

My name is Maurice Morris and I am a former minister and former Deputy in Ohio.

In 2003-2004 two musicians (James Jones & Arthur Bishop) in my former church (St. James Holiness COGIC, in Toledo, Ohio) were convicted of having sexual relations with a under aged girl. Not only did my former pastor Dr. William James stand up for these individuals, he allowed them to continue to play at the church as they served there time in work-release community detention. These individuals are still required to register as sexual offenders in the State of Ohio. In 2005, a male member (Nate Fullove) was convicted of molesting two male teenage members of the church. In addition, another male member (Brain Watkins) was convicted of having inappropriate sexual relations with a under aged member(s) of the church. Dr. James did nothing to help the families of the teens who had been violated by the named individuals. While these things were transpiring, I received word from several young ladies in the church along with a few concerned mothers that there were several older men making sexual advances towards them. I advised them that as a police officer I was obligated to report what they told me and did so. Some of the young ladies as well as their mothers did not feel comfortable with me reporting what they told and they began to distance themselves. However, I went to the pastor several times between 2004-2006 to tell him about the information I had received about the ongoing victimization in the church. Not only did he not listen to what I had to say he began to preach against me across the pulpit.

In late 2005, I was approached by another member of the church, who was concerned about her then sixteen-year-old daughter who was having a sexual relationship with an area church musician (Marlon Wilkins) who was in his late twenties. She had learned of the relationship and wanted to know what legal action she could take to protect her daughter. I advised the mother of the steps she should take and she subsequently filed charges against the individual, however, he continued to evade prosecution and continued to sneak around with her daughter and even went as far as calling her out of school for the intention of having sexual relations with her.

In March 2006, while in uniform, I encountered the above-mentioned individual, who was wanted on several warrants, in the parking lot of St. James, where he was playing for Wednesday night Bible Study. At that time the individual tried to run me over with his vehicle as I tried to place him under arrest for those warrants. Later in the month, I encountered the individual again and with the help of another police agency, arrested him at another area church. In what turned out to be a miscarriage of justice, the individual claimed that I assaulted him during the arrest. Not only that, the pastor of the

church where the arrest took place, I believe and have evidence to support, lied under oath and said that he witnessed the assault of the individual ( Marlon Wilkins), the perpetrator. Witnesses, who were also fellow church members that told me that they saw what really happened but refused to come forward because they “did not want to get involved”. I even went to the mother of three of the witnesses who witnessed what happened. This woman is also a member of my former church. She stated to me that she knew that her children (all of age) saw what happened and they know the truth and the truth was they witnessed an assault on myself. When I asked her could she convince them to come forward with the truth her response was “I can see what I can do. They live in my house but they are adults”.

After not being able to resolve things locally and receiving no support from my local church, I removed my membership in mid 2006. After serving there for so many years but have the leadership turn their back on me when I needed them most was not only a slap in my face but calls into questions what church really stands for. The pastor was quick to ask for money but slow to move when it came time to care about the safety and well being our young people who were being prayed upon.

In 2007, I met with the then jurisdictional Bishop (Walter E. Jordan) to inform him of what was going on in my church. Also, that there were members of the church that knew what happened the day of my incident but refused to speak up or lied about what they saw. The Bishop advised me to meet with my District Superintendent (Chester Trial), and two other district pastors (Edward Cook & William Lucas). I told them of the particulars of my case including the fact that there were church members who were refusing to come forward and that there was an area pastor who had lied under oath in my criminal trial. After a two hour meeting, I was offered no help and came away with no answers. No help, no advocacy, nothing.

This ordeal has not only led me to question my relationship with God but I question the role of the church and church leadership. The church leadership sat back and continues to sit back and allow sin and immorality take place within church walls and does nothing to protect the members, especially the young and defenseless. Moreover, shouldn't the church be concerned about the well being of its members? It seems at times that some leaders may be driven by what is in the collection plate rather than what is in people's hearts and minds. The details outlined in this letter are just the beginning of what has been uncovered in my city. There seems to be a collective group of area church musicians who are praying on young boys and girls throughout the city. What is even worse, there are area

pastors, in my city, that are aware of these activities and may be taking part in such activities or just simply turning the other way.

These lies have cost me my job, which includes twelve years with the Lucas County Sheriff's Department, my pension, my confidence, my faith and countless many other things. I was eventually convicted of misdemeanor assault and spend 45 days in jail for a crime I did not commit. Of course, I was portrayed in the media as a rogue officer. One officer tried to make false accusations by saying I made derogatory comments to him when I was actually talking with my lawyer. In addition, the judge even went as far as to say that I "stalked" the man I arrested by filing police reports. However, this was not the case. Anyone in law enforcement knows that reports filed is done so to protect you and to give an accurate account of the incident. I filed the necessary reports with my commanding officers as I have been trained and directed to do.

People may wonder why I am so passionate about young people being victimized. It is because my own family was traumatized by church abuse. A musician in the church raped my younger cousin. My cousin contracted AIDS from this musician and later died. My family is still dealing with this tragic loss. I do not want to see what happened to my family happen to another family.