

John Longaker Case

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John Longaker Case:

I remember three people, trusted Church and/or Church School employees, that I'd like to talk about here.

John Longaker, the first, was a Computer Teacher at FCA in the 1990s while I was attending the school.

Longaker had an affair with a 14-year-old girl, Kelly Romig, that I knew slightly. The affair involved having sex with Kelly on multiple occasions.

Kelly has told her story herself elsewhere. The short version is that Longaker started out by "counseling" her privately and the "counseling" gradually became physical.

Ultimately, Kelly learned that Longaker was doing other girls. She expressed suicidal thoughts to Longaker related to her feeling that he was abandoning her. Longaker encouraged her to kill herself.

Somebody told Pastor Paul Auckland at Faith Baptist Church about the situation. Kelly was pressed by Auckland to talk about what was happening. She did so.

Longaker was charged with sexual offenses. He pleaded guilty to the least possible charge and spent a short amount of time in prison. It was just for 12 months. They let him out on probation after that.

Longaker denied that anything illegal had happened because Kelly was age 17 at the end, old enough in that State to consent to sex.

However, Kelly was age 14 at the start and romantic relationships with girls that age are disapproved of in most jurisdictions.

Additionally, the part where John Longaker, now of Fellowship Bible Church, told Kelly to go ahead and kill herself because he was tired of her underage charms, well, that part stands out.

That part seems sufficient, in and of itself, to classify Longaker as filth.

Non-public Longaker evidence:

When I got to 7th grade, my friend Dustin's sister Jenna was in one of John Longaker's classes. She got an "F" from him for one report card.

Her dad asked, "What's up with this F?"

I think that I was present during this discussion, but I'm not certain. It's possible that Dustin told me about it.

Jenna told her father, "I'll put it simply. I won't suck up to him."

She said Longaker would hover over girls, clearly trying to look down their shirts. He never hovered over boys, just girls. Sometimes, he'd go so far as to put his hands on girls' shoulders.

He tried this, the touching part, with Jenna. She twisted away from him and said, "Get your hands off of me!" So, Longaker gave her an "F" in his class.

There's no proof, decades later, that the story is true. However, if the incident had been investigated at the time, other students would have been above to confirm that the touching was taking place and Longaker could have been dealt with.

Feelings about Longaker case:

When I thought about this recently, I figured initially that the school was responsible.

A maintenance worker allegedly reported to the school that he'd unlocked a door and found Longaker and Kelly in a disheveled state. That isn't good.

And Kelly apparently asked a staff member, in public, what would happen if a teacher and a student were found to be having an affair.

If these two incidents occurred, one might question the judgment of the school in not investigating things sooner.

I don't remember if Jenna or her father reported that Longaker had tried to touch her. If they did, and the school didn't investigate, this greatly increases the school's culpability.

Eventually Kelly broke down and revealed what was going on to her friend's brother Jason, who was friends with some FCA students and was 18 at the time. He informed Auckland who was willing to investigate but wanted to "handle the problem internally". From all appearances, Auckland took decisive action, but this was after Jason insisted on informing the police himself after Auckland's

reaction. Strangely, Kelly's parents and even her brother Eric "hated" Jason for doing so, he says. Kelly was angry at him as well until she made some progress healing as an adult.

I think that this case is about the "see no evil, hear no evil" maxim in the sense that people are reluctant, initially, to believe that a member of a power structure is doing something inappropriate. It's awkward and inconvenient to need to believe that.

John Longaker today:

Longaker pleaded guilty to a charge that didn't require him to register as a sexual offender. So, the 1990s activities don't seem to have had serious long-term consequences for him.

In fact, by 2010, Longaker was a pastor at Fellowship Bible Church in Castleton, Vermont. He remained pastor at least until 2019 and may still be there as of 2020.

Today, Longaker states that he was entirely innocent and implies that he went to prison solely because of mistakes made by his attorney.

Longaker notes that Kelly filed a police complaint in 2005, a decade after the abuse, related to a partial mental breakdown on her part in which she imagined, incorrectly, that Longaker was stalking her again.

The mental breakdown, though, doesn't change the facts of the original case. And Longaker was arguably largely responsible for Kelly's mental state.

FCA wasn't responsible for Longaker's behavior. Fellowship Bible Church is another matter.

Longaker is no case of repentant criminal turning his life around. The church in question does damage simply by claiming to be a church.

Fellowship Bible Church commented, in 2019, that it didn't know about Longaker's past initially, but that Longaker's initiation of a romantic relationship with a 14-year-old wouldn't necessarily have disqualified him from becoming pastor.

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