

Hello all.

My name is Gavin Kane. I am 19 at the time of writing this, and I have been an active member of Celebration Church for as long as I remember. I have lots of great memories and I met lots of great people that I'm still friends with to this day. I was very active in the volunteer department and I attended a lot of the youth events they put on, and eventually volunteered for them once I was too old to attend. I taught a class for Fine Arts and attended Spencer Lake Summer Camp, both of which are some of my favorite memories. I think it's important for you to understand this context of me having mostly good memories of my time with the church before I say what I am unfortunately about to say.

Before I actually talk, I just want to say that I don't know every detail of every story I am going to bring up, I just have what I heard and saw with my own eyes as well as some demonstrative evidence that I am going off of.

It has come to my attention as of late that Celebration Church, fundamentally, either is not the same as I remember it being, or I was too young and brainwashed as a young member to notice. As high school went on, I slowly started attending church less and less, and by the time COVID came about, I basically wasn't going there anymore. In my time away from the church, I've re-assessed some stories I had already heard when I was a member there.

I have an older sister named Lexi Kane. There was a situation that had happened to her involving a member of the church. I won't go into detail, if you're interested in her story she has a typed document that you can read [here](#). The biggest takeaway from her situation was how embarrassingly awful the lead pastor of the church, Mark Gungor, handled it. If you want the details, feel free to read her story.

I am ashamed to admit that at first when I didn't really understand the whole story, I fell into the trap of not giving my own sister the benefit of the doubt. Most people in the church believed my sister but counted on Mark to make the final judgment, but he instead fell into the trap of blaming the victim. This method of thinking has clearly been carried over to the members of the church, as it seems not one person attending the church disagrees with him. At the time of all this happening, I was one of those people. I didn't know any better, nor did I know the whole story at the time.

As someone who regularly attended church on Sundays and listened to Mark's "messages", I found him kind of charming at first. Something about his incorporation of humor and his fast pace in his speaking at least somewhat kept me from losing my mind of boredom. Week after week, I started to notice a pattern, especially more recently. His "comedy"..... how do I even explain this. Oh, I know! Here's a screenshot of a meme he posted on his Facebook page as little as a month ago:



His Facebook page is full of “memes” you could pick right out of r/boomershumor on Reddit. This type of “comedy” carries over to his sermons in which he makes fun of millennials and their culture of “playing the victim” and “being offended”. Part of me thinks Mark had a heavy influence on how I was raised just because my parents heard this and used it to shut me down at every opportunity. Regardless, his viewpoint on victimhood also carried over to his conversation with my sister, in which the very first thing he did was blame her for putting herself in that situation. Which, if we haven’t learned by this point, is NOT how you deal with this type of situation.

Since I grew up with this church and trusted everyone that went there, I found it hard to believe anyone there could act so toxic. I know now that I was completely wrong. I find it really hard to even be typing this right now, knowing that people I actually know and trust will likely disown me for even suggesting that the church is systemically toxic because of Mark Gungor. I am hoping that by you reading this, your eyes are opened up and that you’ll understand that something needs to change.

To add to my sister’s story, what angers her so much to this day is that her abuser is still going to Celebration Church (on an on and off basis, but still). I find it unnerving to be around him knowing everything I know now, but I do my best to hide it because he is friends with my friends and I don’t really have the balls to bring it up. I’m afraid I’ll be told to “just get over it” like my sister was. That I’m the problem because I’m being too hard on him. The fact that Mark still allows him to go to this church speaks volumes about his morals, and how backward they are.

A few months ago, I attended an all-male event through the church that I've been going to on a yearly basis for a while now. This event is entirely run by men in the church, voluntarily. Mark has no direct influence on how this event operates. During this event, me and two of my friends my age were taken aside and asked to step up and be leaders at this event. These two friends I have known my whole life and they are incredible people. So it made sense.

My sister's abuser was attending this event as well. One of the leaders suggested that he also be promoted to be a leader.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing when someone finally told me. I doubt this particular leader even knows anything about what happened, which just speaks to how the church is brushing the incident off. Thankfully, another leader who does know the whole story shut the idea down immediately.

Besides that whole situation, Mark Gungor is just a terrible person in general. All you have to do is look at his Facebook page. Maybe it would be less offensive if this was just some random guy, but this is a very wealthy individual with a big influence on his people.



This is just one example of a misogynistic joke on his page, there are plenty more if you look for yourself. You'll also find plenty of conservative-biased political takes, which as a church pastor,

don't really make sense when people follow you for being a church pastor. However, recently, he really outdid himself with a post about "sexual unfaithfulness".

Couples are to be sexually faithful to one another. When one unilaterally decides to deny sex to their partner, they are no longer sexually faithful. More clearly stated: The man or woman who refuses sex to their spouse is being SEXUALLY UNFAITHFUL.

We are not talking about people who are having physical problems or those in abusive situations. We are talking about an individual, for whatever reason, just refusing to be sexually intimate with their spouse.

At it's core, marriage is a sexual contract. Refusing sex to your partner is a violation of the contract. ("Covenant" for you uber spiritual.)

Bottom line is that couples are supposed to be sexually active with each other. When they refuse (and "refuse" is the key word here), they are being sexually unfaithful. And in such cases I always advise the same steps as if one were having sex with a person who is not their spouse.

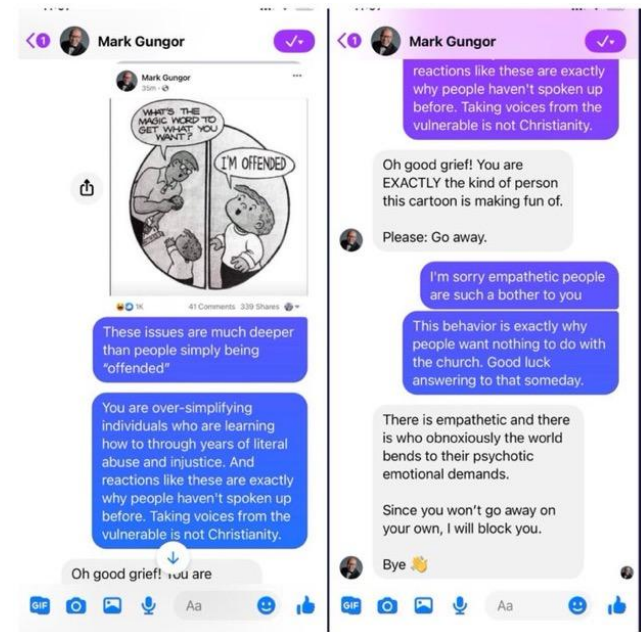
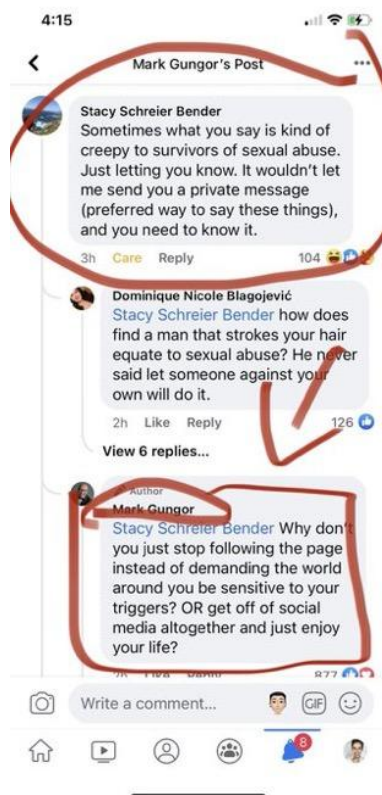
1. Confront the unfaithfulness
2. File for separation

"At its core, marriage is a sexual contract. Refusing sex is a violation."

This is terrifying. This is exactly what women are afraid of. Partners do not owe each other sex. I was taught for the longest time that sex was evil until it was with my wife, but apparently, now I'm signing a contract to not refuse sex when I get married. I can't believe someone with a platform this big would post something this obscene.

Now, keep in mind, his Facebook page is full of "memes" about him not caring who he offends. However, he has demonstrated that he is a coward whenever his logic is challenged.

Mark has two defense mechanisms on the internet. Option one is to block anyone who disagrees with him or calls out his toxic behavior. Option two is to engage in a hostile social media exchange with the person that challenges him. Here are some examples of that:



Hopefully by the time you read this, his posts will still be available on twitter and facebook. Notice how hostile he is. This has been his character from the very beginning. He projects this kind of toxicity into his sermons, and it can be very obvious with the way certain people in the environment act.

Mark Gungor's history of silencing abusers needs to end. He has blocked several people that have tried calling him out, and it's embarrassing that Mark has not had his legitimacy as a pastor challenged in any way besides those of us on social media. His arrogance and cocky attitude is embarrassing and it directly contradicts his claim that others are trying to tear him down, as he does everything in his power to cover himself up.

If you're reading this and attend Celebration Church, I challenge you to share this with your fellow attendees. This is not an attack on you or your religion. Please do not take it that way. You deserve better than Mark Gungor and I hope you have the courage to speak up if you agree with me. Thank you for listening to what I have to say.

If you have any questions, comments, etc. feel free to reach out to me. I won't tolerate any personal attacks.

Thank you for your time and have a nice day :)