

Marion Evans - her very personal story

I have decided to tell the extremely abridged version of my very personal story and those that protest in support of the Exclusive Brethren, may be interested to know how my family has been treated by these people. It is especially relevant at a time when this cult is fighting to retain its charitable status and doing its utmost to convince the outside world that the Exclusive Brethren is there for public benefit and indeed they state on their new look website “family is central to our beliefs”. Those of us who have decided to leave the Exclusive Brethren to live in the real world, of course know that the truth is starkly different to what the Exclusive Brethren would have the wider public believe.

My story begins in 1986 when as a young adult I left the Exclusive Brethren religion in which I had been raised. Leaving my family in the Exclusive Brethren was the hardest decision I have ever had to make, but also the best one. Many would be aware that if one leaves the Exclusive Brethren, either by choice or through being told to leave (known as being “withdrawn from”) they are cut off, shunned and treated as if they no longer exist.

This was the case for me when I first left. I remember walking past my father in the street and him looking through me, as if I wasn't there.

Adjusting to life outside of the Exclusive Brethren was not easy and I struggled a lot in the first few years. Five years after leaving I married my husband Dave and we have two children, who are now adults. Over the years the four of us developed a relationship with my parents. My parents just could not abide by the Exclusive Brethren doctrine of treating me as if I was dead. Due to the extreme unbiblical doctrine of separation we were forced to keep the relationship secret, to protect my parents. Discovery would have most likely resulted in my parents being excommunicated, and this would have prevented them having a relationship with my Exclusive Brethren brother and his family. This was the only way my parents could keep in contact with both their children. The contact grew from infrequent phone calls and letters, to a much deeper and close relationship, to the extent that Dave would often call at my parents' house during the week when he was working nearby and my mother would make him tea and scones and he would sit and chat with Mum and Dad in their lounge.

In February 2008 my father, aged 95, passed away. The Exclusive Brethren tried to bury him in the grave of a non-related female Exclusive Brethren member who had died many years previously. The reason for this became clear some months later.

In September 2008, we found out quite by chance that my brother was sending Mum to New Zealand for a few weeks on “holiday”. Mum told Dave about this when he called to see her with some home-grown tomatoes two days before she left. We were very concerned about Mum's welfare; she suffered from severe back and hip pain, Dementia, and recently had undergone surgery for breast cancer. We spoke to a local Exclusive Brethren member who told us that they had recently learned that an Exclusive Brethren spinster was going on holiday to New Zealand and thought it was a wonderful opportunity for Mum to have a holiday too.

Two days after Mum left for New Zealand I received documentation from the Court of Protection, advising me that my brother had applied for sole Power of Attorney. I objected to this being filed, as I did not believe he had our mother's best interests at heart. I was proved right.

Dave managed to obtain a telephone number for Mum in New Zealand and we kept in contact. Each time I rang, Mum told me she wanted to return to her home, in England.

The “few weeks” holiday turned into six months and when I called New Zealand on 8 May 2009 to speak to Mum again, it seemed that she had disappeared. My relatives with whom Mum had been staying in New Zealand led me to believe that she had returned to the UK to live with my brother. However, it became clear that this was not the case. I made numerous enquiries with many Exclusive Brethren and they all deceived and deliberately misled me as to Mum’s whereabouts.

Finally some weeks later on 2 June 2009 my brother rang me. He refused to give me any contact details and would not tell me where he lived. All he said was that he lived north of Sydney. When I asked to speak to Mum he refused, saying she was unavailable, and put the phone down.

I was distraught and feared the worst. The following day I traced Mum to a hospital in Gosford, New South Wales. I rang and I was advised that my mother had suffered a number of falls in my brother’s house (medical notes confirm they were unseen and unheard by my brother or his family), hence her admission. My call was transferred to Mum’s bedside phone. My mother was clearly thrilled to hear from me but our conversation went no further because my brother was with her. He took the phone from her and told me he would not allow me to speak to her and put the phone down.

My family and I abandoned our booked holiday to Portugal and travelled to Australia in June 2009 to try to bring Mum home. Sadly we were unsuccessful. We were visiting Mum for six days before the Exclusive Brethren we aware of our presence. Once they found out they flooded the hospital, and from that point onwards when we visited Mum they were all grouped around her bed, so much so that we could not get near to her. A nurse was so outraged on our behalf, that she asked the brethren to leave, telling them that the family from England wanted to spend some time with their mother/grandmother. Whilst we were there, my brother obtained my mother’s signature on a bridging visa application form. However, in 2008 medical professionals had stated under the Mental Health Act that Mum had lost capacity due to her Dementia; therefore she did not have the capacity to make such a life choice. My brother did not have Power of Attorney, so what he did in obtaining Mum’s signature was illegal. He knew this. It is documented in hospital notes that Mum did not want to reside in Australia, and that she wanted to return to her home in England. My brother insisted and still does insist that before my father died they had all planned to emigrate to Australia and that this plan was carried through after Dad died. This then begs two questions:

- 1) Why did my brother tell Mum that she was going on holiday, and indeed why were we told by local brethren that Mum had gone on a holiday?
- 2) Why is it documented in hospital notes upon Mum’s admission that my brother’s wife told hospital staff that Mum was holidaying with them?

My father told me when he was 92 that my brother was desperate to move from his tiny house in the UK, to Australia. However he could not afford to do so and had asked my father if they (Mum and Dad) would go with them, in order to provide financial assistance. Dad

told me that he had no intention of moving anywhere at that late stage in their lives.

There are obvious discrepancies and it seems to me that my brother, with the help of the Exclusive Brethren, acted very dishonestly in every aspect of this and forced Mum into Australia via the “back door”. It is not rocket science to work out. Dad (who had refused to relocate) had passed away, Mum had Dementia AND my brother had access to our parents’ finances as well as help from the Exclusive Brethren.

We returned home and I fought through the courts in both the UK and Australia in order to ensure Mum and her assets were protected. Guardians were put in place in both countries as well as a financial manager in Australia. These are decisions that are not taken lightly and it seems that the authorities saw the need for my mother’s assets to be protected from my brother, so that further monies could not be taken. In the Australian Guardianship Tribunal that took place in 2010, my brother informed the panel that he had not thought it was “appropriate” to tell me of his plans for Mum, and that although her express wish was to return home to England, he said it would be “unthinkable” to allow it and he would refuse to facilitate it.

I had sight of my parents’ bank statements during the UK court proceedings and it became clear that my brother had taken money from my parents’ accounts, for flights for himself and others. This amounted to thousands of pounds. My brother admitted to this. However, the money was never returned. After my father had died, my brother had substituted his name for that of my father’s on the bank accounts and this enabled him to help himself to our parents’ money.

Mum went into a nursing home, but before this, was charged by my brother for the privilege of living in a converted garage at the front of his house, in a country where she had no wish to reside. She had her own home with no mortgage in the UK and wanted to return there. She was charged by my brother for electricity, etc., despite the fact that she was already paying for Electricity, Gas, Water Rates and Council Tax on her UK home. Mum also had to reimburse my brother for items/services that she would have received free of charge in the UK, such as prescriptions, eye care, etc.

As if this wasn’t enough, my brother and his wife abused my 88-year-old mother by tying her to her bed, to prevent her getting up. Nursing home staff told us of this elder abuse in 2011. In a meeting at my brother’s house on 5 January 2013 my husband challenged my brother regarding this. He admitted, in front of witnesses that they did indeed treat my mother thus.

My mother died in July 2012. My brother and the Exclusive Brethren refused to postpone the funeral to take into account the 25 hours it would take for us to travel to Australia. We were told in an email that the church service was private. Note, “private”. This, from a group of people who are trying to convince the public that they are an open church. So Mum died in a country in which she had no desire to reside and my brother refused to allow her to be returned to her home in England so she could be buried with her husband.

My brother and I are sole joint beneficiaries to the Will. My brother is also one of the Executors (along with another UK Exclusive Brethren member). The Will is very simple, it states that the estate and personal effects are to be divided **equally** between my brother and I. However, my brother is not carrying out his legal and moral duty to honour our mother’s

wishes. Instead he is making this simple matter extremely difficult.

My husband and I flew to Australia on 26 December 2012, to try to get matters in relation to my mother's Estate sorted. When we first called at my brother's house on 29 December 2012, he opened his front door only just wide enough to get his head through and he kept the fly screen door closed. He refused to talk to me. The image supplied is of my brother standing at the door of his house. The following day he emailed me and said he was sorry but we had caught him "on the hop". He was apparently very anxious to meet with us after all. He sent several emails and even rang our friend and gushed about how much he thought of us all and said he was so sorry he had acted the way he did at the door. A meeting was subsequently arranged for 5 January 2013 and an Exclusive Brethren elder, Nathan Kennard, was present. My brother and his wife both said they were sorry if they had ever acted wrongly or said anything wrong to us. My brother told me he wanted to look at all my concerns. Nathan Kennard said to me "there has been a lot of water under the bridge"; he went on to say "what we can do is do things different from today". When we left, my brother and his wife plied us with gifts, mostly alcohol. The following day we returned the gifts and said we could not accept them.

The meeting was shallow and meant nothing. It was obviously just another of the Exclusive Brethren's delaying tactics. Since the meeting my brother will only communicate with me via his solicitor. So despite Nathan Kennard's words, nothing has changed.

After one month no progress had been made and we had to extend our stay another month. We have put our work, personal and family lives in the UK on hold and now have been here for nearly ten weeks and we are still no further forward. This is at massive expense to us as Dave is a self-employed sole trader and cannot work all the while we are in Australia. Over the three trips we have made to Australia (2009, 2011 and 2012/13) we have incurred expenses in the region of £30,000 (including 95 days where Dave has been unable to work and earn money) plus we lost £600 on our abandoned Portugal holiday in 2009. It is a shame that due to government policy, the State Trustee's role in relation to my mother's finances lapsed at her passing. This then meant that the finances were passed back to whom I believe to be the perpetrator. Had the State Trustee retained the responsibility to divide the estate, this would have been finalised weeks ago.

Last week I had to meet my brother and a lawyer in a public car park to view my mother's massively depleted possessions, having only a few minutes to look at them. This was after my brother and his lawyer had delayed for two hours, leaving us standing in the scorching sun. What I was presented with was a few of my parents' belongings in four broken cardboard boxes in the back of a work van in full view of the public. When I became upset, my brother's lawyer told me that she understood, and that she had lost people too. I was stunned at her insensitivity! I was not allowed to take any of my mother's possessions away with me, apart from my mother's wedding and engagement rings. I was blackmailed into agreeing a "without prejudice" document in order to take these.

I have now been presented with a Deed for signature, including a confidentiality clause, and nothing of my inheritance will be released to me unless I agree to sign it. They have offered me A\$20k (approximately £13,500) towards our expenses claim and as you can see above, this comes nowhere near to reimbursing us the expenditure to which we have been put, which would not have been incurred had Mum not been taken to the other side of the world and held there against her will. The Exclusive Brethren are holding me over a barrel and lumping this

separate issue in with the Will. There is absolutely no reason why that which is not in dispute can't be released. The matter of the money my brother took from my parents accounts has not been addressed and the Deed dictates that I must remain confidential about my monetary claims and the ex gratia payment. This is emotional blackmail of the very worst kind. I have signed nothing to date, so see no reason why I should not be open about what is going on and how they wish to silence me.

Sadly, this is how this group of people behave. A group, who call themselves Christians, yet are not in the slightest bit Christ like.

This is only a very abridged snippet of a story that will shock people in the extreme. Those who know me (including my late father) have encouraged me to write a book. So this I am in the process of doing. The longer this painful matter is drawn out, the more chapters it adds to my book.

Hopefully the readers of this post will be able to look at my story and ask themselves, are the Exclusive Brethren truly what they purport to be, or is there another sinister side to them? A side, which they would prefer to keep hidden from the public? I know the truth and I dearly hope that others will see the Exclusive Brethren for what they really are.

