

WA NID AK Staff Discussion re Guidelines



wingsfortruth2

June 18

Two weeks ago WINGS reported on the [December 2023 Zoom call](#) with the Arkansas Missouri Oklahoma Task Force and Craig Winqvist, where Craig announced that he felt that there should not be any formal Child Safety policy.

Now we have learned that the Washington, North Idaho, Alaska staff had a meeting on June 4, 2024, where they discussed significant reservations about their proposed guidelines.

See audio recording <https://youtu.be/PthldsztZ9E>

and a lightly edited transcript

[wa-nid-ak-staff-meeting-re-guidelines-june-2024](#)Download

Some of the issues being discussed were:

1. An amazing number of people in the fellowship have been victims and perpetrators in the past but some have moved on with God's grace and should not be re-traumatised by having their cases re-opened.
2. Other people are still traumatised and need help and support.
3. Some of those people are still anonymous.
4. The [Grace Investigation](#) is not seen as a positive outcome by some, and not seen as a good basis for all future cases. There is concern that funds donated by friends should not be used to pay for external investigations.
5. George Peterson issued some guidelines based on selected scripture, characterising the fellowship as a family, rather than an organisation.
6. There is a belief that guidelines/policies are only appropriate for corporates and formal organisations, not for the fellowship 'family'.
7. Issuing universal guidelines creates risk that the whole organisation might be sued and suffer financial cost, whereas regional guidelines with some differences may provide legal protection.

8. Issuing policies is likely to be divisive. Failing to issue policies is also likely to be divisive.
9. Issuing guidelines based solely on scripture is less likely to be divisive, for those who believe in the truth and adequacy of scripture. It isn't clear whether Old Testament scripture is as relevant as New Testament scripture, nor is it clear how various scripture references are to be interpreted and applied to specific CSA circumstances.
10. There is clear agreement that all accusations should be reported to authorities, and that education is necessary for all – workers, families, etc.
11. A lot is left to the discretion of workers and elders if there aren't clear guidelines.
12. Perpetrators should not be cut off from the help they need, IF they are willing to seek help.
13. Issuing guidelines will help people understand that the fellowship is taking the matter seriously.
14. Guidelines will promote fairness, to avoid advantaging the well-known and well-connected people and disadvantaging the less well-known. Even safety teams can be biased by family or friendship connections, and those conflicts should be resolved by open discussion (Matthew 18).
15. Issuing guidelines will show to the authorities that the fellowship is taking it seriously and has accountability.
16. The bible is relevant for spiritual matters but not for matters such as physical health.
17. Issuing and talking about guidelines will help everyone recognise that the subject can be discussed/reported and should not be hidden.
18. A safety team of elders and professionals can be of great help to ensure appropriate decisions and actions are taken, as it may not be clear to workers what action should be taken.
19. The workers are not smarter than lay members, who may have better understanding of what's going on in the world.

20. Decisions about CSA policies may cause a major divide in the fellowship.
21. Trying to please the majority is a political decision, not scriptural. Scripture teaches to seek and support the one lost sheep, rather than prioritising the majority.
22. Guidelines are needed because there is a history of overseers making horrible, atrocious, mistake after mistake over the last century.

WINGS observes that:

- There is still widespread lack of knowledge of the enormous number of perpetrators and victims, with the likelihood that there will be many more reports, especially in other countries where there has been minimal publicity.
- Many people have left the fellowship because of CSA disclosures and concern about how they have been, or are being, handled.
- Some countries and regions have no guidelines/policies, and others have documents of varying quality/relevance.
- There is widespread belief by workers that actions should be guided by common sense and the Spirit, yet that has failed over the last century. Being spirit-led, i.e. doing what I feel is right, has resulted in rampant dishonesty, manipulation and harm to thousands of victims and has violated Christ's principles, virtues, compassion, truth and even basic justice.
- There has been minimal progress in providing support for victims, such as funding for therapy, even though the fellowship is reported to have many millions of accumulated funds.
- The dynamics of this subject show tension between overseers as rulers of the fellowship, and experienced educated elders who observe the many bad decisions that have been made by overseers, and have therefore created guidelines to support victims and minimise the risk of harm to further vulnerable children.
- Minimising the risk of harm to children and supporting past victims should be the guiding objectives.

WINGS intends to post a series of questions, to allow anyone to contribute suggestions of what should be done better to reduce the risk and minimise the number of cases of harm to children, and to support victims of past abuse.