

Ex-church minister who admitted child sexual abuse to BBC still free years later

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George Wright



An ex-minister of a shadowy Christian church who told the BBC he sexually abused a child in Canada is still free more than two years after he made his admission.

Robert Corfield admitted when confronted by the BBC that he sexually abused a boy, Michael Havet, in the 1980s. Corfield's was one of more than 1,100 names given to a hotline set up to report sexual abuse within the church, which has no official name but is often referred to as The Truth or the Two by Twos.

The FBI launched a probe into the church around a month after the BBC published its investigation in early 2024, but Corfield remains free in the US state of Montana despite him saying investigators visited him more than a year ago.

We have now spoken to a man who says he was also sexually abused by Corfield in 1974 when he was 11 years old - around a decade before he started abusing Michael. Corfield previously claimed to the BBC that he had not sexually abused anyone else.

The FBI did not respond to requests for comment.

Asked about Michael's case, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said it launched an investigation after it "received a report of historic sexual assaults that occurred in the early 1980s" in Saskatchewan and that its "findings were sent to Crown Prosecutors for their assessment".

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice said it "does not comment on whether it is reviewing cases under investigation by the police".

The Truth is believed to have up to 100,000 members worldwide, with the majority in North America.

It was founded in Ireland by a Scottish evangelist in 1897 and is built around ministers - referred to by the church as workers - spreading New Testament teachings through word-of-mouth.

One of its hallmarks is that workers give up their possessions and must be taken in by church members as they travel around, spreading the gospel. This makes children living in the homes they visit vulnerable to abuse, former members say.

Warning: This article contains details some readers may find upsetting

BBC confronts man who abused boy in secretive Christian church
FBI launches probe into church investigated by BBC

Contacted by phone in December 2025, Corfield told the BBC that he was visited by the FBI a year ago.

"They saw me in person. They basically reviewed information and I just responded with the truth," he said.

Asked whether he told them that he abused Michael, now 57, for six years starting when he was 12, Corfield replied "yes" before adding: "It was a year ago - I don't remember all the details."

He added that the FBI "were satisfied at that point and I haven't been contacted by anyone else since".

Asked if he was fearful of arrest, Corfield said: "I realise there is that possibility."

He was no longer attending church meetings, he added.



Photo supplied

Robert Corfield, left, told the BBC he sexually abused Michael Havet, right, for six years.

Last month, another man contacted the BBC about being abused by Corfield.

The man, who is entitled to anonymity but we will call Edward, said that Corfield attacked him on a camping trip in Canada in 1974.

"Robert got mad at me for something - I don't remember exactly what that was. Then he called me into the camper," he said.

"I can only remember him being angry and holding me down. I just remember the cushions being covered with that weird 70s floral pattern ... he ended up holding me down on the bed," he added.

"He went from angry to sexually assaulting me."

Edward recalled another time when a group of boys were swimming on church convention grounds and he saw Corfield watching, "blanket over his lap, doing something inappropriate to himself underneath the blanket".

Corfield "was in constant grooming mode", Edward said.

He tried to tell his parents about what Corfield did to him, but said "they wouldn't even hear a name from me".

The power of the workers in the church means they are rarely challenged.

"When my incident happened with Robert, I tried to talk to my parents about it and neither one of them would have anything to do with that, because he was a preacher and he could do no wrong," Edward said.

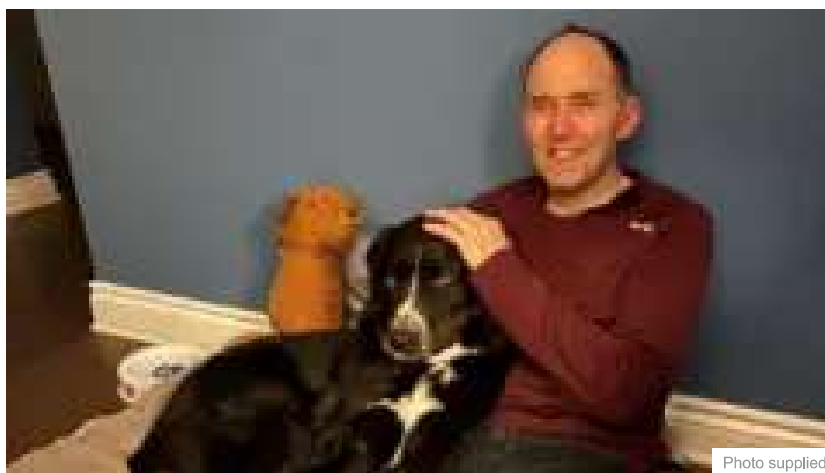
"Our house was an open door, the workers had keys to the house," he added.

"They were on the pedestal, they were the moral compass. The family kind of didn't have a moral compass on its own, they only only looked at right and wrong based on what the workers said. Right and wrong wasn't about what your heart or soul said."

Edward reported the attack to the RCMP in 2024 but the prosecutor's office declined to prosecute the case due to lack of evidence.

Corfield declined to comment about the latest allegations when contacted last week.

However, the BBC has obtained two private letters Corfield sent to Michael, in 2004 and 2005, which asked for forgiveness and said he was seeing a therapist. In one letter, Corfield said he was "making a list of victims".



Michael, now 57, says he also wants to see the church's leadership to face justice

The church has been thrown into crisis since more than 1,500 current and former members of the sect contacted a hotline set up by campaign group, Advocates for The Truth, in 2023.

The Advocates have since ceased operations, but co-founder and private investigator, Cynthia Liles, is still running the hotline under the name 2x2 Church Accountability.

There have been 1,164 allegations of sexual abuse, she said, with more than half of the accused in positions of authority. There have been approximately 75 convictions, she said.

But despite Corfield admitting to sexually abusing a child for six years, he remains free.

"I'm confused by the law enforcement in Canada. Robert is a confessed pedophile...he took responsibility for abusing me for six years," Michael told the BBC in a message.

He also wants to see the church's leadership face justice, some of whom have been accused of covering up abuse.

In our previous investigation, Michael said he reported his abuse in 1993 to Dale Shultz, Saskatchewan's most senior church leader - known as an "overseer". Overseers are the most senior members of the church and there is one for each US state and Canadian province where there is an active following.

But Shultz didn't go to the police and Michael says he violently assaulted him a few weeks later because he thought he had told others of the abuse claims.

Michael said Shultz then "encouraged" him to leave the church - while Corfield was moved to be a minister across the border, in the US state of Montana.

Corfield told the BBC in 2024 that he believed it was Shultz's decision to send him to Montana, where he remained in post for 25 years.

Shultz previously told the BBC that "much of the information that you have received concerning me is distorted and inaccurate". However he declined to go into any further detail.

"I'm frustrated that the RCMP refused to include the leadership. They failed the membership," Michael said last week.

"Robert is guilty, sure. Dale and all the enablers are guilty also," he added.

Edward said "it's completely ridiculous" that Corfield is still free.

"What kind of pressure does the RCMP need to feel to make this move forward?" he said.

The RCMP directed questions to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, who declined to comment.

The church itself has done little to address the sexual abuse crisis, said Liles, the private investigator, who herself was born into the sect before leaving.

"In fact I think they're going backwards," she said. "I think they retracted from positions they originally took in an attempt to show that they were going to try to make changes."

Some states initially hired an organisation that helps Christian groups confront sexual abuses, she said, but the church ended up rejecting the policies.

"They just said: 'we don't need any of this, we're just going to use the Bible,'" Liles said.

Many perpetrators of sexual abuse are back in church meetings, Liles said, including one man in Arizona who was jailed for rape in 1969, made a church elder upon release and then went on to abuse other children within the church.

The BBC reached out to multiple church overseers for comment, but did not get a response.

Secretive Christian sect coerced young mothers to give up babies

While the wheels of justice are moving slowly for victims, many are connecting online. One Facebook group called 'Exposing Abuse: 2x2s' has more than 10,000 members from across the world offering each other support.

After Corfield's public confession two years ago, Edward reached out to Michael.

"I reached out to Michael very, very soon after that and we managed to stay in contact over the last few years and develop a relationship," he said.

"For us to know each other, it gets rid of that isolated 'me against the world' feeling - it's actually us against the church."

Edward is also now receiving counselling to work through his experiences in the church.

"It's not the church that's helping to fund my counselling sessions, it's a bunch of ex-church members," he said.

"That's been a godsend for me."

Sexual violence Child abuse Canada