



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
**Volume 15 Number 16**  
**April 22, 2020**

**Heads up on Another Splinter off the Way International Tree**  
***Christian Family Fellowship of Tipp City, Ohio***

By Tal Davis

The Way International (TWI) has been on cult watchers' radar screens for decades. We ourselves have two articles in our website concerning that movement. Started in the early 1950s by the late Victor Paul Wierwille (1916-1985), the original organization was called the Way Incorporated. It is now known as the The Way International, and is headquartered in New Knoxville, Ohio. Read the background on that movement at the following links on the MarketFaith website:

Whatever Happened to The Way International? - <http://www.marketfaith.org/whatever-happened-to-the-way-international/>  
Update on The Way International and Its Offspring - <http://www.marketfaith.org/2018/04/update-on-the-way-international-and-its-offspring/>

As we have noted in the past, it is usually the case that when the supposedly divinely inspired founder of a cult or sect dies, competition arises among those jockeying to succeed the dead leader. That is exactly what happened to TWI. In the 1980s and 90s, after Wierwille's death, the movement began to lose members. One reason was that Wierwille's handpicked top leaders were accused of moral failures and corruption. Consequently, many dedicated members withdrew from TWI and formed new organizations that continued to teach the bizarre doctrines of Victor Paul Wierwille. Those splinter groups included:

- Christian Research and Fellowship of Destin, Fla., founded by John Hendricks;
- Christian Educational Services of Indianapolis, Ind., AKA: Spirit & Truth Fellowship International,

- al, led by Mark Graeser, John Lynn, and John Schoenheit;
- and
- Pacific West Fellowship led by Steve Sann. (See above update article)

We do not know if all those groups are still in business or still have the same leaders.

In any case, we have just become aware of another such TWI offspring group called Christian Family Fellowship (CFF) located in Tipp City, Ohio. (Note: Other churches around the U.S. use the name "Christian Family Fellowship" but have no relationship with the one in Tipp City, OH. We are focused only on this group and other churches affiliated with it.) Apparently CFF began in 1996. CFF's current senior pastor is named Tonia Shroyer. Other teaching leaders include Tom Dill, Kevin Guigou, and Wayne Clapp. The group's website ([www.cffm.org](http://www.cffm.org)) has a list of other "Pastoral Care" ministers and contacts located in 30 states. It also claims chapters in 10 foreign countries. We have been unable to find any biographical information about any of the leaders on their website or elsewhere.

Another individual associated with this group is Jon O. Nettle. He has written a number of books on the Sermon on the Mount and other subjects. One of his books was apparently published by an evangelical Christian publisher who withdrew it when it learned about Nettle's background. His bio is available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) with his book, *Leadership in the Body of Christ*. Oddly, it mentions that he was at one time a research assistant to the "President of a ministry" but

### Permission to Reprint

If you wish to reprint this article in your own print or electronic newsletter, please include the following text:

*Reprinted from **Worldview Made Practical**; a free e-zine produced by **MarketFaith Ministries** featuring practical teaching and life tools to help Christians become more effective in their faith life. Discover **MarketFaith Ministries** at [www.marketfaith.org](http://www.marketfaith.org).*

### Speaking Schedule

If you are interested in having Freddy Davis or Tal Davis present one of our **Worldview Seminars** or to share about worldview and its practical implications at your church or organization, please contact **MarketFaith Ministries** to schedule your event. All contact information is at the bottom of this e-zine.

### Worldview Resources

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

does not identify the president or the ministry. That may refer to one of the former TWI presidents, Victor Paul Wierwille or L. Craig Martindale, or to present leaders such as Rosalie F. Rivenbark, and Jean-Yves De Lisle. In any case, the bio states that in 2001 he was ordained a minister in Christian Family Fellowship. Some of his audio lectures are posted on the CFF website.

So why do we think that Christian Family Fellowship is related to TWI? After all, they never refer to TWI or Victor Paul Wierwille anywhere on their website that we can find. Also, Christian Family Fellowship's website does have a brief statement of faith titled "What We Believe". Here is what it says:

"We believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

As you might notice, it sounds almost verbatim like the Apostles Creed. Regardless of their orthodox sounding statement, a careful analysis of the CFF website reveals a number of subtle clues as to the true origin and nature of its unchristian theology. To begin with, the writers on the website use many of the same methods of biblical exegesis and theological terminology as does The Way International.

Two examples are what they mean by a couple of specific points in their

statement of faith quoted above. In the unitarian theology of Victor Paul Wierwille and his theological progenies (like CFF), "Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord" does not mean he is equal to God the Father. Jesus is only the "Son of God," but not fully God. Wierwille taught that Jesus Christ did not actually preexist, but was only conceptually "The Word" in the foreknowledge of God. He was totally created at His physical conception. Nonetheless, He was born a perfect man whose soul was specially created by God and given "holy spirit." Therefore, Jesus can be regarded as the "Son of God" but not "God the Son."

The second example, according to Wierwille, is that the Greek term *hagios pneuma* (holy spirit) is used in two distinct ways in Scripture. The "Holy Spirit," with capital letters, as in the CFF statement of faith, is only a synonym for the Father God, but not a separate person. It is a name of God describing His nature as Spirit (see John 4:24). The other use of the term is "holy spirit" (same Greek words but not capitalized). In Wierwille's literature, and in that of CFF, "holy spirit" refers to the gift of God given to believers by the Holy Spirit. It is the energizing power of God given on the inside of the believer that is manifested on the outside by speaking in tongues. In other words, the CFF, like Wierwille, absolutely denies the historic doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, one of Wierwille's most important books was titled *Jesus is Not God*.

These Wierwillian doctrines and terminology are found sprinkled throughout CFF's website articles and in sermons that are streamed audibly online. Apparently, CFF does not want the casual reader or listener, who may lack a discerning knowledge of cult deception, to easily recognize its critical doctrinal deviations from historic Christianity, or its dependence on Wierwille's theology. They hope, using a strategy employed by most cults, that

## Subscription Information SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE:

A subscription to **Worldview Made Practical** is complementary for anyone interested in receiving it. If you received this email as a forward from a family member or a friend and wish to subscribe for yourself, you may do so at [www.marketfaith.org](http://www.marketfaith.org). If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply follow the instructions found at the bottom of each edition.

## Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

[info@marketfaith.org](mailto:info@marketfaith.org)

Phone: 850-383-9756 (Tallahassee, Florida)

Fax: 850-514-4571

You can order our products and examine our services at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

This issue of **Worldview Made Practical** is a production of **MarketFaith Ministries**, © 2020. All rights reserved.

a potential convert will become innocently enmeshed in the church's fellowship before being slowly indoctrinated into its eccentric theological concepts.

It is common practice among cult groups to disguise their flawed teachings by using terms familiar to people who have some background in Christianity. Cults often use Christian words and phrases, but have their own definitions for them. In my many years of cult investigation, I have talked to numerous well-meaning ex-cultists who admitted they were duped by the familiarity of the words used and by the friendliness of those seeking to proselytize them

into the cult. Also, many naive seekers are attracted to the dynamic personality of the cult leader who seems to have a clear, unique, or "hidden" understanding of the Bible. Wierwille was that kind of leader.

The proliferation of cult movements in America, contrary to the assumptions of even many evangelical observers, has not abated in recent years. We may not hear as much about them as we did a couple decades ago, but they still cunningly seek to deceive even Christians into their false teachings. Christian Family Fellowship appears to be one of them. Keep your radar screens operational!

## Would You Consider Supporting Us?

Would you consider financial support for **MarketFaith Ministries**? I feel confident that what we are doing is consistent with your beliefs about spreading the gospel and equipping the saints for ministry. Would you let us be one element of your hands and feet in this process? **MarketFaith Ministries** is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible. If you would consider this we would be very grateful. Also, if you would like to know more about the ministry, it would be my pleasure to share with you personally what we are working on and how you can plug in. I can be reached at 850-383-9756 or by e-mail at [Freddy@marketfaith.org](mailto:Freddy@marketfaith.org). As for any donations, they may be sent directly to **MarketFaith Ministries** at 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312, or you can contribute through our secure website at [www.marketfaith.org](http://www.marketfaith.org). Simply click on the "Donate" button at the bottom of the homepage. We are deeply grateful for your support of this ministry.

And, as always, if you have any thoughts, opinions or suggestions about how **MarketFaith Ministries** can help you, please feel free, at any time, to call (850-383-9756) or e-mail ([info@marketfaith.org](mailto:info@marketfaith.org)). We are here to serve you.