

AFFIDAVIT OF MICHAEL TAYLOR

I, Michael Taylor, do affirm the truth of the following, based upon first-hand knowledge, unless otherwise specified.

1. My name is Michael Taylor and I presently reside in Island Pond, Vermont. My date of birth is December 15, 1954. I worked for a car dealer, Brighton Garage, as a car detail specialist for the past 31/2 years (1995-1998) and presently am self-employed in the same line of work.
2. Over the past twenty years since 1978, I have been a member of the Church in Island Pond, Vermont, now known throughout the world as the Twelve Tribes or Messianic Communities, off and on, but I am not presently a member.
3. I want to write this affidavit for the purpose of "setting the record straight", hopefully, once and for all because, despite my prior efforts to do so, I am aware that distorted accounts attributed to me from the distant past are still being circulated. It is a great distress to me that individuals would continue to spread misrepresentations about the "Community" although I have tried to replace the former falsehoods with the truth.
4. I first became acquainted with the "Community" in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in around 1978, and I remained in the group until sometime in 1982, after they moved to Island Pond, Vermont.
5. It is my understanding and experience that the "Community" believes in the practice of corporal punishment, according to what is written in the Bible; that is, spanking children to correct errant behavior and to teach them right from wrong. There is no policy and no teaching which approves or condones the practice of abusing children in any way -physically, emotionally or psychologically.

6. In 1982 I left the Community in Island Pond because I was in a very weak place spiritually and I was not being open with my life, that is, taking counsel with my brothers and sisters, about things that troubled me. This included a couple of isolated incidents of children being treated harshly that I did not speak out about like I should have.
7. One incident involved myself. I was watching a little girl for a couple who were friends of mine. She was about three years old and I could not gain control of her. I got frustrated with her and spanked her beyond what I should have because I could tell it was not doing any good. Instead of going to seek help from her parents and admit my difficulty, I went beyond the grace I had to care for her. This bothered me for years. I did not injure her, but in myself, I knew I spanked her too long and too hard. What I did is something that is repeatedly taught against in the community. The teachings clearly say that it harms rather than helps a child to bring correction and discipline in any other spirit than one of love and self-control.
8. When I left the Community in 1982, a woman named Suzanne Cloutier from Orleans, Vermont, was quick to direct me to Burlington, Vermont, where she told me I could receive "help." She drove me there to the home of one of two families who were working against the Church. I now know that this woman had been persuaded against the Community by Galen Kelly and Priscilla Coates who came to Barton, Vermont in November 1982 to hold a public meeting in order to stir up the public to be against the Community. At that time they were part of the Citizens Freedom Foundation which eventually evolved into the Cult Awareness Network.
9. When I went to Burlington, Juan Mattatall was already there trying to gain sympathy and support for himself and using the media to smear the Community. I knew that much of what he said was not true. It bothered me but I did not do anything about it.

10. Once I was taken to Burlington, I was "kept in line" by two big burly men who stayed by my side. I am a large man myself. I was taken to meet Gaylen Kelly in Poughkeepsie, New York where I was led into his office in a back room. He was very friendly to me, like he wanted me to know he was my friend.. He turned me to act against the Island Pond Community in ways I had never intended. This is how he did it.
11. From his office I was taken somewhere else. I think it was to a motel, where I was kept "in a cubicle", one on one with Galen Kelly, a deprogrammer, for about seven days. He showed me videos about Jonestown and Guyana and repeatedly talked to me about how Elbert Spriggs was "just like" Jim Jones. Endlessly he would pound this idea into me about how much the Island Pond was a "cult." He would create parallels between Jonestown and Island Pond to try and convince me how dangerous the Island Pond group was.
12. He showed me papers and documents trying to prove to me that Elbert Spriggs was a bad man, dishonest and manipulative. All these things were contrary to my personal experience, but I felt helpless against it. Any time I would disagree or say anything positive about Island Pond, I was told I was "brainwashed" or under "mind control."
13. Eventually, I succumbed to the pressure and he employed me into his ranks, working with him against the Church in Island Pond. I was useful to him as a former member who had left. I could provide information that made his claims seem credible, whether they were truthful or not, they were convincing.
14. I remember specifically being at a meeting in Burlington with a group of people determined that the Community was a "cult" and Kelly said he had a "sure fire plan to bust up the Northeast Kingdom Community Church," as it was known at that time and place. I was part of it and I worked with him for about six months. The plan included infiltrating the group, creating and contributing to media hysteria

about them and using people "under cover." I remember him saying that he "already had people in place."

15. Here are two examples of the types of activities I remember doing with Galen Kelly. I went with him to the Boston Common looking for a Hare Krishna member. He did surveillance out of a van with tinted windows. He had me go to a house pretending to be a seeker to see if I could find the man, which I did. Kelly later "snatched" the man to deprogram him. I regret that I ever did this. Another time I went with him to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where there was a Children of God group. We went looking for a young lady, about 20, with her parents. I was just "there", but we scouted the place out looking for the girl, but never found her.
16. I lived with Galen Kelly for about 2-3 months and stayed in his home. I was paid to drive him around. Eventually, I came to see that the people who were supposedly "helping " me were using peoples' lives to their own end, trying to manipulate them to do things their way. The anti-cultists wanted to "purge my brain" and reshape me in their image. I was just another "log on the fire." But this did not become clear for quite a while, after I said and did many things which I will always regret. I will continue to tell you what happened.
17. I lived with my mother and stepfather for a while in the summer in 1983 in Tampa, Florida. While I was there two State Investigators from Vermont called them and they came to see me. I was asked a lot of questions. It turned out that these two investigators were a Vermont State Police corporal, Peter Johnson, and a Social and Rehabilitation Services Director, Conrad Grims.
18. I answered their questions, but it seemed like they already knew a lot from other people, because they would say "Is this right? Is that right?" It was like everything I said, whether it was truthful, exaggerated or not true, was used to make their case. I remember saying simple, straightforward facts and somehow they would say it back twisted, to make it sound bad or worse than I meant it. I would say "No, that's not

what I meant," and they would say "Well, that's what you said." I felt pressured by them and I could not or did not stand up to their forceful questioning. I was a coward and left things sounding really bad, when I knew it was not that way.

19. The main thing that bothered me was the way they drew conclusions about the people in the Community, to make them all out to be "bad" or awful or deliberately mean to children or unduly harsh with them by design. I knew these things were not true, but I did not know how to explain the truth or how to make it right. It was "too big" for me. I felt so bad when I saw bad things in the newspaper about the Community and I knew I had contributed to it.
20. I knew I was trapped into following along, but I didn't know how to escape the intense pressure from the anti-cultists. They were very controlling. The only way to get any relief, to please them and get them off my back, was to say the things they wanted to hear.
21. During this time I did an interview with Marselis Parsons from channel 3 TV in Burlington, Vermont. Things were at the boiling point about the Church; it was before the 1984 Raid. I gave a terrible interview. It was bad because it was not true. I was asked things like "Well, Mike, have you ever seen Elbert Spriggs beat the hell out of a child?" I would say "Yes, that is true and accurate," when it was not true at all. I am very ashamed about these things. All I can tell you is that I was under the persuasion of people who were determined to use me for their purposes and I let them do it.
22. Once they got me to the point of exaggerating and telling lies, I fed them what they wanted to hear. It is a deliberate and calculated strategy to use people. I felt like a puppet used to say what they were desperate to prove true, whether it was really true or not. Once I left the Church in Island Pond, they saw me as out of a cult and now it was them that was going to "reset my mind". They would even say "Now, we're in control."

23. I remember meeting Priscilla Coates at Galen Kelly's office. It was obvious they were working together. There were many phone calls between them. Upon information and belief, it was the two of them who advised the Attorney General of Vermont before the 1984 Raid.
24. I remember one incident going to Island Pond in a camper van with Galen Kelly and Juan Mattatall, who had a plan to get his girls who lived in the Community with their mother. Channel 3 and another TV station, as well as newspaper reporters were there to do interviews at the State beach. It was all coordinated by the anti-cultists to make the Community look bad. Suzanne Cloutier was there giving her opinions, supposedly as a "concerned citizen" and local person, but really, she was the pawn of the anti-cultists.
25. Some years later, after I had "recovered" from the worst of the damage done by the anti-cultists, I wanted to return to the Community. I knew I believed what was taught there. I went to the newspapers to tell them what had happened years earlier, to tell them about the lies. No one cared. No one wanted to fix it. Around 1991, I came back to the Community again for several years. I got married.
26. Around 1994 I left again and I have been gone since.
27. It is very hard for me to believe that lies that were spread about the Community way back before the 1984 Raid on the Church in Island Pond are still being used against new Communities around the world. These lies do not represent the reality of who the Community is. The people there are not perfect, but they do strive to obey the Bible. I know for sure they love their children. If there are individual exceptions, they should not be used against the whole community
28. Probably what I resent the most about how I was used, even though I know I am accountable for the things I said that were not true, is how isolated incidents that I mentioned were inflated to be the "practices and beliefs of the Church," creating the

impression that members were zombies who were mean to their children. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Church teaches the parental responsibility to raise and care for your children, being devoted to their upbringing. It is my observation that this is what the parents there strive to do, even though they are not always perfect. They are there to help one another.

29. Because I was once a part of it, I know first-hand the tactics of the anti-cult movement. People like Gaylen Kelly and Priscilla Coates hurt innocent people and cannot be believed, especially when they lump people together because of their faith. I regret ever participating in such things even though I did not fully understand at the time. Please believe me.
30. Hopefully, my statement today will make it clear that I do not consent to the use of any former statements that I made against the Messianic Communities. I do not want them used or distributed because they do not reflect the truth. By my affidavit today I intend to put on notice anyone who would maliciously use these prior statements or interviews, knowing them to be false or defamatory. Please consider yourself accountable for spreading lies and falsehoods if you should ignore my most sincere and solemn request.

Mary Jo Dwyer
Notary Public
2/10/99
Commission Expires
this 15th day of August 1998

Respectfully,

Michael Taylor
Michael Taylor
date: ~~8~~ 8/15/98

AFFIDAVIT OF ROLAND CHURCH

I, Roland Church, do affirm the truth of the following, based upon first-hand knowledge, unless otherwise specified.

1. My name is Roland Church. I live in Palmyra, Maine, and am a self-employed blacksmith. My birth date is May 4, 1939.

2. I was a member of the Northeast Kingdom Community Church between the years of 1978 and 1983. Today, the same group is called the Twelve Tribes or Messianic Communities.

3. Fifteen years ago my membership in the group and the fact that I left it became of great interest to the State of Vermont. Some people who were very against the Church in Island Pond used my daughter and me to try to prove that the Church Community was a bad place and that the people there made a practice of abusing children. These things are not true.

4. However, back in May 1983, due to circumstances in my family, I became involved with certain people who were against the Church. I made statements and said things in anger that were less than truthful. Within months, if not weeks, of doing this, I felt very bad about it and tried to make it right. To my great regret, fifteen years later, I have come to know that these misrepresentations are still being used to try to convince people that the Church Community is bad or does dangerous things. I know this is not true and I make this statement today in the hope of putting an end to the use of anything I ever said or did being used against the Church or a Church member.

5. I am not presently a member of the Messianic Communities and have not been for at least thirteen years. When I left in 1983, it was because really I had never made a complete commitment to the Church and I left because I overreacted to an incident with my family. For nearly 35 years, I have been looking for the truth

about God. I still feel like the Church in Island Pond, as I knew it, (the Messianic Communities now) is the closest thing to the truth of God that I know of on this earth. Even though there might be some doctrines that I might not fully agree with, I know that does not mean they are wrong. How I feel is "If the church in Island Pond is not the truth, what else is?"

6. I will try to explain to you what happened fifteen years ago.

7. My wife, Constance, and I have two daughters, Rolanda and Darlynn, now aged, 30 and 28. At the time we lived in the Community in Island Pond, Vermont they were between 8 and 15.

8. In May, 1983 my daughter Darlynn and I became the focus of the State of Vermont's efforts to lay criminal charges against a member of the Church in Island Pond. My daughter at that time had severe problems with lying, such that other children in the Community were jeopardized by her behavior and my failure to help her adequately.

9. On or about May 12, 1983 we had a meeting to help her. Both my wife and I were there, as well as her teacher and several close friends. We spoke with her at great length about the different incidents where it had become clear she had not been truthful. After she had admitted that she had not been honest about serious things, we agreed that it was appropriate that she should receive a spanking.

10. The usual practice, of course, would be for one of her parents to discipline her, but on this day, I was so angry at what was being revealed in my daughter's life, that I knew I did not have the grace or confidence to spank her myself. Therefore, I asked one of the leaders present if he would spank her for me, which he did. I was there the whole time. The next day, when Darlynn saw Eddie Wiseman on the street, she ran up to him, hugged him and told him she loved him. It was obvious that she knew he cared about her.

11. My relationship with my daughter was not the best. I was on the road a lot and was not close to her and did not know how to be. The Church leadership was trying to help bring healing to our relationship, but I was resistant and stubborn to receive it.

12. When this meeting happened, the extent of my daughter's insecurity was obvious and I was humiliated by it, not because of anything anyone did, but because of the obvious condition she was in due to my own neglect of her.

13. In the days after the spanking, I began to consider all the things that had bothered me and instead of facing them and my own failures and seek help, I took my family and left. I was mad and just wanted to be alone. We moved back to Maine, where I had been raised.

14. Little did I know of the great efforts that were underway to discredit the Church and to make them look like criminals. Gaylen Kelly and Priscilla Coates of the Cult Awareness Network had already been to Barton, Vermont to stir up the public to be against the Church Community. Several members had already left who were working with these anti-religious zealots to destroy the Church, especially Juan Mattatall and Michael Taylor.

15. A local woman who was a licensed practical nurse, Suzanne Cloutier, became active against the Church and she made herself available to act as a conduit sending people who would leave to these anti-cult activists, who would then use us to promote their "case" against the Church. They would take what they wanted of what we had to say, distort it, and forget the rest, whatever we had to say that was good. This was what happened to me, but unfortunately, it took me a long time to see it. I did not know this at the time.

16. After we were in Maine a few days, a few people up there started asking questions about why we left and started being nosey. They were strong in their

suggestions that we “do something” and “take action” against the Church. I did not realize for a long time how many of these people were against the Church for their own reasons and were using me to provide the “ammunition” for their own personal vendettas.

17. I wanted to go back to Vermont to get my tools, personal possessions, etc. One of these people, a woman in Maine, called the State Police in Vermont. They gave her the name Suzanne Cloutier to arrange for me to meet her. She called the social services and told us we needed to go there. It was all arranged.

18. By the time I traveled to Vermont to pick up my things, it was like I was a celebrity. There were reporters and news cameras all around. People were asking me questions and flashing pictures. I went to social services with my daughter and made a statement. They were like vultures on us and we fell prey to giving them the “meat” they wanted.

19. Some reporter asked me “Was your girl whipped 89 times?” I said, “No, it was 8 or 9.” It was all over the papers, “89 welts.” The whole thing was ridiculous and untrue. Even in the Word, when they beat Jesus they gave him 39 lashes, because they said 40 would kill a person. My daughter was spanked with a thin flexible wooden rod; she was not “whipped” or anything exaggerated like that. The mood was that nobody cared about the truth, they just wanted to “get the Church.”

20. Suzanne Cloutier exerted heavy pressure on me to go to the authorities with my daughter. At the time, I was naïve to the agenda that these people had to come against the Church. She said it would be simple, no problems and that “she would arrange everything.” She did, but it was not short, sweet or simple. It is probably the worst thing I ever did in my whole life, the thing I regret the most.

21. When we went to tell our story, they were only interested in proving what they already believed, the worst. Anything we said, they twisted it to make it seem worse. They were uninterested in hearing anything good about the Church in Island Pond.

23. Out of these statements by my daughter and me, Church leader Charles ‘Eddie’ Wiseman was charged with simple assault in Essex County, Vermont in 1983.

We gave depositions in the case that we never signed because they were less than true.

24. When I saw what was happening, I did not want any part of it. Eventually, I let everyone know that Eddie Wiseman did not abuse my daughter and that we were available to testify to the truth at his trial.

25. I held a press conference in August 1984 to make a public statement and recant the exaggerated claims that I had made and let my daughter make. I did this in order to do everything I could to try and undo the damage I had done.

26. Instead, the State never called us as witnesses even though we were there to tell the story. In June 1985, the court dismissed the case against Wiseman, finding that the State's Attorney had engaged in prosecutorial misconduct. The judge found it was unethical practice to delay the trial instead of calling truthful witnesses that would have helped the defendant. This was exactly right.

27. Today, fifteen years later, I don't think it's fair that people who want to destroy the Church are able to use these same old lies and half-truths against the Church, after they have been shown to be untrue. These people have bad motives and intentions and should not be believed. Why haven't they come and seen me if they want the truth? I would tell them. Why isn't the ruling of the court good enough? I am telling everyone here today, so that anyone who wants to know the truth can read this and trust it.

28. My daughter Darlynn is now 28 and has three children. I have no doubt that the damage of the ordeal created after leaving the Church has hurt her life. I regret ever having taken her from the Church where friends were trying to help her with her problems. The Church was not the cause of them. My older daughter Rolanda has stayed in the Church Community with my approval. She is 30 and married with three children. Periodically, we visit her and her family in the Community.

29. I want to make it clear, despite anything I may have been pressured to say in the past, that I have never been under "mind control" and also that the Church does not practice "mind control." It was Suzanne Cloutier and the anti-cult activists who introduced me to the concept of "mind control" and persuaded me to be influenced

by them. But I want to make it clear that anything I said or did while in the Church I did voluntarily of my own free will. The Church does not practice any such thing as "mind control." I lived there for five years and I am sure of that.

I also want to make it clear that I specifically do not consent to any former statements that I ever made against the Church in Island Pond (the Messianic Communities) to be used, as they do not reflect the true. It seems it could be costly for such slander or libel to continue, knowing it is a misrepresentation.

Valeri Gmague
Notary Public

Comm. Expires

Gmague, Notary Public
State of Maine
My Commission Expires 5/16/2002

Respectfully submitted,

Roland Church

Roland Church

8/13/98