

MAY 23, 2024 BY WINGSFORTRUTH2

New Zealand Woman speaks of sexual violence she faced in Two by Twos

From Morning Report, 7:47 am Thursday 23 May 2024

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/morningreport/audio/2018939592/women-speaks-of-sexual-violence-she-faced-in-two-by-twos>

A woman who was a victim of sexual violence as a child has spoken for the first time of the abuse and how the secretive sect she was raised in turned a blind eye and later condoned her husband's affair. Amy Williams has the story.

Transcript of the audio:

Introduction

One of the women who was a victim of sexual violence as a child has spoken for the first time of the abuse and how the secretive sect she was raised in turned a blind eye and later condoned her husband's affair.

The FBI is working with international law enforcement partners to investigate abuse within the group known as the 'two by twos' or 'The Truth' and Police here are investigating at least one former minister for historical abuse.

Former members described the control the group has over its members with many unwritten rules and a belief that those who stop attending its meetings are destined for hell. Amy Williams has the story.

Amy Williams reporter:

Grace was subject to years of sexual violence when she was a child living overseas. She remained in the same religious group when she came to New Zealand, attending meetings in people's homes. She says her marriage to a man who had grown up in the 2x2s became psychologically abusive and he had affairs, which she eventually disclosed to one of the sect's top leaders at the time.

Grace: "He spent a little bit of time with my husband and then spoke to me, and said they had had a discussion, but I needed to understand that men had needs, and that was what was driving this behaviour, and therefor I shouldn't be treating it with the kind of concern that I was."

Grace says she was made to feel that it was her fault.

Grace: "I was absolutely gobsmacked. I could not believe that someone in such a senior position, who spoke from the platform consistently about the kind of people that we are required to be, would so easily attest that behaviour as a human need and therefor it was OK."

Grace says she was urged to stay in the marriage and her husband continued having affairs.

She says having that swept under the carpet added to the trauma of her childhood, especially considering sect leaders here and overseas had discouraged her from disclosing the sexual violence, including rape, she suffered as a child and teenager while overseas.

Grace: "It's that silence, secrecy and judgement. They are the three things the church holds very close to themselves, but they are also the three things that allow this kind of abuse to continue. The church's coverup doesn't just steal your childhood and your life; they steal your ability to recover from it as well, which is absolutely horrendous."

The sect has 2,500 members in New Zealand and its overseer Wayne Dean says they actively encourage care, understanding and support for all victims of sexual abuse, referring them to agencies that can assist, and do not condone the behaviour described. Mr Dean says the group has a zero tolerance of anyone in its fellowship being harmed, and encourages and supports the reporting of abuse to the Police. But Grace says she has not been offered any help as a victim of historical child abuse.

Grace: "The impact of the abuse has affected every part of my life, leaving both physical and psychological scars that I will never recover from. The church doesn't care. Their focus is now on protecting the church, not caring for the victims."

Grace says she believes there are other victims who are not coming forward. Along with other former members RNZ has spoken to, Grace says it was hard to leave the sect because she was led to believe that it was the only true Christian church and that those outside the group were not saved.

Wayne Dean says the fellowship follows the teachings of Jesus Christ and believes that salvation is available for all mankind, through believing in and living according to Christ's teachings.