

## CgiKawartha-2026-StephanWillshaw-Ordination

All right. Thank you, sir. Appreciate that. Well song, everybody. Everybody was in good voice today. I was just counting up. I think we're 12 today. Everett, you're making us 12. I like that. Yeah, welcome, Everett. Everybody knows Everett. I don't know whether Jasmine, I'm going to say Opal, but Jasmine, my apologies. I'm 71 now, so I don't remember perfectly. But this is Everett, and this is Jasmine.

Everett's Campbellford area. And Everett Jasmine's. She's a local. She's a local. So it was last week that you guys were minus a few people. I guess. Yes. I should turn it on. Testing one. Yeah. Okay. Thank you. You were minus a few people. And that was because Sandy and I and Jim.

Went down to Tyler, Texas to a conference. And it was an all-day adventure just getting there. Everybody knows that traveling, oh, it's such a lot of fun, isn't it? It's such a lot of fun. And we woke up to our, actually I woke up before the alarm clock, 5 o'clock in the morning on Friday, not yesterday, but last Friday. And I thought, here we go.

And at 5 o'clock, sometimes I'm just getting to sleep. Well, I'm just going up and down without a machine. I can relate to it. But anyhow, we left in the foggy morning on Friday. At 6 o'clock, Louie's Rides came to the laneway and picked us up. And Louie's Rides comes out of Port Perry. He's got three cars down there. And we were riding in that. What was that vehicle?

An aviator. An aviator. A Lincoln aviator. And that thing was wall-to-wall electronics in front of us. So anyhow, I'm going to tell you this one thing about that. I was thinking on the way up because it was raining. But it wasn't raining. It was so foggy that it was raining. You ever been? It was like a fog rain. And the roads were dark. I thought, he's going around all these curves. We're going to get in an accident. But we didn't.

I was thinking that. If we get in an accident here, we may not make it to Tyler. So I was quite nervous. I was sitting in the back, Jim in the front, Sandy and I in the back, and Louie wasn't nervous at all. He said the roads weren't slippery, but they looked slippery, but they weren't. So this is what took place. We got to Toronto Airways. Oh, I'm glad that's over with. So that took place on the Friday morning. We got away in good time. We found out when we got there. Nothing was on time.

I think we were back up for an hour because of the fog, you see. It keeps, it slows things down. So we got on the plane. We arrived in Tyler. And we walked into the Holiday Inn. This was a place where they had these conferences. Holiday Inn Conference Center there in Tyler.

Beautiful place. We were late. And the meeting, the first meeting was already underway. And we walked in there. Jim French was recognized.

recognized by Charles Gross who was speaking when we walked in the room. Oh, this is Jim French. He looked at us and didn't know who we were. Sandy and I didn't know who we were. They didn't know us. We didn't know them. It was all new. So we walked in and sat down and it started right off. It was really quite nice. And it was Charles Gross. Maybe you've heard some of these names. Charles Gross, Winskel, Mike James, Jeff Reed, and Vance Stidson were leading this thing.

And they were scattered throughout. I think there was about 70 of us at that particular meeting. And the whole thing was about unity. And you can realize why it was about unity. Because that is what is the problem in the Church of God International. And I'll spread that out into the

Church of God at whole. Unity is a big problem. It's human nature probably getting in the way. That's what happened, right?

But I'll tell you this. We have unity here. And I don't like using the word proud, but I'm quite proud of you guys because you really bring forth unity. And it shows up every time we get together. I mean, look, if Everett came in today, he got hugged to death. It was pretty good. It was pretty good. So we didn't have a ministerial conference like this for about 10 years. Sonny and I had been in the Church of God International for, I don't know how long, 12?

Something like that. So we hadn't had one. They hadn't had one that I remember. So this was well needed, this one. There was about 70 of us invited to this conference. Most of them were ministers and their wives as well. So that first evening, Charles Gross was speaking when we arrived. And again, I said, we were late. So we get in and it was already taking place. When we got in, Charles spoke for a couple, maybe five minutes. And all of a sudden, he invited.

Wynn Skeleton to the lecture. You guys know Wynn Skeleton? Have you seen him? I played him once or twice here. He started talking, and he really caught my attention right off. He said this, and he wasn't behind the lecture, he was just walking around talking. Very, very relaxed. He was very relaxed. All these meetings were very relaxed. And he took us to a scripture, and I thought, you know what, we haven't missed a thing. You know what he quoted? He quoted this.

Listen to this here. This is the first scriptural quote that I picked up on. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 24. It says, Not that we exercise lordship over your faith, because we are working with you to increase your joy. Do you feel joy being in this Church of God movement? That door...

There should be a lineup of people going outside. If they really knew what was going on right now, they'd be fighting to get in here. We wouldn't be in this little room. We'd have a big auditorium. But that is not taking place. But this is what the ministry has put in place for, to help you to be joyful. And when you are joyful, we don't need to help you anymore, right?

We're just there just in case, I suppose. But we're not there as people that...

have you under our thumb. That's not what it's about. It never has been. So let's go to another scripture here. Let's turn this time to Hebrews the 13th chapter because there seems to be a scripture here that contradicts what I just read in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 24. And it's not really the whole scripture. It's the very beginning part of the scripture. Let's turn there. And I was thinking to myself, the scriptures don't contradict. I thought that while we were turning to that.

So a point here by making is this, and this really took place. Our former organization really took place.

took advantage of this particular scripture we're going to find here in Hebrews 13. Did I say Hebrews 13? Verse 17. Look what it says here. I'm reading out of the faithful version. It's probably very similar to what your words are. It says here, Hebrews 13, verse 17. Follow your leaders. Follow your leaders. It starts off right there. And be what? Be submissive. That first scripture I read didn't seem to say that. But that's what the former organization.

Focused on. Follow me. I'm the boss. Kind of. What it says, right? Because, it says here as we continue on, because they are looking out for your spiritual well-being. Can't you do that?

That's what it says. Because they're looking out for your spiritual well-being as those who must be ready to give account to God in order that they may do this with joy and not with groaning because that would be unprofitable.

For you. So it doesn't really contradict. But our former organization really focused on the first few words of that. Follow your leaders and be submissive. They made a big point of that. We

don't do that. The ministry doesn't do that today. At least why is it not supposed to? What does the ministry do? It raises up. It helps you with your faith. Helps you with your understanding. We're helpers of people's joy.

All these guys out there, they're helpers with your joy. That was very prominent at the conference. It's about servant leadership. Helping to care for God's begotten children.

Caregivers. Caregivers. That's what they are. They're not over you. They're not above you. No. You know something? I thought about this. You know how we're always involved in our brains and outreaching?

Outreaching is important. But inreaching, that's just as important. Protecting the flock. And we're all here to protect each other. Correct? Inreach is important. That's what we're doing here today. We're having an inreach meeting. To be an asset. Not an overlord. Using the gifts. Using the abilities. To help others. Not trying to be at the top.

Lord over people? No. We serve. You serve each other. You serve me. I serve you. In what?

Pridefulness? No. Humility. Just exactly the opposite. We follow Christ. Not a fist approach.

Overlordship? We've really got to be careful with that. Sometimes it can come out. But when it does, usher it out the door. They also spoke about being very careful.

With negative stuff. Ever turn your television on? See anything positive? Be careful of negative stuff. There's an acronym they use. Help. H-E-L-P. Stands for something. Help. The H stands for healing. The L. This is a good one. What do you think that stands for? Close. Listening.

Yeah, love and listening go together. P. No, help. I'm sorry. Help.

Then an E in the embassy. Empathy. Then L for listening. And then P? Persuasion. What were you going to say? Yeah, that's good too. Persuasion. Persuade people with patience. I think that's good. Yeah. So all the ones in the room that were there were in leadership positions. Most of them being elders already.

They talked a little bit about idolatry. There can be lots of idols. Your house can be an idol. All kinds of stuff. They talked about that. I won't get into that. They talked about 20 minutes about idolatry because it's part of what takes place in life, right? People have idols. Ancient Israel had idols. We have idols too. We don't want them, but they just happen to be there sometimes. They talked about something else that we don't talk about too much.

They talked about financial expenses. And they talked about how much this Church of God International, based in Tyler, Texas, how much they bring in per year, and how much they use every year to run the work. I was surprised at how much work they do on the little wee bit of money that they bring in. For a church that's kind of international, it was a small amount of money to do a big work. It just blew me away.

It's totally amazing how they do that. They have a small church building, a very nice church building. If it was up here in Lindsay, maybe worth \$2 million. If it was sitting here on the real estate right here, I don't know what it would be worth entirely, but no idea. No idea at all. But it's a small place. I think they hire three people, and they're all full-time. They work in there, and the ministry are not paid. It's a volunteer service, folks, in the Church of God International. And it's just quite amazing the work that they do. I was totally just amazed at the whole thing. It was really, really special to see all this for me. So the first night ended. The next morning we woke up to a breakfast downstairs with everybody. It was quite nice. It was all fellowship.

Three separate rooms with these great big tables we sat in. And it was kind of a smorgasbord out in the lobby. So it was really, really good that way.

The unity and the togetherness was there. So the next morning we met. We had a morning meeting. And then they went through this book here. I want to show you this book. You guys, if you want to read it, you can. It's maybe a little boring. Can you read it from there? Manual for Field Churches. They went through this whole book. They hopscotch through it quickly. But they said, when you get home, read it carefully. Because that's what this is all about.

manual for field churches. We're a field church. That's what we are here. Yeah. So we took a break, came back, and had another meeting after breakfast, just prior to the Sabbath service. And one thing I did say was this. I want to share this with you. The ministry is aging. And what they're trying to do is they're trying to generate more leaders. And we like to get them that are younger so they can carry the torch when all the rest of us are...

They're not around anymore, the older people. I think when Skelton was, what did he say, he was born in 1954, same as us, he made that comment to us. Oh, he says, I like 1954, by the way. We knew what he was talking about. So I had 1954 on my application. So he said, he liked the 1954. I said, we're the same age, so 71 years old. So they want to get younger leaders just so we can carry this on. It's not happening.

There's a lot of old people in the church, older people. Not that that's a bad thing. That just is the way it's going right now.

Now, the conference leader, or the conference rather, called CGI a preference-driven church. Preference, I thought I heard that, preference-driven church. The next statement that came out of, this was Winskelton saying this, the next statement that came out of his mouth on this preference-driven church was, beware, you have to get rid of you and let him.

Take over. That's the preference. But had he not said that to me, I wouldn't have put it together. It was kind of a puzzle going together, right? And what we have to do is stay patient and endure and strive for the all-important unity of the faith. That was what was taking place there. You guys do a fantastic job. We've got good unity here. It's incredible.

Be thankful that we have a congregation, because many don't out there. Ask Everett about that. He'll tell you about it. He'll tell you all about it. Colossians 3, the second scripture to turn to. Let's go there. But while we're turning to Colossians 3, I'm going to quote something on unity here out of Psalms 133, verse 1. You're turning to Colossians 3. Psalm 133, verse 1 says, And how pleasant it is for brethren, for us to dwell in unity. That's what's taking place. I love it. Ephesians 4 verse 3 says, we're going to Colossians 3. Ephesians 4 verse 3 says, Be diligent, brethren, to keep the unity of the Spirit in what? The bond of peace. Keep it in the bond of peace. Colossians 3 says this, picking it up in verse 12, reading down to verse 17.

And I quote, Colossians 3.12, Put on then, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, deeper inner affections. You guys have that, by the way. Kindness. You guys have that, by the way.

Humility. You guys have that, by the way. Meekness. You have that, too. And long-suffering. You put up with me. You've got long-suffering. You think that's funny? I'm serious.

I'm not easy to get along with sometimes. Verse 13, forbearing one another, forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so also you should forgive. And above all these things, put on that four-letter word, love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your heart.

to which you were called to one body. And that was a huge statement down there. One body. We're one body. We're one body with all the rest of the churches of God. They're all brothers and sisters. That's what come across down there. So amazingly powerful. Ask Sandy about that.

She'll tell you. We were blown away. Totally blown away. Called into one body and be thankful.

Verse 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, in spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And in everything, whatever you do in the world, in the word rather, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

So who do we do it to? Doing it all to the Godhead. You know something? Every leader should be what? A good influence. So we broke for lunch after that. We had a Sabbath service where the local area congregation came together. All the people from the Tyler area came up. We weren't 70 any longer. We were roughly about 120. It was like the Feast of Tabernacles.

There was 120 people there in this fairly small room. I'd say it was half again the size of this. Long, but it was wide. Half again as long. And it was full. It was really full. And it was a regular service, opening prayer. Two thunderous hymns were sang. It was amazing. Something else that was in the room, I couldn't believe how big these things are. A grand piano. Reg, they're big, aren't they? Grand piano.

And the lady was playing that. It was amazing. We were about in the second row box. We heard all this noise coming out. It was amazing. We had two sermons, two younger guys. They would have been 40-ish. And they spoke really well. And the one guy had red hair. We had fun with him later on. I won't tell you that. Maybe in fellowship. He had fun with him. He was a good guy. We had two ordinations take place.

Is that special? I'll tell you, I thought about this. I kind of thought, you know what? We're going to go down there. I wonder if they're going to have, and I got an email. We're going to have any ordinations, I thought. I got an email saying, we're going to ordain you at Tyler. That was news to me. I didn't think it was going to happen. I already had my exit interview the week before by Rick Dubler, Winskelton, and Mike James.

They kind of grill you as to what your personality is like. They want to make sure you're not an axe murderer, right? So that took place a week before that. But anyway, they had two ordinations. And here's the special thing about that. Not that the people being ordained were special, but we lost about six elders with the Bill Watson split. That name never came up once. They never mentioned that name once. My forgiveness for mentioning that right now, but that's what happened.

They lost about six or seven elders. So it was a psychological boost to see at least two more were added. So we thought about that, you know. Yeah, so it was really special. So we had these two ordinations. There was a guy from Pasadena. His name was Tom Caroso. He was slightly older than me. He was ordained before me, and then I went up and they ordained me there. It was quite really something. Sandy, do you have any pictures of that?

Yeah. Are you going to show those now or later? As soon as you're finished, I'll go through and show the pictures. Okay, okay. I'm just about finished here. So, yeah, we had those, and it was quite a service. We had, like we close here, closing him and then the fellowship took place. You couldn't hear yourself think the buzz that was going on. Just a real buzz. You think we have a lot of noise going to hear a fellowship? You couldn't hear yourself think there with just a buzz of fellowship going on.

So it was really wonderful, a really good time, and it was an eye-opener for me. I needed to see that. Sandy needed to see it.

Jim had been there before, and it's just how organized it was. It's a small church. It's not a very big church overall. I mean, we're in a few different countries, but just handfuls of people like we are. And it's just what it is, what it is. And so it was really good. Evening meal, we...

We broke, had the evening meal, and then we were lounged. Quite a few of us, we lounged in the bar and lounge area, and they had karaoke going on there. We were sitting in another section, so we weren't really with the karaoke, but we had a whole table full of brethren. Mostly Canadian brethren were there, so we had a good time with that. But you know something? To end here, we all need each other. We're all working to what? Different goals? No, it's the same goal. We're heading to the narrow gate.

And all this stuff going on around us takes place. It is what it is, right? It's hard to overcome, especially if you're alone. Sally and I talked about that last night a little bit. A lot of you guys are alone. That is difficult. That is so difficult. If you think it's not difficult, I don't know. I know that it is. I was alone for a long time too, so I kind of understand where you're at. It's difficult. So we're all working at the same goal.

speaking the same thing, believing the same thing, which of what? The truth of God's Word. It boils down to that, doesn't it? We're all part of one body, the body of Christ. And we use the power of God's Holy Spirit to care for the sheep. It tells us that in Ephesians, the fourth chapter, one verse six. We are to walk worthy, hold to Christ's standard, and speak to the congregation about the congregational needs.

Elder does that. They listen to what's going on and say, I think you should speak to this. So, now you have a local elder. And I will do my best to be humble, to serve you, and we'll serve each other. And that's what we'll do. I'm not above you. I'm standing beside you. I'm a sheep as well. Never forget that. I'm one of the sheep as well. Okay? So you don't have to call me pastor or elder. Nothing's changed. It's Stefan.

Okay? I'm good with that. Everybody's good with that. The guys down there, that's what they do. They're not all puffed up. You get puffed up enough as it is, just being a human, right? So, the Sabbath is something I want to say, just one sentence here. The Sabbath has to be a day of peace, right? If that isn't taking place, this is not representing the Sabbath day. It's a day of peace.

It's a day of unity, especially for us. We are a service organization, so let's, brethren, be about our Father's business. I'm just going to show you some slides, pictures that I took, if you'd like to see what the building down there looks like, and you'll be amazed. We were blown away.