

C Street Fellowship (Christian organization)

REF: CONFIRMATION FOR *"The Heart of the Matter – is the Integrity of the Heart"* Seven Page

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The Fellowship, also known as The Family, is an international organization founded in [1935](#) and has since at least 1969 been led by [Douglas Coe](#). Its members include scores of U.S. Senators, members of Congress, White House and other executive branch officials, high-ranking military officers, corporate executives, the heads of religious and [humanitarian aid](#) organizations, and non-U.S. leaders and ambassadors. It has been described by prominent evangelical Christians as one of the most, or the most politically well-connected fundamentalist organization in the US. ^{[1][2][3][4][5]}

Incorporated in Illinois in December 1942 as the National Committee for Christian Leadership (NCCL), the organization changed its name to International Christian Leadership, Inc. (ICL) in 1943, and in 1972, to Fellowship Foundation, Inc. ^{[6][7]} *It also has conducted activities as the National Fellowship Council* ^[citation needed] *and National Leadership Council.* ^[citation needed]

The core purpose of this group as stated by its leader [Douglas Coe](#) is to provide a private forum for public officials to hold [Bible Studies](#), prayer meetings, worship services, or to share their troubles. ^{[8][9]} *In [Newsweek](#), Lisa Miller writes that the common love for the teachings of [Jesus](#) binds this group together and all approaches are acceptable; Jesus the historical figure, the rabbi, the prophet, the shining example, the Son of God.* ^[10]

The group is most widely known for organizing prayer groups throughout the United States and around the world, including the Presidential Prayer Breakfast, later renamed the [National Prayer Breakfast](#). Every sitting United States president since 1953 has attended the event. ^{[7][11][12][13]}

The Fellowship generally practices strict secrecy about its members or activities and as such, eschews publicity and asks its members not to speak about the group; some members have denied that the Fellowship exists. ^[14]

Extent of influence

Prominent evangelical and fundamentalist Christians, and the Family themselves, have described it as one of the most, or the most, politically well-connected fundamentalist organization in the US.

[D. Michael Lindsay](#), a Rice University sociologist who studies the evangelical movement, says "there is no other organization like the Fellowship, especially among religious groups, in terms of its access or clout among the country's leadership." ^[2] *He also reports that lawmakers mentioned the Fellowship more than any other organization when asked to name a ministry with the most influence on their faith.* ^[1]

In 1977, four years after he had converted to Christianity, Fellowship member and Watergate conspirator [Charles Colson](#) described the Family as a "veritable underground of Christ's men all through [the US] government." ^[3]

The Reverend Robert Schenck, founder of the Washington, D.C. ministry Faith and Action in the Nation's Capital, describes the Family's influence as "off the charts" in comparison with other fundamentalist groups, specifically compared to [Focus on the Family](#), [Pat Robertson](#), [Gary Bauer](#), [Traditional Values Coalition](#), and [Prison Fellowship](#).^[5] (These last two are associated with the Family: Traditional Values Coalition uses their C Street House^[5] and Prison Fellowship was founded by [Charles Colson](#).) Schenck also says that "the mystique of the Fellowship" has helped it "gain entree into almost impossible places in the capital."^[14]

A series of taped seminars from 1970 for young male members of the Fellowship describes their access to power: "If you want doors opened... there are men in government, there are senators who literally find it their pleasure to give any kind of advice, assistance, or counsel."^[15]

Lindsay also interviewed 360 evangelical elites, among whom "One in three mentioned [Doug] Coe or the Fellowship as an important influence."^[2]

The Family also has relationships with numerous non-US government leaders. Lindsay reports that the Family "has relationships with pretty much every world leader— good and bad— and there are not many organizations in the world that can claim that."^[1]

"The Fellowship's reach into governments around the world is almost impossible to overstate or even grasp," says David Kuo, a member of the Family and former special assistant in George W. Bush's Office of Faith-Based Initiatives.^[4]

Beliefs and theology

The Fellowship's [501\(c\)\(3\)](#) mission statement is:

To develop and maintain an informal association of people banded together, to go out as "ambassadors of reconciliation," modeling the principles of Jesus, based on loving God and loving others. To work with the leaders of other nations, and as their hearts are touched, the poor, the oppressed, the widows and the youth of their country will be impacted in a positive manner. It is said that youth groups will be developed under the thoughts of Jesus, including loving others as you want to be loved.

As [Newsweek](#) reports, the Fellowship has often been criticized by conservative and fundamentalist Christian groups for being too inclusive and not putting enough emphasis on doctrine or church attendance.^[10]

[David Kuo](#), a member of the Fellowship and staffer in President [George W. Bush](#)'s Office of Faith Based Initiatives, said of the Fellowship:

For all the hysteria about Christian organizations, the irony that the Fellowship is being targeted as a bad egg is jaw-dropping. This is so not [Focus on the Family](#), this is so not the [Christian Coalition](#). There are other Christian groups that are truly insane. Who purport to follow Jesus Christ and who I would submit do not. The Fellowship is a loosely banded group of people who have an affinity for Jesus.^[10]

Current Fellowship member and former US Representative [Tony P. Hall](#) (D-OH) said, "If people in this country knew how many Democrats and Republicans pray together and actually like each other behind closed doors, they would be amazed."

The Fellowship is simply, "men and women who are trying to get right with God. Trying to follow God, learn how to love him, and learn how to love each other." When he lost his teenage son to [leukemia](#), Hall says, "This family helped me. This family was there for me. That's what they do."^[10]

Hillary Clinton described meeting the leader of the Fellowship in 1993: "Doug Coe, the longtime National Prayer Breakfast organizer, is a unique presence in Washington: a genuinely loving spiritual mentor and guide to anyone, regardless of party or faith, who wants to deepen his or her relationship to God."^[17]

Author Jeff Sharlet did intensive research in the Family's archives, before the Family archives were closed to the public. He also spent a month in 2003 living at a Fellowship house near Washington, and wrote a magazine article describing his experiences.

In his 2008 book about the Family, he criticizes their theology as elitist, an "elite fundamentalism" that fetishizes political power and wealth, consistently opposes labor movements in the US and abroad, and teaches that [laissez-faire](#) economic policy is "God's will." He criticizes their theology of instant forgiveness for powerful men as providing a convenient excuse so that elites who commit misdeeds or crimes can avoid accepting responsibility or accountability for their actions.^[18] Lisa Miller called his book "alarmist" and says it paints a "creepy, even cultish picture" of the young, lower-ranking members of the Fellowship.^[10]

Controversial leadership model

Fellowship leader Doug Coe is described as preaching a leadership model, and a personal commitment to [Jesus Christ](#), comparable to the blind devotion that [Adolf Hitler](#), [Josef Stalin](#), [Chairman Mao](#), and [Pol Pot](#) demanded from their followers.^[19] In one videotaped 1989 lecture series, Coe said, "Hitler, Goebbels and Himmler were three men. Think of the immense power these three men had...But they bound themselves together in an agreement...Two years before they moved into Poland, these three men had...systematically a plan drawn out...to annihilate the entire Polish population and destroy by numbers every single house...every single building in Warsaw and then to start on the rest of Poland." Coe adds that it worked; they killed six and a half million "Polish people." Though he calls Nazis "these enemies of ours," he compares their commitment to Jesus' demands: "Jesus said, 'You have to put me before other people. And you have to put me before yourself.' Hitler, which was the demand to be in the Nazi party. You have to put the Nazi party and its objectives ahead of your own life and ahead of other people."^{[19][20]}

Coe also compares Jesus' teachings with the Red Guard during the Chinese [Cultural Revolution](#):

I've seen pictures of young men in the Red Guard of China...they would bring in this young man's mother and father, lay her on the table with a basket on the end, he would take an axe and cut her head off...They have to put the purposes of the Red Guard ahead of the mother-father-brother-sister -- their own life! That was a covenant. A pledge. That was what Jesus said.^{[19][21]}

David Kuo states that comparisons such as these aren't representative of the picture Douglas Coe was trying to paint:

Kuo says Doug Coe wasn't lauding Hitler's actions. "What Doug is saying, it's a metaphor. He is using Hitler as a metaphor. Jesus used that," Kuo said. A metaphor for what? "Commitment," Kuo answered. ... [A] close friend told NBC News that Doug Coe invokes Hitler only to show the power of small groups -- for good and bad. And, the friend said, Coe spends "99 percent" of his time during the sermons talking about the leadership model set by Jesus Christ. ^[19]

Publicized extra-marital affairs of Fellowship members

In 2009, the Family received a spate of media attention when three prominent Republicans associated with the Fellowship were reported to have engaged in extra-marital affairs. Two of them, Senator [John Ensign](#) and South Carolina Governor [Mark Sanford](#), were considering running for President in 2012 and their affairs were known to the Family several months before becoming public. The affairs of Ensign and then-Congressman [Chip Pickering](#), R-Miss., took place while they were living at the C Street Center. All three voted to [impeach Bill Clinton](#); Ensign and Sanford had called for Clinton to resign over his affair with Monica Lewinsky. ^{[59][60]}



[edit] [Senator John Ensign](#)

Senator John Ensign, a Fellowship member and longtime resident of the C Street Center, admitted in July 2009 that he had had an extra-marital affair with a staffer. The announcement by Ensign brought additional public scrutiny of the Fellowship and the C Street Center, where Ensign lived with Senator [Tom Coburn](#) and other senior politicians. ^[61] *Coburn, with Timothy and David Coe, attempted to intervene to end Ensign's affair in February 2008, before the affair became public; they met with the husband of Ensign's lover and encouraged Ensign to write a letter to her, breaking off the affair.* ^{[62][63][64]} *Ensign, who was driven to Federal Express from C Street Center to post the letter, shortly thereafter called his lover to tell her to ignore it.* ^{[62][63][64]} *One of Doug Coe's grandchildren, Belen R Coe, was a paid intern in Senator Ensign's office in 2004.* ^[65]



[edit] [South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford](#)

In June 2009, South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford, a Fellowship member and Congressman from 1995 to 2001, admitted to having an extramarital affair and said that months prior he had sought counseling at the C Street Center. ^[66] *While attempting to decline federal stimulus funds for South Carolina, Sanford was using state money to fly first class to visit his lover in Argentina.* ^[67] *During his last secret trip to Argentina in June 2009, during which he told his staff he was hiking on the Appalachian trail, Sanford disappeared for four days and did not answer 15 calls from his chief of staff, Scott English, or let his family know where he was on Father's Day.* ^[68]

Sanford "was a frequent visitor to the home for prayer meetings and meals during his time in Congress".^[69] Sanford turned down his Congressional living allowance while serving in Washington, choosing instead to sleep in his office.^[70] Recently, however, Sanford was found to have potentially violated state law by abusive use of state planes, including to fly to get a haircut.^[71]



[\[edit\]](#) Congressman Chip Pickering

In 2009, Pickering's wife filed a lawsuit against the alleged mistress of her husband, a former six-term Republican Congressman from Mississippi.^{[69][72]} The lawsuit alleges that Pickering restarted a relationship with Elizabeth Creekmore Byrd, his college sweetheart, while he was "a United States congressman prior to and while living in the well-known C Street Complex in Washington, D.C."

[\[edit\]](#) List of prominent Family members

This is a partial member list focusing on well-known and influential members of the Family.

[\[edit\]](#) Members currently in the US Congress

Sam Brownback Chair of Senate Values Action Team Rep (R-KS)
James Inhofe Senate Rep (R-OK)
Jim DeMint Senate Rep (R-SC) -----Chairman of Steering Committee
Chuck Grassley Senate Rep (R-IA) -----Former Chairman of Finance Committee
Richard Lugar Senate Rep (Rep IN) ----- Former Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee
John Ensign Senate Rep (R-NV) ----- Involved in sex scandal
Tom Coburn Senate Rep (R-OK) ----- Acted as go between for Sen. Ensign and his mistress and her family.
Mark Pryor Senate Rep (D-AR)
Bill Nelson Senate Rep (D-FL)
John Thune Senate Rep (R-SD)
Mike Enzi Senate (R-WY) ---
Joe Pitts Senate Rep (R-PA) ----- Chair of House **Values Action Team**; Member Committees on Energy & Commerce, Sec. & Coop in Europe
Todd Tiahrt Senate Rep (R-KS)
Frank Wolf Senate Rep (R-VA) ----- Member of House Appropriations Panel^[1]
Zach Wamp Senate Rep (R-TN)
Mike McIntyre Senate Rep (D-NC)
Rep Bart Stupak Senate Rep (D-MI) ---- Author of the **Stupak-Pitts Amendment** for the **Affordable Health Care for America Act** that would ban federal funding for abortions.
Michael F. Doyle Senate Rep (D-PA)
Heath Shuler Senate Rep (D-NC)
Jerry Moran Senate Rep (R-KS)

[\[edit\]](#) *Members currently serving as state governors*

Mark Sanford Gov. (R-SC) Notoriety Involved in sex scandal

[\[edit\]](#) *Current Family members formerly serving in the executive branch*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Notoriety</i>
<i>John Ashcroft</i>	<i>Attorney General</i>	<i>AG under G.W. Bush; Also Sen. (R-MO), Member CNP</i>
<i>Dan Quayle</i>	<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Also former Sen. (R-IN)</i>
<i>James Baker</i>	<i>Secretary of State</i>	<i>Served under G.H.W. Bush</i>
<i>Robert "Bud" McFarlan</i>	<i>National Security Adviser</i>	<i>Iran-Contra conspirator; served under Reagan</i>
<i>Ed Meese</i>	<i>Attorney General</i>	<i>Served under Reagan; also Member CNP</i>
<i>Charles Colson</i>	<i>Special Counsel</i>	<i>Watergate conspirator; served under Nixon; joined the Fellowship after leaving executive branch; served time in prison.</i>
<i>Melvin Laird</i>	<i>Secretary of Defense</i>	<i>Persuaded Ford to pardon Nixon</i>

[\[edit\]](#) *Current Family members formerly in the US Congress*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Notoriety</i>
<i>Don Nickles</i>	<i>Sen. (R-OK)</i>	<i>Also Member Council for National Policy</i>
<i>Mark Hatfield</i>	<i>Sen. (R-OR)</i>	<i>Chairman of Appropriations Committee</i>
<i>Pete Domenici</i>	<i>Sen. (R-NM)</i>	
<i>Dan Coats</i>	<i>Sen. (R-IN)</i>	<i>Promoted Faith-Based Initiatives</i>
<i>Chip Pickering</i>	<i>Rep. (R-MS)</i>	<i>Involved in sex scandal</i>
<i>Tony P. Hall</i>	<i>Rep. (D-OH)</i>	<i>Also UN ambassador for hunger issues under G.W. Bush</i>

[\[edit\]](#) *Current Family members formerly in the US military*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Notoriety</i>
<i>John W. Vessey^[4]</i>	<i>Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff</i>	
<i>David C. Jones^[9]</i>	<i>Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff</i>	<i>Also member Council on Foreign Relations</i>

[\[edit\]](#) *Historical members*

The following Family members are all deceased.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Notoriety</i>
Richard C. Halverson ^[1]	<i>US Senate chaplain</i>	<i>"[One] of the first to join the Fellowship under found Abraham Vereide in the 1950s."</i> ^[1]
Richard Nixon ^[87]	<i>US President</i>	<i>Joined Family after presidency</i> ^[87]
Gerald R. Ford ^[92]	<i>US President</i>	<i>Pardoned Richard Nixon; also Member CFR</i>
Strom Thurmond ^[24]	<i>Sen. (R-SC)</i>	<i>opponent of civil rights</i>
Herman Talmadge ^[24]	<i>Sen. (D-GA)</i>	<i>opponent of civil rights</i>
John C. Stennis ^[4]	<i>Sen. (D-MS)</i>	<i>opponent of civil rights</i>
Absalom Willis Robertson ^[24]	<i>Sen. (D-VA)</i>	<i>Father of Pat Robertson</i>
Arthur F. Burns ^[92]	<i>Chief of Federal Reserve</i>	<i>Served under Nixon</i>
Frank Carlson ^[93]	<i>Sen. (R-KS)</i>	<i>Kingmaker for Eisenhower</i>
Harold K. Johnson ^[94]	<i>Gen., Chief of Staff of the Army</i>	