

Mark: Well, if you read the paper today you know that there's a new sexual abuse suit filed against the Spokane diocese because I think that there's nine more plaintiffs that are suing Patrick O'Donnell. I don't think that as big a news as it is in other places in the country. It's the same thing, I don't think they're going to be able to get him criminally for these charges, that's why they're suing him and of course it's just piling it on, the same thing over and over. We know Patrick O'Donnell is no good.

Well, there's something else going on, and I have to really be honest with you; I talked to Mike Fitzsimmons about this the other day and he brought up a great point and I have to agree with him. That it's going on other places. And I says well "Where? How come we don't hear about it?" "Well, I think we really do." But I think the Catholic Church is powerful and it's widespread and you know, let's face it, the Catholic Church is basically the same any place we go in the world. I think most religions cannot say that, I think they have different sects, they have different followings maybe under the same umbrella of the church, but they're different. They may wear different clothes, they may say different things, they may have different doctrines. And one of those churches that has got a big problem is the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Now, I've got some of the doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and before we take this break I wanted to just go over one thing. You know that some of the church rules about abuse. And here's a feeling from as they say, the Christian scriptures in the New Testament. Three bullet points: A person should forgive someone that has hurt or abused them. Individuals can be redeemed. People can change through prayer and spiritual support. Can't argue any of those, they're pretty broad and far reaching and sometimes they don't reach anywhere. But the interesting part about this doctrine is, if there's abuse in the Jehovah Witnesses...if you thought the Catholic Church before the recent policy is bad, listen to this: If you've come forward and you've been abused, say you're ten years old and you tell your parents; your parents take you to whoever's in charge, I'm not even sure how you describe it, priest, minister, elder, whatever, you bring forward your child who was abused by this person a member of your church. The policy of this church is this: it has to be corroborated by two people. Okay, that doesn't seem to be too difficult. That means that, as most abuse, and most rapes, there's only two people involved, the victim and the suspect. Well, that means if the victim comes forward and the suspect doesn't say "I did it," then the Jehovah's Witness, their administration, their church treats the person accused as innocent. End of story. They have another policy too; if the state doesn't require the clergy to notify law enforcement, they do not. Good moral lessons going on here, isn't there. I wonder if they teach this in Sunday school just so the kids know where they stand.

Well, we're going to talk about that, we've got Bill Bowen here, he used to be an elder with the Jehovah's Witnesses, he's done a lot of research and investigation in just what's going on.

One more thing, I want to get this out, so we know what's coming. On Sunday Bill Clark of the news is going to write an article about the suit against KXOY, Mike Fitzsimmons and myself. Of course we can't talk about it because well why? Because it's now a legal issue, a matter for the court. But yet the Spokesman-Review wants to do some kind of commentary. Do you think it will be objective? Hm? Says so much for the Spokesman-Review doesn't it?

We're going to be right back with Bill Bowen, from the Jehovah's Witnesses, ex-elder for the Jehovah's Witnesses. This is the Mark Furhman show on 920 KXOY.

Announcer: You have the right to remain silent—except on this show. Mark Furhman is on your radio now.

Mark: Welcome back to the show, we are going to be talking about another church. And I think you know, I was talking to Mike at lunch the other day and you know, I think we have been unfair in not covering some of these other churches, but you know, they're just not in the news. And I can't figure out why, I think one reason is, is because the church, the Catholic Church is so widespread and so well-known and everywhere you look you can see a Catholic Church I think that's one reason. I'm not sure with some of these other churches I can actually identify or find one of these churches, but we are going to seek it out, and we're not going to stop with Jehovah's Witnesses, we going to go ahead and seek out. Now, we have Bill Bowen with us, right in a second but I want to tell everybody that at 4:00 we are going to have a family and a victim from a Othello Washington in 1996 case involving the Jehovah's Witnesses, that I think will be fairly shocking we're going to deal with this and listen to the victim and the family and what they've been through and with that I'm going to welcome Bill Bowen to the show.

Bill: Hello, this is Bill, I'm glad to be here.

Mark: Well, thanks Bill. Now, you used to be an elder with the Jehovah's Witness church, correct?

Bill: That's correct, I used to be an elder for twenty years.

Mark: Why don't you take us through, first, your experience with the church, what made you leave the church, and what have you done since?

Bill: I'm a second-generation Jehovah's Witness, I was involved with Jehovah's Witnesses for forty-three years. In basically the fall of the year two-thousand, I came across some information that indicated that a fellow elder was a child molester in my local congregation. And I worked for ten months within the church to try to have this exposed so that the members of the church could be protected. And basically I met with opposition from every standpoint with regard to the church as far as exposing what this man had confessed to. So in the end, my last conversation was with Watchtower Legal on December the eighth of the year two thousand, on which I gave them the information which indicated that this man was molesting a child currently. And the church told me to "Leave it in God's hands", and to basically not report the matter. So at that point, I felt like I had to go public and report him to the police and basically expose a policy and a practice within the church that protects child molesters and exposes other children to danger.

Mark: You know Bill, I've read this, I've got some of the doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses; if the Jehovah's Witnesses are actually printing, and actually advocating what it says here, they're actually actually disgusting by their own regulations of how they report and don't report abuse. And I think leaving it up to God is something...and you were an elder with the church. I am not somebody that is very learned about the church. But I do remember one thing, and I think everybody would agree with this and all religions do: God gave man the power of free will. Correct?

Bill: Correct.

Mark: So then we can't rely on God to solve our problems can we.

Bill: No. As a matter of fact, when I wrote my letter of resignation, I said three times, "We have to do what is morally and ethically right in the interest of protecting children. And that was the basis of my resignation as an elder in the church. And that letter went ignored with the exception that they accepted my resignation and had nothing more to say about it.

Mark: Now, Jehovah's Witnesses, are they bound by some kind of code; are they ministers, are they reverends; what are they called?

Bill: Persons that qualify within the church become eventually qualified to become elders. All Jehovah's Witnesses consider themselves ministers at the point of baptism. So if you ask a Jehovah's Witness if "You are a minister", if they are baptized they will say "Yes." Now an elder is a person that is charged with oversight in the congregation and who oversees matters relating to that.

Mark: So Bill, do we have any seminary that's involved with this title?

Bill: No, the appointment of elders is based on the recommendation of elders who are currently there in the church, and it's authorized by the home office in Brooklyn New York, once they send up the recommendation.

Mark: And do they have a man in charge; the Catholic Church has a Pope, is there anybody in charge of this?

Bill: Yes, Jehovah's Witnesses have a Governing Body which comprises 11 members at the present, and has been as high as seventeen. These eleven men are believed to have a heavenly calling, and they have absolute and direct authority from God. Everything they say has to be accepted without question, which includes their policy on child molestation.

Mark: So they've got like a website to God; I mean--they're emailing Him?

Bill: Yes.

Mark: It sounds ridiculous, that's why I make fun of it.

Bill: As a matter of fact—ALL mankind. I think you'll find it quite interesting that in the deposition that was taken on August the fifth of last year, regarding Erica Rodriguez' case, they make the comment that the Governing Body "oversees the spiritual, physical and emotional welfare of all persons associated with Jehovah's Witnesses as well as for all mankind in general." So they believe they have charge of everyone on the face of the earth.

Mark: Sound's like somebody's on a power trip. Bill, these eleven individuals that run the Jehovah's Witness church, which I suspect is worldwide?

Bill: Yes.

Mark: What qualifications do they have? What seminary, what colleges?

Bill: Most of these men have just basically risen up through the ranks of the church through their own educational programs. By and large none of them have college educations.

Mark: So basically, we're talking about on-the-job-training ministers?

Bill: That's exactly right.

Mark: That are ruling the world of Jehovah's Witnesses?

Bill: They rule over you. They rule everybody.

Mark: They don't rule over me.

Bill: Well, if you don't obey them, then, they say, God will kill you.

Mark: Well, I'll take my chances.

Bill: I'm not trying to be facetious. Their belief is that they are the only authority of God on this earth and everyone will answer to them. At the end of time, everyone who is not doing what they say will be killed by God, that's their belief, at Armageddon.

Mark: Yeah...sounds feasible. Bill, you know, when I read these doctrines, let's face one thing. The Catholic Church, they go to a seminary, they have the same devout standards that all other priests do, they have certain obligations, certain tests, certain things, certain stages, there is an educated hierarchy not only in general education but in the church. Now it seems like the Jehovah's Witness, it sounds like in some regards, and don't take this wrong, I don't want anybody to take this wrong, but it's almost like the inmates are running the prison.

Bill: Well now I need to clarify that. Every four years, the church conducts what they call an "elders school", in which they call their elders in meetings all across--well actually around the world—for a day-and-a-half seminar on the procedures and policies of the church. So at this point they are advised on how they are to operate within the church and any decision has to acquiesce to the home office in Brooklyn New York, which is called our Service Department and our Legal Departments.

Mark: Does that mean that if they deviate from doctrine or they haven't memorized the right thing, then their name's turned in and they're in trouble?

Bill: Oh yeah, you can immediately lose your eldership. When that person at the Legal Department told me to "Wait upon Jehovah," by disobeying his direction then I immediately would have been disqualified as an elder. So I just resigned because I saw the handwriting on the wall. I couldn't continue to serve as an elder and protect a child molester.

Mark: Let's go back to the basic reason. We've set the stage, we have no standards of education, I think it's important that anybody that is a leader needs a basic education that matures them and enlightens them in even subjects they don't want to study, makes a well-rounded person. Four years of college is required to be a doctor, to be a lawyer, to be an accountant, and in a lot of regards to be a priest. First you go to four years of college, then you go to a seminary. I think that's important and that's not present. But the doctrines say they are going to protect all people who abuse other people even people in the congregation abusing each other or each other's children or elders or anybody in the church in the staff abusing any others' children. What is the motivation to protect child abusers?

Bill: Well you have to understand; in the Jehovah's Witnesses' theology, they teach that 1 John 5:19 says 'the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one'. Which basically means: the world as we know it--the governments, everyone-- is controlled ultimately by Satan which includes the media, which is you, Mark. So they believe that all members must therefore only associate, have interaction with fellow Jehovah's Witnesses who are considered the chosen ones of this earth. Earth. So when you put that into context of child abuse, if a person is a member of the church has a child that's abused, they then they basically have to go to the elders to get the answers. Why would you go to Satan's world when you have the elders who are directed by God, who are designed to oversee such matters as wrongdoing?

Mark: You know it sounds like smoke and mirrors, mumbo jumbo, sounds like the wizard of Oz. But you know what's really interesting when I hear that? David Koresh and all of his followers died in the fiery death for about one-tenth of the radical views that I just heard. I hope they don't build a farm and say they're not paying taxes and have a couple of M-14's on their property.

Bill: Well, they already got a farm, they got about five thousand acres in upstate New York.

Mark: Well, they better not upset the FBI. Bill, hang on there, we got more to go on this, you want to call in do so now, we set the stage, some of it's up to you. You're listening to the Mark Furhman show on 920 KXOY.

Announcer: You have the right to remain silent—except on this show. Mark Furhman is on your radio now.

Mark: Welcome back to the show. We're talking about the Jehovah's Witnesses. It doesn't sound too good, in fact it sounds a lot a lot worse than anything I heard in the Catholic Church. At least in the Catholic Church, they're realizing that something was done wrong. I

will say that. There may be coverups, and there may be movement to try to hide people, to try to get them help, maybe they believe—I don't care, it's all wrong. But this sounds almost wrong from the very onset, that they're not going to acknowledge anything. My guest is Bill Bowen, he's a former Jehovah's Witness elder from Benton, Kentucky. Bill, when you look at the situation that's going on in the Catholic Church, and then all I have to do is listen to the first ten minutes I talked to you, it sounds like the Jehovah's Witnesses aren't going to recognize anybody abused a child no matter how bad it is.

Bill: Well, when I started my little organization called 'Silentlamb', it was a measure to try to reach out to victims of abuse. If no one had come to me, I would have discontinued the organization and not done anything more. I've had over six thousand victims of Jehovah's Witnesses abuse come to me and talked to me about being molested as children. There's over a thousand stories posted on my website. These victims are not lying. And yet the organization has taken the stance that they've done nothing wrong, last year they excommunicated six people that simply spoke to the media and said it happened to them or that there was a problem in the church. So, their stance is: not only have they done nothing wrong, but they will—in the Biblical context—'stone' anybody to death that says otherwise.

Mark: You know, Bill, you sound like a smart guy, how did you get mixed up with this kind of theology?

Bill: Well, I was born and raised as a Jehovah's Witness, from the moment of my birth, I was a second-generation so I never knew anything else. It was a way of life for me that I firmly believed in and supported. And on the side of fairness, you got to understand, there's many good people in the religion who are Jehovah's Witnesses that are required to follow these tenets. Now they're trying to raise their kids, they're trying to be good people, and be honest, but they have to follow this policy directed by the Governing Body. If they do not, then they lose their family, their friends, and their life.

Mark: Well, they don't lose their family and their friends, because if they lost them over an issue over somebody's gonna go out public that somebody's raping their child then they were never their family and their friends to begin with.

Bill: Well, within the organization, it's all conditional on the directives of the church. When I came forward, my parents no longer spoke to me anymore. I lost forty family members in the organization, and hundreds of friends that I had known all my life, within the Jehovah's Witness community. Now I am viewed as dead. If my mother walked into the same room that I was, she would not even acknowledge my existence. That is the way they treat people that don't follow what they tell them to do.

Mark: Well you know Bill do you see it the way I see it? I couldn't tolerate thirty seconds of that attitude, it's mumbo jumbo it belongs in the circus some sideshow along with the bearded lady, and the tattooed man.

Bill: Well, you have to understand that the purpose of my coming forward on abuse is not to try to put Jehovah's Witnesses out of business or just to try to change the religion.

Mark: Why not? It sounds like they don't have a place in religion, it's not religion it's fanaticism.

Bill: If people aren't in one religion, just like you mention, there's probably followers of David Koresh, there's probably still guys following Jim Jones, even as we speak.

Mark: But they're not as fanatical as what you've described, that's what's odd about it. Well, let me ask you another way to ask this question, Bill. You know, I do see that if people weren't born in a religion, they would've certainly questioned it when they were nineteen or twenty or fifteen all of a sudden they're confronted with these issues when they've already become somewhat 'worldly' or at least able to make their own decisions. Do you think that you could have gone into the Jehovah's Witnesses at nineteen years old and not questioned the reasoning behind the church?

Bill: I think if I'd been approached by the Jehovah's Witness at eighteen, as a young person who knows? When you first become acquainted with Jehovah's Witnesses, they're very nice people, and they talk to you about being a brother, like a member of their family, and that you have a hope of a paradise earth, it's a very convincing ideology to follow. So, I don't know, perhaps I would have joined up with it. But now, with my life's experience, in the last two years that I have seen, what they're willing to do and willing to be untruthful about to the media as well as to their own members—no, I have no question in my mind, I couldn't be part of this, because it's corrupt.

Mark: It's corrupt and it's criminal. Bill, when we look at what the Catholic church has been involved in, I don't see any incidents where you have parishioners violating parishioners, or parishioners absolutely knowing of abuse, that they can absolutely state it occurred, and be silent because the church says so. But yet in the Jehovah's Witnesses, that's exactly what they're supposed to do isn't it?

Bill: Well, as we've shown time and again through documentary programs and otherwise, victims come forward and say, when they went to their elders they were told to be silent. And how they were silenced, is they were told that they had to produce two eye-witnesses when the molester denied that he molested them. And many times these were four, five, six-year-old children, and no one has an eyewitness when you're in that type of situation.

Mark: Well, women and children unfortunately in this society, maybe all societies, virtually have no power. When it comes down to believing, you have a system like the Jehovah's Witness, and a lot of organization.. just to say organizations..where you have men in charge and you have men make the rules, when women and children come forward just like in the family unit their word is discounted, their accusations are discounted because it isn't convenient to the total good of the organization or the family because men are deciding this, I think this is unfortunate. Talking about women are we, we're talking about men and we're talking about grown women that have come forward that do have somewhat of a voice and still they're silenced?

Bill: Absolutely. When an adult comes forward, I can give you an example in a nearby area. A thirty-five year old woman came forth and accused her father who was an elder and a presiding overseer of raping her from age eleven to fourteen. She finally summoned the courage to come forth and say this man did it to her. She of course went to the elders, they told her she did not have an eyewitness, he denied it. She was told that if she did not remain silent about it, that she would be charged with slander and excommunicated from the church.

Mark: Well, Bill, I'm going to go way out on a limb here and I'd say, if anybody knows this about their church, the Jehovah's Witnesses and they say they support that attitude, they are part and parcel of the actual crime after the fact. Let's face it, if you know something happened, you gotta go forward. They don't go forward unless the state requires it, I bet you they don't do then either, do they Bill?

Bill: Well, now you gotta take into consideration they have a Legal Department, and they require elders to call the Legal Department whenever there's an issue.

Mark: Yeah well, Bill, I want you to stick with us we're gonna have the Rodriguez family on, the victims in Othello Washington in 1996, you can hang with us?

Bill: Sure.

Mark: Okay. Hang in there, we're going to be right back, this is the Mark Furhman show on 920 KXOY.

Announcer: You have the right to remain silent—except on this show. Mark Furhman is on your radio now.

Mark: Yes, welcome back to the show. We have a caller during the break that wanted to ask a question. Fred wanted to know, are we going to hear the other side of the story? You absolutely will, we'll notify and contact and hopefully we can get somebody that represents the Jehovah's Witnesses church, whether it's an elder or somebody from the national headquarters. We certainly hope we can do that. If they want to come on, they're going to have to answer some pretty difficult questions because absent of all victims if there never was a victim then their doctrine is something that should be in question and of course we've got lots of those. Bill Bowen is still my guest, he's hanging on. He's a former Jehovah's Witness elder from Benton Kentucky, that started Silentlambs, he has six thousand victims that have come forward and he thought that he would basically close up shop if he didn't get any and six thousand came forward, we have him on the phone and also Erica, she's a victim from Othello Washington, it's an adjudicated case and involved the Jehovah's Witnesses church, and Erica welcome to the show.

Erica: Thank you.

Mark: I know you're not feeling good and I appreciate you being on this show. You know, I don't want to ask any questions that you feel uncomfortable with and we want to show you the respect that you have been the victim and you have been through a lot. Why don't you tell us what you would like to tell us. And how you would like to say it. What occurred and what happened and basically how you feel about the church?

Erica: Well, I was born into the religion, my parents had been Jehovah's Witnesses for twenty-five years and I was molested from the age of four until I was eleven by Manuel Beliz who is in jail right now. The problem is that, my dad was an elder, and my mom a regular pioneer which is—well, we were a very respectable and spiritual family in the organization. And Manuel was a ministerial servant and then became an elder soon after we moved to Sacramento, a while, it was pretty much happening every day kind of thing. He was convicted of two counts of child rape and child molestation because he would penetrate his fingers inside of me, and that constitutes a rape.

Mark: Erica, how did the church and the congregation—first, let's deal with the church, the people that run your church, how did they deal with this and how did they react to it?

Erica: I was always told that I was going to be condemned by God, and not to tell anybody by Manuel, that I was going to be considered the black sheep of the family kind of thing. Something occurred when I was eight, and some little girl—my cousin actually, came in saying that Manuel tried to kiss her. Everybody turned their back on her, and took Manuel's side, and that to me was proof that I could not say anything. When I was sixteen I finally decided that I couldn't take it anymore. So I told my brother and then it all came out in the organization. I thought I was going to get their support and instead they pretty much told me that if I said anything that I was going to be condemned by God and that it was something that should be left in God's hands.

Mark: You know Erica, when I hear stuff like this I want to strangle somebody with my own hands. Left in the hands of God? Yet these men are taking these actions on their own, or are they being directed by God? I heard Bill Bowen talk about these elders, these eleven elders in charge of the church are basically talking to God on a regular basis. Are they then conveying messages to these elders that they should be molesting children?

Erica: something's happening, something needs to change, and that's kind of a scary thought. The fact is, I know personally from what happened to me that, they tell me that I was going to be condemned by God, and Manuel was in such a high position as he is, then obviously God had forgiven him. And he's doing so good right now, and so drop it. You know, even an elder at my sentencing actually had the nerve to say that he—and this is a quote—I've know both of these two, and that really makes me sad to see both of them here in court because it shouldn't be necessary. They have a judicial committee and they think that they the judicial committee is above the law. And as long as they have a little judicial committee, and if you don't have two eyewitnesses, then pretty much you're out of luck.

Mark: Well, you know that, that kind of determination—and if we were to be completely and brutally honest, I was on a police department, and if we needed a corroborating witness for every rape or some kind of molestation, we would be out of luck because we would probably prosecute almost none.

Erica: Absolutely because there is no witnesses and that's the whole point of coming forward and be so public about what happened to me and what happened to other children. And what Bill Bowen is doing is just absolutely awesome because the word needs to get out that this needs this needs to change. Because who molests somebody in front of somebody else? You, know it just doesn't happen, a child molester never molests somebody in public. It's ridiculous and it needs to change. And according to all the elders that spoke at my sentencing, they all got up and said that I should just get over it, pretty much. And their words were just like that. I should just get over it, Manuel's a good man, what he did in the past is in the past, and just get on with it. Get on with life.

Mark: Erica..

Bill: Let me interject here, members of law enforcement in five countries that we've done documentaries about Jehovah's Witnesses, have all said that Witnesses have obstructed justice by not reporting or by telling them that they would not consider testimony unless there were two eyewitnesses, share information with law enforcement. Those countries are Australia, United Kingdom, Scotland, Canada and the United States.

Mark: So why don't we prosecute these people? These good Christians?

Erica: Well, they told me it was gonna give God a bad name, if I came forward and said that Manuel did this to me. That it would give the organization and Jehovah a bad name. Therefore, we should keep it within the organization. That's their main reason for not prosecuting for child molesters. Forget the victim and what they're feeling and the survivors of the abuse—it's all about their image and you don't want to stain God's image, so children continue to get molested. That's the message they're giving me and other people out there. If they're not going to prosecute them, it's because of their image. Their image is more important than the victim.

Mark: Erica, what happened when your dad found out about this?

Erica: My dad was removed as an elder because he said it was up to me what I wanted to do and I wanted to go to the police. My dear friend is a cop and he told me, if you don't do anything about it, then he's going to continue molesting children and I just couldn't live with that. And my dad couldn't live with that either, so the District Overseer told my dad that this is pretty much that his daughter—was ruining Jehovah's name so he got disfellowshipped as an elder. And my dad had pretty much your reaction, he wanted to strangle the people who had reacted that way.

Mark: Well, I kind of wished he would have. I wish he would have went through them like a hot knife through butter. I think that's exactly what they deserve. And you know the one thing that I don't like about religion, the thing that really turns my stomach is that there's two ways of making people do what they want or make them follow certain things that seem unnatural or immoral—you're going to hell, or guilt. Both things I don't think should be laid on an adult let alone a child.

Erica: Well, I felt so guilty when I was told I was going to be condemned by God. I believed it because that's all I ever knew. I went as far as trying to commit suicide, and they just destroyed my life. I was so down in the gutter, I just thought God hated me and I ruined God's image. But at the same time I couldn't live with the fact that this man was going to continue to molest other children. Because I knew there were two other victims, I just couldn't live with the fact that it wasn't going to stop with me, I knew that because once a molester, always a molester. But they made me feel so down when I actually tried to kill myself. Which is why I'm here now and I took him to jail and I'll go through another trial if I have to because it just happens a lot.

Mark: Yes it does, Erica, I appreciate you being on the show, just stick with us we're gonna take a break we're gonna come back more with Bill Bowen, more with Erica, she's been a victim of this, she knows this firsthand, we're going to take your calls, they are most willing to

answer your questions . You're listening to the Mark Furhman show on 920 KXOY.

Announcer: You have the right to remain silent—except on this show. Mark Furhman is on you r r adio now.

Mark: Welcome back to the show, you know what we're talking about Jehovah's Witnesses—is it bad? It's terrible. If there were no abuse victims, their policy is just a breeding ground for corruption and crime to happen. And it did, we have one of the victims, Erica on, she's talking to us, about her experience, none of it has been good, Bill Bowen, a former Jehovah's Witness elder from Benton Kentucky, and he's talking about his groups the Silentlambs, and he's got six thousand members that have been abused in the Jehovah's Witness, and that's a lot, I think. Tell me bill, is that more than the Catholic church has more collectively of their victims? Nobody keeps track of the exact amount, but just in your group, six thousand.

Bill: Well, if you want to hear a number far more incriminating than that Jehovah's Witnesses maintain a database of their child molesters, many of which have never seen the light of a police investigation. In that database according to sources that have told me, there's 23,720 child molesters in their database. And they refuse to share these guys criminal record with proper law enforcement and these people go on to molest more children and they continue to update.

Mark: You know Bill and Erica, I have a feeling that with all this coming out, we are going to in the near future nix church and state. I think that the church, not all churches, but certainly large organizations need to be monitored by the state because they can't seem to be responsible and moral all by themselves. Even if they don't violate anybody or they don't condone it, they're rules and regulations are just absolutely ridiculous—they're medieval, that's what they are, basically the church can do no wrong.

Bill: The first amendment was designed to protect the rights of the individual not ot protect the right of a religious organization to take away civil rights. The first amendment has been twisted to tehse religious philosophies that hurt people like Erica and children and when you take the first amendment and hide behind it to get away with these crimes.

Mark: And another thing I think we should do, is I think all churches should be taxed, I think they should be under the same taxation as any corporation because that's what they've become. Let's go to the phones, Erica are you still with us? Okay, we've got a couple of phone calls. Mary, you're on the mark Furhman show, 920 KXOY.

Mary: Hi Bill, hi Erica, this is Mary in Spokane.

Bill: Hello.

Erica: Mary.

Mary: And, I just have a couple of things to say Mark. I was a JW for 32 years, I came in when I was 22 years old and it's so subtle you have no idea you're being mind controlled. And actually, Steve hassan, who is an exit counseling person, says if you're being mind contolled, how would you know it?

Mark: Mary, let's be fair though, somebody, from just what I've heard today that basically if you don't come to the elders and they solve your problems, you can't go anywhere else, because God will send you to hell and kill you for separation I guess from your church. If I heard that I'd be walking out the door. That's psycho.

Mary: I know it sounds psycho when you're out of it, but when you're in it. First of all, most Witnesses don't know about all this abuse, your individual abuse.

Mark: Oh I don't mean the abuse, Mary, I mean the doctrine. That we have uneducated elders that go to no seminary, that are basically on the job training that are dictating how I live my life and who my friends are and how I deal with crimes inside the church.

Mary: Well, they have answers for all that. It's like they're appointed by God. And they have God's spirit.

Mark: And how do we prove that? There's a lot of psychos out there like that, like Manson says that he was driven by God too.

Mary: Well, you got a point. Millions of people are falling for it.

Mark: Erica, you're listening to this, I know you grew up in the religion, and it was something that you didn't think about so I think that is the only condition that I can understand that an intelligent person can actually going along with this because then when it comes time to actually have something that is damaging you look to them for help. Right or wrong?

Erica: The problem is, being a Witness, you really can't ask questions , you're told something and you pretty much have to go with it; if you ask questions then you're doubting God. So I think that's the thing, when you're in it, then you're like, well, well, you really can't

start asking questions because immediately you'll either be disfellowshipped or ...

Mark: Mary I think we're going to have to break off, we can't listen to the baby at the same time, I'm sorry Mary. Bill and Erica, when I listen to all this, you know we're about to go to a war with a country that has a lot of the same attitudes. It's a dictatorship and if you go against the government you're gonna die. If you go against Allah, you're gonna die. It's just fear and guilt. You're looking over your shoulder, and you're scared all the time, is that the way it is when you're a JW? After you realize what's going on?

Erica: That's the way I felt, it's the fear and plus I totally believed it was from God and anything that was said by them that they were being directed by God. It's like saying no to God. And you're not going to do that. That's the way I felt, and then plus you have the whole you're going to die and you'll never live either in a paradise or hell or heaven you're just going to be dead forever and never see your family again. And that's like a huge threat right there; and Armageddon, you'll never survive it. It's scary, even growing up as a child it was really scary thinking that Armageddon's going to come and you're going to see people just destroyed. The idea of Armageddon is just scary.

Mark: You know, it just reminds me of the Bible belt and the Depression when these screaming ministers were going and putting the fear of God in people just to get a following and they were trying to put the fear in uneducated people, that maybe some of them didn't know how to read and write. Maybe I can understand that a little bit. But where do these elders get their divine right to talk to God? If we had any normal person in here on the street that says I talk to God, they'd be in an insane asylum pretty quick or on some kind of brain drug. Wouldn't they?

Erica: You would think.

Mark: You would think. Bill, come on, you were an elder, did you talk to God a lot?

Bill: I prayed every day.

Mark: Did you talk to God where he answered?

Bill: No, he never said a word to me.

Mark: Then I can talk to God too. That makes me an elder, that means I can run a church.

Bill: That's what's this country's based on. Over five thousand across this country, that revolve around everything from nudity to worship of Satan, and all these people claim some type of divine inspiration to justify their existence and they have people that follow them in that quest.

Mark: Let's see what Mike has to say about this. Mike, you're on the Mark Furhman show on 920 KOXY.

Mike: Hi Mark, thanks. I'm one of the leaders of the staff group here, Survivors Network Abused By Priests, and we have anywhere from thirty to fifty people that kind of work with us in our group. We started in October. When did you start your group?

Bill: Silentlamb started in March of the year 2001.

Mike: Wow, you've got six thousand victims already?

Bill: Yes.

Mark: Mike, you know what I think is interesting, and we've talked a lot about the Catholic church But I think what's interesting, when we see the comparison between the Jehovah's Witness doctrine and the Catholic Church, the Catholic church has never said it was right. They actually recognized it was wrong in some regards and tried to do things about it and whether it was to transfer a priest or take him out of certain areas, I mean the Catholic Church has never said it's right. Jehovah's Witnesses said "we're not going to say abusing and raping somebody is right, but you gotta keep it in house and you gotta forgive and you just be silent. Period.

Mike: We're dealing with the same issue of shame and guilt. Most of our victims still have not come forward. I have people that call me every week, in fact I had two that called me today that are just reluctant to come forward because their names would be tarnished in their minds or the minds of their friends or their family or the church if they came forward and said they were abused. So, you deal with that all the time, I'm sure.

Bill: Yes, through Silentlamb, there's only a thousand stories posted on the website, that roughly means one out of six is brave enough to come forward and tell their story. That leaves five others that prefer to remain silent and just maybe have a personal conversation or email they ask to remain confidential. It relates to child abuse itself. People are at various stages of healing.



Mike: Can you tell me how many victims you have here, or how many survivors you have here in Spokane?

Bill: I would have to recall off the top of my head, the Spokane area, I would estimate probably around a dozen. If we cover the state of Washington, we'd approach somewhere between seventy-five to a hundred.

Mark: Incredible.

Mike: So there's many times that more that have not come forward?

Bill: Yes.

Mark: Well I think we're going to have the longer distance, everybody, we're going to have less victims that are willing to go through the ridicule. Erica's an example of what she had to go through at a very young age and it's terrible. Mike, we're going to take a break. Erica and Bill hang on with me Erica when we come back I want to see how your life is now, let's stop with the negative let's see how you've been able to move on and who's helped you do that. We'll be right back, this is the Mark Furhman show on 920 KXOY.

Announcer: You have the right to remain silent—except on this show. Mark Furhman is on your radio now.

Mark: Welcome back. We're talking about the Jehovah's Witnesses and some of the things that they have done. They've covered the Catholic Church, now we have Bill Bowen, he's a Jehovah's Witness elder from Benton Kentucky who has Silentlambs who has got six thousand members of abused people in the Jehovah's Witnesses church since two thousand and one. That's huge. We also have Erica who has been a victim. And Erica, before we go to the phones, before the break I asked—or told you I was going to ask this question—how's your life now? Have you got on with life? Have you still felt the scars from this experience?

Erica: I don't think the scars will ever go away. The recurring nightmares are always there. But I have an eleven-month-old baby so right now my mission in life is to do well in my career. But also this is very important to me, to be an advocate speaker for children who have been abused. And to have the m c change their policy because it's something that's always going to be with me, it's always going to be with me. I'll always have these nightmares and it shouldn't happen to anybody else. If I can prevent that from happening to one more person then that's worth it.

Mark: I agree with you wholeheartedly. Erica, have you sued the Jehovah's Witnesses' church?

Erica: Actually, we have a lawsuit going right now. Jeff Anderson, he's the lawyer, and he's absolutely awesome. He's such a caring lawyer and his mission, it's not about the money, it's 'you change your policy because you're hurting children'. Right now it's set for, I believe August there's a trial set for the civil.

Mark: I don't think it will ever go to trial, I think you'll get a nice settlement and you'll have to make some kind of statement, but it's interesting that a lot of people say that it's not about the money. And I think money is one of the only ways that you can hurt organizations like this. I think that you deserve to have some kind of payback for the pain that you have already gone through and the pain that you're going through. Simply because your life should be a little easier for the pain that you've already experienced. And I think you shouldn't feel guilty about that. Let's go to the phones and see what our callers have to say. Ken, you're on the Mark Furhman show 920on KXOY.

Ken: Yes, first of all I'd like to say that I just give my condolences to those who people that have suffered in this way, and that not happens among Catholicism, the Catholic church and Jehovah's witnesses, but it's inconceivable it doesn't happen among the Amish, the Mennonites, or any religious groups. Sin is no respecter of persons. As long as there is men and man is going to be alive, there is going to be sin. If I can make a couple of points. One, in 1981, one of the biggest things that hit the news was the church in Collinsville Oklahoma. Mark, I don't know if you're familiar with this. This hit national news, it was one of the first churches that sued for three hundred ninety thousand dollars because they had a member who was involved in a sexual immoral situation with the mayor in town. And they'd asked this woman to repent of this sin and she did not, etc. Then they had to follow procedures given in the scripture for disfellowshipping her. Of course then the government steps in and then it becomes a great big lawsuit and now all of a sudden every church becomes very fearing of this to try to do anything about its members that fall in the sand or is found out to be with sin but there are procedures in the scriptures which that if they do believe the scriptures, they should abide by.

I cannot answer for Jehovah's witnesses, I myself am an Evangelist for twenty-five years and I've had to deal with sin in the church. And dealing with sin in the church our sole authority is based upon the Word of God and what God said. Now, in the Jehovah's witnesses, there's something there I think that is very shocking and that is, they defy even the word of God when it tells us that if an elder, by the testimony of two or three is in sin, and refuses to sever himself from that sin, he is to be taken before all and rebuked. Now we can't just by the wave of the hand condemn all of Christianity just because one religious group or Catholicism which is bigger than any group refuses to practice the very scripture that they say they hold to.

Mark: Well, Ken the part I'm stuck on, is, we reevaluate the meaning of the Constitution which was written in 1775. But yet we don't reevaluate the words that were written in 1 B.C. or 40 A.D. or 1200 A.D. When it's convenient, it seems like religious groups just go back to the very raw form when the world was almost primitive, in today's standards. They just cite these scriptures as if they just fit into today's society and they do not. What was sin in 1 A.D. is not considered sin by a society now. I'm not saying everything, but I'm saying come on, let's be absolutely candid about this: are all the ten commandments followed by every single person in its starkest form?

Ken: Not by every person, absolutely not.

Mark: How about anybody?

Ken: That's not a valid question. The question is, should every single person follow the ten commandments.

Mark: That's up to every person, not a bunch of people that are uneducated without any formal education to counsel themselves, let alone other people of the congregation.

Ken: That's why we believe in education.

Mark: Yeah, Ken, thanks for the call, we've got to move on. Let's go to Pat, you're on the Mark Furhman show 920 on KXOY.

Pat: Hi.

Mark: Hi Pat.

Pat: I'm a friend of Bill and Erica both Hi Erica, hi Bill. I was at the trial, and I also participated at the March in New York against the Watchtower and I did a press conference here in Oregon, preliminary to that March, to alert the public to it. As a result, what I've experienced, is that my neighbors who are Jehovah's Witnesses and a presiding overseer of the congregation I used to belong to—they're shunning me now. They've told me I've brought reproach on God, on his name and on his organization because of what I'm saying and doing publicly.

Mark: Well Pat you know something? You're a lucky person. Those kind of people you do not want behind you, you want them in front. And it's usually called the enemy.

Pat: I agree completely.

Mark: And it's crazy, this fanaticism belongs in Nazi Germany, it belongs in Manson's cell, I mean, that's where we hear this stuff. We don't hear this from David Koresh.

Bill: Well, I would encourage all Jehovah's Witnesses to understand, when it comes to protecting children there is no reproach on God. Children are in every congregation of Jehovah's witnesses. When you put children as a priority, then whatever they believe as a religion, they'll be a better religion as a result.

Mark: What about your women? Certainly, but they're certainly not going to change. Because I would tend to believe that they are so ingrained in what they do they're not going to budge, it's almost like they're too stubborn to see the truth.

Bill: In the March Watchtower of this year, 2003, they actually go on a limb—I shouldn't say a limb—they say anyone on the radio or television that says anything negative about their organization is an agent of Satan. And any judge that rules against them will be punished by God.

Mark: You know it kind of sounds like I would rather be there than with the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Bill: Actually, you're on the airways right now, they're calling you an agent of Satan.

Mark: Good Good Good Good. I love every psycho to call me names, I've spent 20 years having people call me names and agents of Psycho as I was taking them to jail. I've also talked to Jesus and all of his apostles and I've met people who have lived six or seven lives and who have lived on other planets. So I'm with you on this one. And it's in a god company that I'd like to be, where I am versus where they are.

Erica: Amen to that.

Mark: Yeah, Pat thanks a lot for the call. Let's go to Mike, you're on the Mark Furhman show on 920 KXOY.

Mike2: Hello:

Mark: Mike, you there?

Mike2 Yeah, I'm here.

Mark: You've got it buddy.

Mike2: Well, I've been listening, I actually came in just before the last break, so I didn't catch the whole show. I've heard a lot of things that aren't true. And I'm suspecting that you're getting a lot of misinformation.

Mark: Like what's not true? Are you a Jehovah's Witness?

Mike2: Yeah, I am.

Mark: Okay, what's not true? Do you believe you need two people to corroborate an abuse, one of which is the person that committed it?

Mike2: It doesn't have to be the person who committed it. But that's actually a scriptural principal set out by Jesus.

Mark: Well Jesus wasn't around when they were abusing children, they didn't have a word for it then. So let's be honest, there's nothing in the Bible that talks about pedophilia and Jesus needs to approve it. And tell me the last time that there was a rape or an act of pedophilia that wasn't immediately reported that there was a witness that came forward later.

Mike2: I'm sorry, I didn't understand your question.

Mark: When was the last time somebody witnessed an act of sex with a child that didn't immediately either report it or become part of the crime. Because you know you are one or the other. You understand that? You're either an accessory, or you're obstructing justice or an accessory after the fact. Or you're a witness.

Mike2: Well actually you ought to take that up with the state of Washington. There are laws regarding that here. Actually every state deals with that differently.

Mark: Mike, no state deals with that differently if a woman comes up or a child comes forward and says "that man" pointing to him, says "he raped me". What do you do go "hmm sorry little girl, go away"? Why don't you tell Erica that's on the air right now that your church handled her situation properly?

Mike2: Well, I didn't hear her situation.

Mark: Well, she was molested from age 4 to 11, by an elder and she went forward and the church told her to be silent. Is that the church you want to part of?

Mike2: No actually I don't agree that that happened.

Mark: That's your church's policy I'm reading it right here. I am reading it right here. In fact your church says that only God can condemn and you should forgive.

Mike2: Well, I actually disagree with you Mark.

Mark: Mike, you know something we have two Jehovah's Witnesses on this air right now. One's a victim, one's an advocate that discovered an abuse and went forward and was excommunicated from the church and started his own group and got six thousand victims since 2001. They both thought like you did before they witnessed it or before they were a victim.

Mike2: Actually I know the policy and I've dealt with it myself and I know that what they're saying is not true. You can choose to believe it.

Mark: Then tell me the policy Mike.

Mike2: The policy starting from where?

Mark: Okay, you want me to read it to you?

Mike2: Okay, go ahead.

Mark: Okay. A person should forgive someone that has hurt or abused them; individuals can be redeemed; eople can change through prayer and spiritual suport.

Mike2: Where are you reading out of?

Mark: I'm reading out of the website of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Mike2: You're reading the official webiste of Jehovah's Witnesses?

Mark: Yeah, is this the one blessed by God? I mean come on, let's get serious. If you're a Jehovah's Witness and you know it, then you tell me this: Is there necessary for the persn that commits the rape or the abuse to admit it before the church will disclose anything?

Mike2: I'm trying to be serious. No.

Mark: Then give me an example I want a name, I want a place where it happened, I want a court case where he was indicted and prosecuted.

Mike2: Well, how am I supposed to give you all that?

Mark: Why don't you give me an instance where we can go search it out then? Do you personally know of an instance where the church turned on one of their own on the word of a girl or a child that said I've been raped or abused absent of that person admitting it? Yes or no?

Mike2: No I do not know of a case.

Mark: Then I guess the policy stands up and you have no evidence to refute it do you?

Mike2: Well actually I don't believe that that's the policy. I know the policy and the policy

Mark: Mike, are you an elder at your church or do you know an elder?

Mike2: I am an elder.

Mark: Okay, would you like to bring the policy down here to the radio station next week on Tuesday, we will do a two hour show with you the elder. Bring all your policies all your horsepower all the doctrine, the eleven people, the names of the elven people that run your church that have no formal education no seminary background that speak to God on a regular basis.

Mike2: See that's all misinformation.

Mark: Really? Why is it misinformation. Do they not talk to God?

Mike2: When people pray are they talking to God?

Mark: Well, they also say they get direction too.

Mike2: No we do not receive any kind of verbal direction from God.

Mark: So why are they any more special than you then?

Mike2: Who said they were?

Mark: They did.

Mike2: No, they didn't.

Mark: So then why are they in charge?

Mike2: Who?

Mark: The eleven people that are running your worldwide church.

Mike2: That's the problem with listening to people who really are not Jehovah's Witnesses.

Mark: You know something, I don't want to be anywhere close to anybody that agrees that they will sit on information that a child or a woman has been abused say that we will keep this inside, that we will keep this secret and if you say anything we will excommunicate you we will shun you and you will die at God's hands.

Mike2: See, that is not the policy we have, that's what I'm trying to tell you.

Mark: We gotta to take a break Mike, but you can stay on if you'd like. But one last question before we do take this break. Does the Jehovah's Witnesses say that anybody in the media that speaks against them is basically the Devil's tool?

Mike2: Anybody in the media that speaks against them?

Mark: Yeah. Are we Satan's instruments , am I Satan's instrument right now? Answer the question Mike, you church has no problem seems you do.

Mike2: No, actually I don't.

Mark: Okay, am I Satan's instrument right now?

Mike2: Well let's see, I guess it would depend on what sense?

Mark: Well I just don't believe you should victimize children and women. Do you?

Mike2: Well that's right, we don't.

Mark: Well then maybe you should go to your church and ask for their exact policy because you'll be shunned and excommunicated if you stand up to them and say "No, we should report all abuses to the police". Do you think they should?

Mike2: You see, that's misinformation.

Mark: Mike, do you think they should report all abuses when a victim comes forward and says I've been raped by one of your people? Should they go to the police?

Mike2: I think that there are circumstances where the state of Washington.

Mark: Answer the question Mike. Do you think your church as a moral group of people should report a rape. Yes or No?

Mike2: Yes I do.

Mark: Okay, if you go to your church you won't be in that church very long. We're gonna be right back this is the mark furhman show on 920 KXOY.

Announcer: You have the right to remain silent—except on this show. Mark Furhman is on your radio now.

Mark: Welcome back to the show. Erica, Bill, we've just got less than two minutes I wanted to get something from both of you. While we've just got a little bit of time thank you both for being on you've been great. Erica I'm sorry for what happened to you and Bill I'm actually sorry for what happened to you; twenty years investment and same with you Erica you've a longtime investment. We listened to Mike is this a denial inside of the church that you're hearing over and over?

Erica: Yep, absolutely. An elder went to my trial, at the sentencing he said "Whatever his problems were he seems to have come to grips with them in 1990 onward and to us we don't see a problem." And that pretty much sums it up. They do not see a problem they do not care, and as long as their image isn't ruined they're absolutely fine. And they'd rather be in denial about it than to just face the facts and change their policy.

Mark: Yeah, it's crazy. Bill, is this all about keeping the reputation of the church and the money flow going in donations?

Bill: Absolutely and the best way I can answer your question is in two trials within the last three years Jehovah's witnesses saw fit in New Hampshire as well as in Erica's trial to send over twenty-five Jehovah's Witnesses as character references on behalf of the child molester. They said they wanted to baby-sit their children. So these people are guided by the home office they have no will of their own.

Mark: Well, you know what I'm gonna say and I thank both of you but I'm gonna say one thing: Anybody that would support a child molester or a child abuser or a child rapist when Erica is up there telling about her seven years of being a victim of one man, that person is definitely going to hell. We gotta go, it is Friday, I will see you on Monday. You've been listening to the Mark Furhman show on 920 KXOY.