

Mad Sanity

"I was beside myself with madness that would bring me sanity. I was dying a death that would bring me life." ~Augustine

January 28, 2008

\$olid Rock

Someday I'll write a more comprehensive account of what it's like to grow up in a Pentecostal church. It's not a subject I'm going to stop thinking about any time soon. But for now, a brief overview.

I spent a large portion of my childhood going to Solid Rock Church in Elk River, Minnesota, pastored first by James Hoogenboom and then later Bill Matthews (did you get all that, Google?). I was there in my pew just about every Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. It was the low point(s) of my week. I looked forward to Monday. A typical Sunday night service looked something like this...

Every week I would sit in the pew wishing everybody would hurry up and fall over so I could get home and watch football. I went forward only one time that I can remember -- at about age 9 or 10 -- to attempt to get "slain in the Spirit" by a female evangelist. I remember vividly how she began to go into this very loud prayer with her hand on my forehead and then shout, "In the name of JEE-zus!" and then press down on my forehead. When I didn't fall she pushed harder. I was left wondering what was wrong with me. Why didn't I pass out or go into convulsions like everyone around me? Was God not interested in me? I never went forward again after that.

This was all I knew of Christianity for the first quarter-century of my life. God's main work was to keep you healthy and rich, Satan's main work was to keep you sick and poor, and the Holy Spirit's job was to give you a buzz on Sunday night. I truly thought that this was about the same thing that every Christian denomination believed. When I read the Bible for the first time at age 25 I was surprised not to find a chapter on being slain in the Spirit.

So of course when I found out that Solid Rock now has live video feeds of their services on their website I jumped at the

chance to go back in time and relive my youth and see what it looks like from this side. I've watched three of their Sunday night services now and I'm sorry to report that it's even worse than I remember. Total chaos erupts right from the beginning of the service. They sing a couple of songs that are void of any meaning at all and then just repeat the choruses over and over again for about ten minutes while the crowd works up a frenzy. People actually begin running laps around the congregation for some reason while shouting and waving their hands in the air. It's a complete circus, but it gets even weirder once the preaching starts.

Pastor Matthews will start his "sermon" by reading some verse of Scripture, usually from Acts or 1 Corinthians, and then just start talking about whatever "God tells him to talk about." There is no outline, there is no plan, there is no main point; he just listens as "God tells him what to say," which always centers around money and healing. Meanwhile, people are still running laps around the congregation occasionally and walking up to him in the middle of his "sermon" and dropping dollar bills in his pocket, to which he responds with one of his favorite catch-phrases, "Thank you, I receive that." The saddest thing is when some four year-old girl will come up to him and drop a penny in his coat pocket and he will stop what he's doing, put his hand down on her head, and yell right in her face, "BE BLESSED!" These kids are going to spend a lifetime dealing with the effects of this crap.

As the service goes on, things get weirder and weirder. Matthews will pace back and forth and start blowing on people and making fart noises (go watch if you don't believe me). He'll stop in mid-sentence and start bursting out in "holy ghost laughter." Then eventually everyone will start lining up at the front while he goes down the line and starts knocking people over with all the swagger of Steven Seagal taking out a gang of thugs with a pool cue.

In the three services that I have watched, sin has never been mentioned and the name of Jesus is only mentioned as an abracadabra on the end of a prayer. But of course there's a quick ten second alter call at the end of the service where you can invite Jesus to come into your heart and "never be the same again," similar to Joel Osteen's. There is nothing in this church that even remotely resembles Christianity anymore, nor is there anything that resembles typical human behavior. All signs indicate that the Holy Spirit has completely abandoned Solid Rock Church.

I'm still not sure what the proper response is to all this. Part of me feels mad, part of me feels pity, part of me wants to grab some popcorn and just sit back and watch, and part of me just wants to throw my hands up in the air like Sheriff Ed Tom Bell and say, "I just don't know what to make of it. I surely don't." But I still know people who have to live with the effects of having grown up in such a place. Heck, I still have to live with the effects of growing up in such a place. So I need to understand this thing further. I'm in the middle of Iain Murray's *Revival and Revivalism* right now which couldn't have come along at a better time. I've got a lot more to say on this topic. Many future posts are brewing.

To be continued...

January 28, 2008 at 10:31 AM | [Permalink](#)

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I didn't watch the video, but reading through your account I couldn't help but think of the Corinthian church. I don't know if it looked

anything like the charismaniac churches we have now, but there definitely seems to be some parallels. Recently I've been convicted of the need to pray for people like this and Joel Osteen. Perhaps God will grant them mercy leading to repentance. I guess all we can do is pray. Hope your investigations yield much fruit :)

Posted by: [darren](#) | [January 28, 2008 at 11:08 PM](#)



I really got a kick out of the video! That trash was funny!!!!

Yogi

Posted by: [Yogi Taylor](#) | [January 29, 2008 at 11:38 AM](#)



Good post. Been there, done that. Few laps for exercise is good but there is nothing there for spiritual health. I think most people, like myself, take off when they start reading their Bible.

Posted by: [Marc](#) | [February 02, 2008 at 02:05 PM](#)



Wow. I was engrossed in this post. Thankfully, this mutant stream of Christianity alluded me in childhood.

To the point of this church's message: Money and Healing; I have been thinking this week (because I'm reading it in Scripture) about Jesus' words, "Follow me. Be my disciple. Go, and sin no more. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

As nice and appropriate as it is to pray to "receive Jesus into our hearts," the daily taking up our cross to follow Him, is where it's really at.

I used to wonder how I could pray "The Sinner's Prayer," but keep on sinning...

Posted by: [johnvano](#) | [February 04, 2008 at 02:38 PM](#)



Unfortunately it's churches like this that give Christianity a bad name. My entire family was also there. It was 15 years ago and we still feel the effects of the spiritual abuse we suffered. We are now involved in a wonderful church but we still know people who go there. There is a great book about this. It's called The subtle power of spiritual abuse. I believe the church has turned into a cult. Currently things have gotten really bad. The pastor has just announced that he will marry his ex daughter-in-law. He has divided his family. The circumstances behind this announcement are so sick that you wouldn't believe it if I told you. Kare 11 might have a story before too long. This church should have been shut down long ago. If there are any former members out there please pray for the Matthews children and grandchildren as they are just victims and are or will be hurt badly. We all have suffered in silence too long.

Posted by: [Former member](#) | [November 06, 2009 at 10:23 AM](#)



Bill Matthews was married to my beautiful cousin, who died this year. He couldn't "afford" health insurance, and she believed that God would heal her cancer. When she died, Bill proclaimed that she was cancer free just days before. I've known him since 1972, the Jesus People Church era. I attended one service probably 18 years ago and watched him pace back and forth, talking in gibberish "tongues", pushing people to the floor. 3 hours of crap. No message, except give money and you'll be healed. He's now planning to marry his daughter in law (26 years old), after he counseled her to divorce his son. He's very evil. This is not Christianity. This is cult.

Posted by: Barbara Heinitz | [December 03, 2009 at 11:21 AM](#)



I would like to remain anonymous, but I grew up under Bill Matthew's teaching. I have recently walked away and cannot believe the persecution I have endured from the very people who are supposed to have loved and cared about me my whole life. I guess it was never real. I have read the book mentioned by someone earlier, "the subtle power of spiritual abuse". It was somewhat helpful in identifying what is going on there, but now what? Like you said, Micah, the children are the ones who suffer. How do you think Bill's granddaughter will do growing up with grandpa as dad? How do you think his other grandchildren will feel that she is his favorite, and they can never be good enough to deserve or earn his love? The sad part is that the people who are still in that will never see it is wrong until they leave. But why will they ever leave if they can't see anything is wrong? If him marrying his daughter in law is not enough for them to see, what will be?

Posted by: formerly brainwashed | [December 14, 2009 at 08:07 PM](#)



I knew the Matthews family when they were in MI. Beautiful children. I had no idea. I will pray for them. I pray that God will rescue the children and grandchildren as well as the rest of the congregates from this evil man. How could anyone go along with him marrying his 26 yr. old daughter in law?

God will certainly judge him. I am so glad that former members have broken free and found the truth. God is so merciful. God bless you all. You are in my prayers.

Posted by: Concerned | [January 09, 2010 at 11:14 PM](#)



Thank you for writing your experiences down for people to read. It will allow others to see that they are not alone.

I would like to remain anonymous but would also like to point something out.

"Not being able to afford health insurance"... is crap!!! Matthews could of had state aid for insurance however he didn't qualify. The reason being is because that matthews had back taxes with federal and state liens on the property of the church; which is also in his personal name. MN law requires a person to have the tax debt satisfied and current- with proof of taxes filed for previous year, in order to qualify for state health insurance or any state aid for that matter. So one could argue that matthews is responsible in allowing his wife to die. But one could also assume that his wife knew that they weren't current on the taxes.

Posted by: someone | [February 07, 2010 at 10:08 PM](#)



A legal fund has been established to help Andy defray the costs of gaining custody of his daughter Natalia. He needs everyone's help. You can help Andy and Natalia by visiting <http://www.james417.org> and donating to the legal fund administered by Apostle Ministry. You can also read Mindy's letter and disclaimer and see a picture of Natalia. Please help Andy and Natalia and keep them in your prayers along with the rest of the children and grandchildren. Rev. Edward G Palmer

Posted by: [Rev. Edward G. Palmer](#) | [February 20, 2010 at 03:46 PM](#)



Hello all my old friends. I couldn't help but put my two cents in here. I may be a little more critical than most, but I am not afraid of that Godless heathen. I was disgusted to hear and eventually find the truth out about this. I for one saw the fall of this heretic years ago. I

watched his nasty little plan of deceit and greed flat-out destroy people in that place. It became evident that he was as lawless and unafraid of God as was told to us before by an 'outside' source. But, when you have no belief in God, running a rogue business like that church is the best job in the world! I thank God for opening the eyes of those who got out!! My own earthly senses want so badly to watch his downfall, but being the reformed person I am, I'll pray for him. But he can add me to his list of people that his current church-goers are not allowed to talk to. I hope all is well with those I know, God Bless!

Posted by: Tom Gust | [August 05, 2010 at 10:24 AM](#)



Ex-attender here also: I did watch some of the webcasts from the church before they took them off. I cannot believe how bad it has gotten. Then he marries his daughter in-law. No wonder this guy has to have a "bodyguard" with him during his alter calls. How many people are still attending there? If I lived closer I would have to go check it out. The brainwashing takes a long time to get over. That church just about destroyed me. I was close to suicidal and felt completely worthless. My heart goes out to all that were hurt and misled. Thank You.

Posted by: Ex-attender | [August 22, 2010 at 01:56 PM](#)



I grew up in Solid Rock Church. While I was there I didn't realize anything was wrong. It is a trick that every cult uses to keep outside influences out and only feed you the information that they want you to have. If I would hear anything bad about the church and ask them they would just explain it away as "an attack of the devil" or say "don't listen to that and don't allow it into your spirit" but if anything bad would happen to people that left the church they would tell you that was a result of that person leaving the place that God called them to be. I was living in constant fear. Did my car just break down because I didn't go to church on Sunday or I didn't give in the offering? It was only when I left that I was able to see everything that was being preached was all based on their motives and was twisted to control and manipulate the congregation. The methods work so well on the ones that are still there. They believe that the devil is attacking their church because they are doing so many mighty things for God. I wonder if they feel empowered by fighting for what they think is a righteous cause. In their eyes this pastor can do nothing wrong. It makes me sad to see all the marriages destroyed, houses lost in foreclosures, families torn apart, and businesses lost from the teachings at Solid Rock.

Posted by: ex-member | [September 28, 2010 at 08:10 PM](#)



Yeah, I always loved when that heretic would say that it was a matter of life and death if you left that place. That guy is gonna burn in the hot place! I still can't believe how many ex-attenders are still so calm about this. When people finally realize the severity of what he did to us all those years, it won't be as hard to take a bolder stand, and hope for an opportunity to confront that freak. He said things like that to keep his pockets lined with peoples money. That is all that this is about. Money. So, after the initial shock and embarrassment of being scammed, and admitting that we were taken, I hope that the rest of you ex-attenders will stop being phantoms. Oh yeah, I've started my own list. It's a list of ex-attenders who think that Bill Matthews needs to shut that place down and repent.

Posted by: Tommy Gust | [September 29, 2010 at 07:05 PM](#)



Sorry Andy, Mindy and Emily. I know how brutal it is to see this happening to your family. I really hate how angry I am. But peoples souls are at risk, and I hate that it's the man that I grew up with doing it! I care about you three very much, so I'm sorry that I've been so harsh.

Posted by: Tommy Gust | [September 30, 2010 at 10:41 AM](#)



Micah, right on man. Its about loving God with all your mind, heart and soul, right? Why in the world did people or churches start going mindless and start barking in the isles? The church of old, and Paul himself used debate to show the message of Christ. If Christians today don't believe that, then they should look at how many times the words "reasoned with" is in the Bible, Acts itself. We have lost how to use our minds with Christian principles. In fact, I bet if you went to that Church, or any church mind you, and asked them how they know what they believe in, they would say faith. Good, but wrong answer. The Bible says to know what you know, not know what you feel. If an atheist would walk up to us, we should be able to prove what we know instead of a blank stare and shallow "listen to the HS" response. This is the common misconception of this movement. Faith to feelings instead of logic to belief which adds to faith. Its no wonder that we Christians look like fools in the eyes of non-believers. Trust me, I know, I was mindless when I went to that church and believed what they believed...that is why my junior year in ACA, everyone hated me...I was pushy with taking the bible out of context. But thank God for new beginnings. Its important to me now to make sure that every word is studied...not just what you want. Even the word "a" can misinform if you don't know the context and study what that word is implying.

Posted by: Jeff Beaudry | [November 04, 2010 at 01:13 PM](#)



Hello. I had absolutly no idea these things had happened at the Elk River Church. Things had not been right at that church for years. My husband was the youth minister there from '82 until May of '85 and we thank the Lord we left when we did.

We should have left much sooner. In fact, later on, we confessed to each other that we both felt like leaving after being there for only three weeks. We thought it would look bad if we did. We hated every single minute we were there. We knew something was wrong but couldn't put our finger on it. So , everyday, we looked at the scripture: "no weapon formed against you shall prosper..." (While we were there we did make some lifelong friends with people who attended back then.)

My prayer is that you will find healing..from personal experience..this will take time. Abuse is so subtle..it effects every fiber of your being... I know.

I am so terribly sorry that this happened.

Posted by: Jeanne Bifulk | [December 14, 2010 at 09:57 AM](#)



I grew up seeing Hoogenboom go to prison or wherever he went and then fled Solid Rock at age 17 convinced it was-and is-a BRAINWASHING cult. Took me another 10 years to give church another chance. Not surprised but saddened by all of this...as the good word says, the truth will always reveal itself.

Posted by: aimee skold bone | [January 16, 2011 at 10:37 PM](#)



Hi again everyone. Thank you Micah for this space to share our stories. It is healing to find that you are not alone. Just an update. It looks like Mr Matthews has been charged with a felony. In the Elk River Star news:

<http://erstarnews.com/2011/01/14/elk-river-pastor-charged/>

Do you think this will be the end?

I was playing around, on the internet, and saw that Jim Hoogenboom had to "restart" his church in Tuscon under a new name. I even listened to a sermon or two. Same as they were 20 years ago. No depth, just pump you up and keep you striving and going. Best wishes to everyone, Dane

Posted by: Ex-attender | [January 19, 2011 at 09:08 PM](#)



First of All Hoogenboom DID NOT go to prison ms. Skold! Jeanne Bifulk...shame on you. I know about the time my father was called out to our house by the police because your husband was beating the crap out of. How dar you peaple blame all of the Matthews crap on my Father. And yes, I have been a follower of this website and I am discusted by what is being blamed on my Father JAMES L HOOGENBOOM!!!! Jeanne...are you still married???? Ms. Skold....you are misinformed! Respectfully...AMber Zepp AKA AMY HOOGENBOOM! And proud of it!

Posted by: Amber Zepp | [January 26, 2011 at 07:46 PM](#)



And by the way miss "ex attneder....Jim Hoogenboom started another church in Tucson under the neame of JIM HOOGENBOOM...and he and my mother are very happily married!!!!

Posted by: Amber Zepp | [January 26, 2011 at 07:48 PM](#)



The Topix Discussion Board concerning Matthews' felony charge is at this link.

<http://www.topix.com/forum/city/elk-river-mn/T4J44NU9EV8I605UV>

BTW - Amber, it's been 18 years. I hope the Hoogenboom family has moved on. You and your family, like the Matthews children and grandchildren also deserve our prayers. Unfortunately, many families who THOUGHT that a righteous pastor would follow in the wake of James L. Hoogenboom's sexual improprieties and unrighteous at the Elk River Assembly of God got hoodwinked by yet a second unrighteous Assembly of God pastor.

Neither James L. Hoogenboom or William Neal Matthews belong in any Christian ministry in any leadership role. It's is NOT that they cannot be forgiven by God. They can. However, they both stepped into roles they were not called to when they decided to take care of God's people as a pastor. Neither have demonstrated the unselfish concern that such a role requires. Better that both of them restrained themselves to a profession where taking advantage of people is not so easily done.

What makes the Hoogenboom affair hang on so long is the fact it was followed by the Matthews affair which is a continuing unrighteous saga in the same church. James L. Hoogenboom suffered from temptations common to all men. It is much easier to understand. However, Matthews is a megalomaniac and pure evil. The stuff he has wreaked upon the people is as incomprehensible as is the fact the church suffered so much from the hands of TWO Assembly of God licensed ministers.

You are all in my prayers.

Rev. Edward G. Palmer

PS - The theft of the Elk River Assembly of God Church aka Solid Rock Church is fully documented at <http://www.james417.org>

Posted by: [Rev. Edward G. Palmer](#) | [January 31, 2011 at 05:25 PM](#)



I was a little kid who looked up to your dad. I'll never forget the day I found out he was sleeping around with women in the church and screwing around with the church's finances.

To be honest, he seared a distrust of organized religion so deeply in my soul that I haven't been a member of a church since.

Whether you like it or not, your father hurt many of us--especially those of use who were little kids--more than you seem capable of

comprehending.

Your attempt at defending your father's name shows a complete disregard for the people your father hurt. Put simply, you couldn't have been more rude and tactless.

I'm sorry to break it to you but your father was a womanizing charlatan who hurt a lot of people.

Deal with it.

Posted by: Ethan | [February 08, 2011 at 11:50 PM](#)



Amy-

I don't want to disrespect you. My dad is Bill Matthews. I can understand what you have gone through, and continue to have to deal with.

That being said, I don't think the fact that your mom and dad stayed married says anything at all. If my mom wouldn't have passed away, she would still be with my dad. I am in no way saying all things between our situations are equal, but just because your dad didn't go to prison for what he did, doesn't mean he didn't do anything wrong. My dad may not go to prison, either. Even serving time doesn't heal the hurts caused to other people.

I speak from experience when I say, it is so hard to be a child of the perpetrator. I feel guilt for all the pain my dad has caused. I couldn't have prevented it, I am a victim of his ego, too. Amy, I am sorry for the pain my dad is causing you by breaking open old wounds. We are not responsible for the sins of our fathers, but I know that doesn't make it any easier to deal with. I wish I could look to the future and see that this would someday be over, and I could move on. I see you, 18 years later, still having to deal with residue. I wonder if this will ever be over for you, or for me and my family.

Mindy

Posted by: Mindy | [February 16, 2011 at 10:43 AM](#)



I attend Pastor Jim Hoogenbooms church now. He has appologized for his indescetions and does not in any way condone such behavior any longer. I guess one of the things that just baffles me is the simple fact that we can hold something against a person for so long. The word says that if we do not forgive then we cannot be forgiven. I have gone thru a tough life or pastors that let me down and hurt me deeply. The plain truth is that GOD expects us to forgive our brothers and sisters seventy times seven. We are ALL sinners no matter which way you look at it. the problem we fall under is the pedistal theory. we place them on pedistals and expect them to be perfect. when, in all reality, they fall and fail like the rest of us. I personally know Jim Hoogenboom. He spoke prophetically over my families life and as a result, it all came to pass. everything that he said would come to pass did! isnt that enough evidence for you to know that GOD STILL has a plan in the ministry for him? To say pastor Jim cannot be a pastor is a judgement. it is not biblical and is a bylaw by the assemblies of God. I have, like a lot of the posters on this page grew up in the assemblies. My great grandfather was a assemblies minister, so I know what it is like to have the assemblies influence. the remark that Rev. Edward G. Palmer stated about pastor Hoogenboom not being called into the ministry is absolutely ridiculous. Thats like saying King David shouldnt have been King since he was a murderer and an ADULTERER! yet GOD kept him as a king even after his Failures. we can go on and on about how I was effected by THIER decisions and how they destroyed the way I see GOD. You have to remember thats the choice you make. The devil keeps a kingdom divied and the body wont function the way it needs to. I am speaking on a MANS behalf! I am not doing this because I condone his PAST actions, I am doing this because I KNOW he is appointed by GOD ALMIGHTY to speak on his behalf. go check him out on youtube.. you may be suprised! oh and another thing, he doesnt condone Matthews or the spirit that comes out of that church! There is not one place in the word that speaks about being SLAIN in the spirit! We have done studies on it and we know the truth to that RELIGIOUS LIE! thats all I have to say.

Respectfully, Stephen

Posted by: Stephen | [February 16, 2011 at 11:03 AM](#)

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Mad Sanity

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Every week I would sit in the pew wishing everybody would hurry up and fall over so I could get home and watch football. I went forward only one time that I can remember -- at about age 9 or 10 -- to attempt to get "slain in the Spirit" by a female evangelist. I remember vividly how she began to go into this very loud prayer with her hand on my forehead and then shout, "In the name of JEE-zus!" and then press down on my forehead. When I didn't fall she pushed harder. I was left wondering what was wrong with me. Why didn't I pass out or go into convulsions like everyone around me? Was God not interested in me? I never went forward again after that.

This was all I knew of Christianity for the first quarter-century of my life. God's main work was to keep you healthy and rich, Satan's main work was to keep you sick and poor, and the Holy Spirit's job was to give you a buzz on Sunday night. I truly thought that this was about the same thing that every Christian denomination believed. When I read the Bible for the first time at age 25 I was surprised not to find a chapter on being slain in the Spirit.

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chance to go back in time and relive my youth and see what it looks like from this side. I've watched three of their Sunday night services now and I'm sorry to report that it's even worse than I remember. Total chaos erupts right from the beginning of the service. They sing a couple of songs that are void of any meaning at all and then just repeat the choruses over and over again for about ten minutes while the crowd works up a frenzy. People actually begin running laps around the congregation for some reason while shouting and waving their hands in the air. It's a complete circus, but it gets even weirder once the preaching starts.

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I'm not saying Jim should not be forgiven, but he should never be a pastor again after what he did. Do you think a catholic preist who

molested little boys should be allowed back into the priesthood because he "has a calling"? Once a predator, always a predator. I don't care what anyone says.

Also, I have to say, Stephen, that it is not a choice anyone would make to have their life torn to pieces, and most people don't have the first clue how to put the pieces back together. Even with help and direction, they can never be put back together the way they were. Jim and Bill are responsible for tearing up a lot of people's lives, forgiven or not, the pieces are still not put back together. That is something that will never change.

Posted by: Mindy | [March 01, 2011 at 09:15 AM](#)



Mindy,

Only GOD can place back together the pieces. he is the potter and the living water. Its all about allowing GOD by making the conscience choice to be broken and completely submitted so that they can be placed back together.

As going to the extreme of a priest molesting boys, thats still sin. we were born into it and we become a slave to it by our own doing. (psalm 51) I believe you missed some of my points. GOD uses whomever he wants. People who have murdered, been addicts, alcoholics, Homosexuals or been satanists. I have been a few of those things I listed. We do not live in the old testament times. this earth would be a pretty barren place if we did! I guess, what I am trying to get you to see from my last post and this post is a few things. One. we are forgiven and given a new life. the LORD forgives us and leaves it in the sea of forgetfulness. Two. We cannot justify anothers PAST sins by placing him/her in a category with a pedophile priest. Sin is sin no matter how you look at it. three. Pastor Jim and Becky have helped us out and have spoken over our lives. Those things have come to pass for the glory of GOD! I said it in my original Post and I am saying it again. GOD is never finished with any of us because we are always going to be works in progress!

Like I voiced before, it is up to an individual to allow GOD to put back together the pieces. I could mull over all the times I was hurt and effected by the past preachers in my life. Yet, I make a conscience choice to say no to the past. It doesnt make my future because I move towards that goal of being renewed everyday in CHRIST.

Posted by: Stephen | [May 17, 2011 at 11:53 AM](#)



I went to Solid Rock Church once in the mid 90s. I thought it was a total cult and it made me very uncomfortable the way that Matthews talked about tithing. My dad went there for two years and he was scammed out of a lot of money. My dad even blamed the devil for his financial woes...

He also went a little nuts and began speaking in tongues and shaking/yelling/praying uncontrollably. My parents are still together but I can safely say that this church totally tore our family apart and I'm unsure if the damage can ever be repaired.

Posted by: Bomb | [May 27, 2011 at 08:11 PM](#)



Better go find a new church, Hoogenboom is getting out of the church business. Sorry, Bro...I know how it is when your pastor quits his job.....you say he was appointed by God....if so, what a disobedient man.....quitting like that.

Posted by: Joshua Fletchure | [July 17, 2011 at 02:19 AM](#)



I belonged to the Elk River Assembly of God under the leadership of Pastor Hoogenboom. What was done caused a lot of hurt. Do those involved deserve to be forgiven? Most certainly. Does that undo the damage done? No, it does not. Many people were hurt. As time passed, I often thought back to the actual messages Pastor Jim preached though. I remember hearing him say "don't follow me", or

"don't look up to me". He directed people to follow God, and to give to God. He directed people to tithe. I honestly don't know if that money was used as it should have been, but I wasn't "giving it" to Jim Hoogenboom. I was giving it because that was what scripture directed me to do. If it was used irresponsibly, that is something the people handling the money will need to answer for. I was faithful to what I believed. I am certainly not as trusting as I was before those experiences...certainly less gullible. We joined that church because of biblical teaching by the pastors there, the joyous worship and the love among the people in the community. There was enough love in the people of that church to draw many people in - there were many, many good people who reached out to others and served the community through generous ministries. I believe that is what Jesus intended "churches" to be - groups of people with common beliefs who love one another and care for one another. It's a tragedy that it came crumbling down as it did. But it makes me wonder - was the focus of the people in the church on Jesus Christ or on Jim Hoogenboom? Jim Hoogenboom, as well as the other leaders at that church preached the truth. None of them were perfect and not everyone (always) "practiced what they preached", but we all have human faults and none of us there were perfect. I wish forgiveness brought immediate healing from hurt, but sadly it doesn't. I can't speak to what happened later under Bill Matthews leadership because I was gone, but it certainly sounded like the "biblical" teachings were gone. Jim Hoogenboom wasn't perfect, neither am I and neither is anyone reading this. But we all deserve forgiveness.

Posted by: anonymous | [July 18, 2011 at 08:37 PM](#)

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