My wife has an excellent collection of AC/DC, Aerosmith, Hendrix, etc, shirts, and I love them. Can I buy one and wear it myself? Not if you paid me. Must be a demon controlling me.

Get the chair!

Now, another thing a lot of us probably have in common is that we miss the music. I do, immensely. I miss playing everyday. At Graham it was music all the time, even though I was always getting in trouble for playing jazz. At Bowen's Mill, it also was music all the

time. In addition to our twice-daily praise services, there were always jam sessions, special performances to practice for, and a few side bands that I was in. Now, I have a closet full of instruments I have bought and maybe played ten minutes on, just sitting there. I get no enjoyment out of playing by myself, not after all those years of group activity. Even when I do pull out an instrument, all that I "know" is Move music. Sure, I can play anything else, but the Move music is so engrained in me that every song I start to play turns into a Dan Ricciardelli song, or a deliverance song. It's pathetic.

I know I've been mentioning farms, so I'll give you a brief history of my Move experience. I grew up in Beausejour, Manitoba. In February of 1987 we joined the Move. I was 13. Yes, there was a Move "body" in Beausejour. After a few years, it was announced the Graham River Farm was re-opening. I had to get in on that, so off I went. I was the sixth person there, I believe.

The farm was in a complete state of abandonment, and all the buildings that were left were trashed. We spent the whole summer re-roofing, re-flooring, and repairing windows. And cutting the grass that hadn't been cut in 6 years.

We carved a farm out of the rubble. We had no generator, and not even propane lights. Because I was the only one who owned a flaring tool, I quickly started installing propane systems in the cabins as we got them ready. That fall we opened as the new "Shepherd's School of Music", and welcomed students from all over, lots of whom had never had to "rough it" at all. It was hilarious. Anyway, after about a year, I was kicked off the farm.

More to follow on that later.

I moved to Bowen's Mill; the Ridge. Now THAT was different. Electricity, air conditioning, meat! I gladly gave up sideburns for meat. I lived there for years, getting kicked off the farm every 8-10 months, but always begging to come back, and promising to change

my ways. I lived at Family Farm (another Bowen's Mill Farm, the one where conventions occur) after a couple of the kick-outs. I attended "college" at Bowen's Mill as well, and after I got kicked out after that, I lived off the farm, with one of my professors. Now THAT is definitely a story for another time.

After that, I moved to Newnan, GA. I taught in the school, led the praise band, wrote songs, cooked for everyone, obeyed all the rules, and got kicked out. Of a city body. Kicked out, and reported to INS. Given two days to drive back to Canada. A "Father Ministry" had signed my visa, and apparently he could revoke it anytime. And he did. I was late getting to the Canadian border by about 12 hours and was arrested and "deported", even though I was leaving willingly. I moved back to Beausejour and Winnipeg for awhile, where I started an online business. This was 1996, and the internet was really starting to pick up. I began traveling a lot, visiting farms that hadn't heard about my latest ousting, and also visiting city bodies and people whom I met online. For those who remember that time—I traveled constantly, with my blue dodge caravan, always setting up my computer wherever I was. No, I did not have a laptop. Laptops at the time did not have capacity or power I needed. The back of my van contained my whole desktop setup, and every night at a different place I had to set it up, commandeering dining room tables everywhere. But that's how I made my money, and that's how I paid for those 2 1/2 years of my life. Don't worry--I knew you were laughing at me--I was laughing at me too. But at least I was in charge of my own life.

Through that online business I met my wife, and we were married in January of 1999. I did not want to live anywhere near her mother, in Birmingham, Alabama, and there was no way I was going back to the frigid land of Canada, so we moved back to Newnan, GA. I still had friends and family here, and we settled in. Believe it or not, after all the rejection and banishment, I still tried to rejoin the Move, taking my wife to a Bowen's Mill convention, and to the church in Newnan. We got kicked out of both of those quite quickly, and have never gone back. We currently live in the city of

Newnan, and occasionally bump into Move-ites and ex-Move-ites around town. Some are nice...some are bitter...most are judgemental and consider us "godless heathens". And that, my friends, is a title I wear proudly!

Enough for now...

=) Jason Schmidt

PS--Any "anonymous" people that know me, I'd love to hear from you, and I'll keep your identities private.

You wonder why I went back so many times? I do too. And so does my wife. I guess I just REALLY loved community. I also fully bought the whole "first fruits" message and fully believed that if I were not in the Move I'd be eternally punished. And I was actually told that upon most of the kickouts, thereby pulling me right back.

The friends, the music--I did not think I could survive without them. Perhaps someday I will discover more of the reasons why, but that is what I see right now.

As far as why I was kicked out oh so many times? For the most part, I don't know. One time it was for playing a "jazz" chord during a praise song. If you knew Ethylwynn, you'd fully understand this. Another time was because I had no interest in walking out a year with the "girl" the elders picked for me.

One time was for taking a picture of an elder smoking a joint. Most other times it was just a complete surprise, as the previously mentioned "visa revocation" incident. The funniest, and saddest, one of all occurred at the Ridge in Bowen's Mill.

All week we had been preparing a going away party for five people who were moving at the end of May--some were returning to their home farms, some were moving to new farms, and one was going off to college in Whitestone. Anyway...we planned a special dinner, musical performances, speeches, etc. We decorated the Tabernacle, everybody got dressed in their best clothes, coats and ties, etc. I had to milk the cows that night, so I was running a few minutes late.

I got showered, dressed, went over to the tab, walked in to see a banner saying "Goodbye (insert 5 names here)and Jason Schmidt".

WHAT?????? What's going on? None of the elders would talk to

me or make eye contact, and all my friends were asking me why I was leaving. I assumed it must be some kind of joke, so I sat through dinner making jokes about it. After dinner, I got up with my group and sang and played the songs we had prepared, did our skits, etc.

Then people started getting up and giving speeches about the people leaving.

No one mentioned me, until at the end, when Jim Fant was closing. He went down the list, saying something about everyone.

When he got to me, he told everyone that he and the elders were sad to say that I had told them I had decided to leave the farm, against their counsel. I was not one for talking back at the time, but still I stood and said, "What are you talking about? This is a complete surprise to me!" He laughed and said, "Jason--what a kidder, we're sure going to miss that sense of humor! I hope the Lord brings you back to us someday."

Then he dismissed everyone for cleanup. Another elder came over to me and asked me to step outside a minute. Once outside, I saw that during dinner someone had packed all my stuff, and had it in the back of a truck. I was told to get into the truck, driven to the bus station, and dropped off. It was 8:00 at night, and the bus didn't come until 7:00 the next morning. I had no money, only the bus ticket that had been handed to me. I could not call anyone, as the bus station was closed and there was no pay phone, which I would not have had the money for anyway (this was before Carrot Top started shilling for 1-800-CALL-ATT). I slept on the sidewalk, using my duffle bag for a pillow, then got on the bus in the morning. Sixty-seven smelly hours later I was back in Canada, begging for change to call my parents to come pick me up.

Now I know some of you are reading this saying no way, that would never happen. Well, it did. At the time I was very confused, and still have never gotten any answers. I did get an apology from two of the elders, but no explanations. I did move right back to the Ridge, though, 3 months later, after getting letters from 8 members of the father and traveling ministry.

Why did I go back? I HAD to.

Like a crackhead to crack, I could not NOT go back. Pathetic, huh? If you know any Graham or Ridge elders, ask around. I'd like to know if they actually had any real reasons...

=) Jason

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This short statement was sent in by one who still suffers from her experience with the move. No other victim of sexual abuse was willing to have their story told in such a public way. Some desire to protect their privacy while others won't have their story retold publicly because they still struggle with the aftermath of childhood sexual abuse and do not want to re-open half healed scars. We add this statement to speak for all of those whose childhood in the move was overshadowed by the "approaches" of a sexual predator.

....."one single-parent child (his father wasn't around or available) was whipped with rubber-coated wires until he had welts, also spanked about 200 whacks at one setting - all under the direct supervision of an elder. These are two of many over a period of two years, the child was around 10 yrs old."

The individual states he is still angry at the perpetrators, but believes that God alone, through His love, can heal his emotions, yet feels it is normal to have such emotions, but as a whole, does not want to think or talk about it all. (which he probably should under a counselors' care. I'm sure for one thing he suffers from PTSS.)

The child was also "approached" by apparently known pedophiles. One he was able to scare by threatening to turn him in, but the others he doesn't want to talk about. I'm not sure to this day the exact outcomes of those.

There are other details and factors and as a mother I was not innocent, and as I've told you before have struggled to forgive myself over the years. He's my only son and I'll never have the chance to be the kind of parent I see now is what I should have been then, for one thing gotten the "H" out of where we were!!

SLZ

