

For Nuncio Accused of Abuse, Dominicans Want Justice at Home, Not Abroad

By [LAURIE GOODSTEIN](#)

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SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic — He was a familiar figure to the skinny shoeshine boys who work along the oceanfront promenade here. Wearing black track pants and a baseball cap pulled low over his balding head, they say, he would stroll along in the late afternoon and bring one of them down to the rocky shoreline or to a deserted monument for a local Catholic hero.

The boys say he gave them money to perform sexual acts. They called him “the Italian” because he spoke Spanish with an Italian accent.

It was only after he was spirited out of the country, the boys say, his picture splashed all over the local news media, that they learned his real identity: Archbishop Jozef Wesolowski, the Vatican’s ambassador to the Dominican Republic.

“He definitely seduced me with money,” said Francis Aquino Aneury, who says he was 14 when the man he met shining shoes began offering him increasingly larger sums for sexual acts. “I felt very bad. I knew it wasn’t the right thing to do, but I needed the money.”

The case is the first time that a top Vatican ambassador, or nuncio — who serves as a personal envoy of the pope — has been accused of sexual abuse of minors. It has sent shock waves through the Vatican and two predominantly Catholic countries that have only begun to grapple with clergy sexual abuse: the Dominican Republic and Poland, where Mr. Wesolowski was ordained by the Polish prelate who later became Pope John Paul II.

It has also created a test for Pope Francis, who has called child sexual abuse “such an ugly crime” and pledged to move the Roman Catholic Church into an era of “zero tolerance.” For priests and bishops who have violated children, he told reporters in May, “There are no privileges.”

Mr. Wesolowski has already faced the harshest penalty possible under the church’s canon law, short of excommunication: on June 27, [he was defrocked by the Vatican](#), reducing him to the status of a layman. The Vatican, which as a city-state has its own judicial system, has also said it intends to try Mr. Wesolowski on criminal charges — the first time the Vatican has held a criminal trial for sexual abuse.

But far from settling the matter, the Vatican has stirred an outcry because it helped Mr. Wesolowski avoid criminal prosecution and a possible jail sentence in the Dominican Republic. Acting against its own guidelines for handling abuse cases, the church failed to inform the local

authorities of the evidence against him, secretly recalled him to Rome last year before he could be investigated, and then invoked diplomatic immunity for Mr. Wesolowski so that he could not face trial in the Dominican Republic.

The Vatican's handling of the case shows both the changes the church has made in dealing with sexual abuse, and what many critics call its failures. When it comes to removing pedophiles from the priesthood, the Vatican is moving more assertively and swiftly than before. But as Mr. Wesolowski's case suggests, the church continues to be reluctant to report people suspected of abuse to the local authorities and allow them to face justice in secular courts.

The Vatican says that because Mr. Wesolowski was a member of its diplomatic corps and a citizen of the Holy See, the case would be handled in Rome. But even many faithful Catholics in this nation, [home to the oldest Catholic cathedral in the Americas](#), say they are unsettled that a Vatican official could have been using children for sex, yet was not arrested and tried in their own country.

"From the pure standpoint of justice, he should be tried in the country where the acts took place because the conditions for trying him will not be the same elsewhere," said [Antonio Medina Calcaño, dean of the faculty of law and political science of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo](#). "But all we can do is hope that the courts in the Vatican will treat this with the severity that it really deserves."

The Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, did not say when the Wesolowski trial will start, who is representing the former nuncio, or whether he is at liberty while he awaits trial. [Under Vatican law, sexual abuse charges can bring a maximum of 12 years in prison and a fine of nearly \\$200,000.](#)

A Dominican bishop, Victor Masalles, visiting Rome in late June, said in a [Twitter message](#) that he was surprised to see Mr. Wesolowski "strolling the Via della Scrofa," in the city's picturesque ancient center. He added, "The silence of the Church has hurt the people of God."

A Man Known as 'The Italian'

The waterfront promenade in the Dominican capital is dominated by a [50-foot monument to the 16th-century Spanish friar Antonio de Montesinos](#), dressed in robes and preaching the fiery sermon that made him famous: denouncing the slavery and abuse of the indigenous people by their Spanish colonists.

It was at the heel of this colossus, on the deserted upper plaza in the shadow of the friar's robes, Mr. Aquino said, that he was often molested by the man he knew as "the Italian." The man always chose a bench that would allow him to see the rare visitor coming up the staircase, and would watch the boy masturbate, would touch him or would touch himself, said Mr. Aquino, now 17. Other times, they went to the rocky beach below the statue.

Mr. Aquino, whose family is originally from Haiti, left school in the eighth grade, earning \$1.50 on a typical weekday by shining shoes. But he said that the man gave him more than \$10 the first

time they met, in 2010, to shine his shoes and to swim naked in the ocean while Mr. Wesolowski watched.

The man returned often over the next six weeks, Mr. Aquino said. But gradually the man wanted more, giving him from about \$25 to as much as \$135, as well as sneakers and a watch, for sexual acts. They met on and off over three years, Mr. Aquino said, but the man revealed little more than his first name, which he gave as “Josie.”

There is a mix of shame and anger among the shoeshine boys who say they knew the man. Darwin Quervedo, who is 14, said haltingly, with eyes downcast, that when he was 11, the man gave him more than \$25 to watch him masturbate down by the beach. He said he felt scared, and never did it again.

When he learned much later of the man’s identity, Darwin said he thought to himself, “What kind of a man who is a priest does things like this?”

The promenade is a popular stretch for tourists and joggers. But it is also frequented by those seeking children and young men for sex. With all this activity, Mr. Wesolowski, in his track suit and running shoes, did not at first attract inordinate attention. He also chose his victims carefully, the shoe shiners said.

“He wasn’t interested in me,” said Robin Quello Cintrón, 23. “He said I was too old, that he liked the younger ones.”

“I warned the younger kids, ‘Don’t go with him,’ ” said Mr. Cintrón, adding, “But the money tempted them.”

Curbing child sexual exploitation is a pressing issue in the Dominican Republic and many countries, and the Catholic Church is among the many religious institutions that have taken up the cause.

In March, Pope Francis signed onto a campaign with other global religious leaders [to fight all forms](#) of human slavery, including child prostitution. This month, he sent a message for the [opening of a refuge](#) in Argentina for young victims of sexual exploitation.

Still, two United Nations panels in Geneva examining the church’s record on child sexual abuse questioned the Vatican this year about its handling of the Wesolowski case.

Mr. Wesolowski, 66, was ordained at 23 in Krakow by Archbishop Karol Józef Wojtyła, who later became Pope John Paul II. In 1999, he was appointed papal nuncio to Bolivia, and in 2002, he was reassigned to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

In 2008, he was sent to the Dominican Republic. Mr. Wesolowski served as a ceremonial dean of the international diplomatic corps here, convening an annual party in honor of the country’s president. The posting came with a stately residence and access to a beach house.

On the waterfront, Mr. Wesolowski attempted to disguise his rank, the boys say. He drove a small gray-green Suzuki sport utility vehicle with rosary beads hanging from the rearview mirror, they recalled, and parked it near the monument in the colonial zone, where several streets are named for archbishops.

One day last year, Nuria Piera, a prominent television journalist, received a tip that the papal nuncio drank beer many afternoons at a waterfront restaurant, then went off with young boys.

Ms. Piera sent a video crew to surreptitiously film the nuncio, she said in an interview at CDN, where she is general director. The crew shot some video of Mr. Wesolowski drinking alone and walking the promenade, Ms. Piera said, but he noticed their presence (though not the camera), walked over, smacked his hand against their car and asked why they were following him.

After that, Ms. Piera said, he disappeared from the waterfront. Her tipster never saw him there again.

“I suspected that there may have been a leak from our own office,” Ms. Piera said.

Mr. Wesolowski began sending a young Dominican church deacon to procure children for him, law enforcement authorities in the Dominican Republic say.

The deacon, Francisco Javier Occi Reyes, was arrested by the police on June 24, 2013, accused of solicitation of minors and taken to jail. But no one came to bail him out, and the deacon sent an anguished letter dated July 2 to Mr. Wesolowski, to be delivered to him by hand at his office.

“We have offended God” and the church, the letter said, by sexually abusing children and adolescents “for crumbs of money.” The deacon wrote that he had agreed to find child victims for the nuncio so that “your sexual appetite can be satiated,” but that he was now asking God for forgiveness.

“Hopefully you will consider asking for God to help you to walk away from this evil disease of continuing to sexually abuse innocent children,” the letter said, according to a copy obtained by The New York Times from a Dominican Justice Ministry official.

The deacon sent copies of the letter to Cardinal Nicolas de Jesus López Rodríguez, the head of the church in the Dominican Republic, and to a Dominican bishop, Gregorio Nicanor Peña Rodríguez. The cardinal then carried the evidence to the Vatican, where he met directly with Pope Francis, according to interviews with the Dominican authorities. On Aug. 21 last year, Mr. Wesolowski was secretly recalled to Rome.

Six days later, the cardinal called the papal nuncio “a great friend and promoter of peace.”

Neither the cardinal, nor other church officials, reported the allegations to the local authorities, Dominican officials say. [Vatican guidelines](#) say that criminal sexual abuse accusations should be reported in countries where reporting is required.

[The country's attorney general, Francisco Domínguez Brito](#), and [the district attorney of Santo Domingo, Yeni Berenice Reynoso Gómez](#), both said in interviews that they first learned about the allegations against Mr. Wesolowski from [Ms. Piera's television reports, which were broadcast in early September and included a child asserting that he had been abused](#).

Soon after, church officials here told local news media that Mr. Wesolowski had been recalled because of the allegations against him, prompting Cardinal Rodriguez to confirm that he had gone to the Vatican to address the matter. He and other church officials denied requests for an interview.

'The Most Terrible Case'

The district attorney, Ms. Reynoso, said her investigators had identified four children aged 12 to 17 with whom the nuncio had sexual contact, but that there were likely others.

The 17-year-old had epilepsy, and the nuncio gave him medicine for his condition in exchange for sexual acts, starting from when the boy was 13, the district attorney said. She said she had "no doubt" about the credibility of the youths' testimony, because it was corroborated by other evidence.

"This is the most terrible case that I have ever seen," said Ms. Reynoso. "He was abusing kids who were living in extreme poverty, in exchange for pills for a boy's illness. It's very perverse."

The Vatican sent someone to the Dominican Republic last October to look into the case, but they made no contact with the district attorney or anyone in her office, Ms. Reynoso said. She forwarded her report to the country's attorney general, who forwarded it to the Vatican.

Ms. Reynoso said the case should have been prosecuted in the Dominican Republic. "These children who were abused, and their families, and the Dominican society, have a legitimate right to see Jozef Wesolowski judged by a jury — not as a diplomat, but for what he really is," she said. "A child abuser."

Mr. Brito, the attorney general, said he trusted that the Vatican would apply the "appropriate discipline." He said he did not seek to have Mr. Wesolowski extradited because he has diplomatic immunity, and "the law would not allow it."

According to experts in international law, the Vatican could have waived diplomatic immunity. In Santo Domingo, there have been small protests and petitions signed by more than a thousand people calling on the Vatican to extradite Mr. Wesolowski to the Dominican Republic. Advocates have accused the government of acquiescing to the church. "We think there has been a lot of impunity in this case, and no transparency," said Sergia Galván, executive director of the [Women and Health Collective](#), which represents abuse victims. "If he's no longer a diplomat, if he was stripped of that title, he no longer has immunity."

The case has reverberated in Poland, where prosecutors have sought to extradite Mr. Wesolowski, who holds both Vatican and Polish citizenship. Poland has indicted another Polish

priest, the Rev. Wojciech Gil, who fled the Dominican Republic last year amid allegations that he abused altar boys in his rural parish. Prosecutors in the Dominican Republic say that Father Gil and Mr. Wesolowski spent time with young boys at the nuncio's beach house.

There are indications from Rome that the pope himself is concerned about the Wesolowski case. A Dominican bishop, Fausto Ramón Mejía, said in an interview that when he was part of a delegation visiting the Vatican late last year, Pope Francis' smile vanished on hearing what country he was from.

“He became very serious,” said Bishop Mejía. “He stopped and he said to me, very sincerely, ‘I feel as though my heart was crossed by a dagger from what took place in the Dominican Republic.’ ”

The case has shaken this stalwart Catholic nation, but the church has said little. In one group photograph released by the Dominican bishops, [Mr. Wesolowski's face appeared to have been removed from the picture](#).

“The people used to say, ‘I want my child to go to a Catholic church,’ ” said the [Rev. Rogelio Cruz, a Catholic priest here](#). “Now they say, ‘No child of mine is ever going to a Catholic church.’ ”

END

Talk in Synagogue of Israel and Gaza Goes From Debate to Wrath to Rage

By [LAURIE GOODSTEIN](#)

SEPT. 22, 2014

With the war in Gaza still raging, Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum offered an unusual prayer for peace last month during a Friday night service at the large predominantly gay synagogue she leads in New York. Cautioning her flock not to “harden our hearts” against any who had suffered, she wove throughout the prayer the names of young Israeli soldiers — as well as Palestinian children — who were killed in Gaza.

The reaction was swift: A member of the board posted his resignation letter on Facebook, accusing Rabbi Kleinbaum of spreading propaganda for the militant Palestinian group Hamas, and three more congregants soon left.

From the other direction, Rabbi Ron Aigen heard criticism at his synagogue in Montreal this month after he gave a sermon asserting that in the recent battle, Israel had endeavored to live up to the highest standards of Jewish teaching on ethical and just war. He said that he received a letter from a member who had not heard the sermon, but announced that she was quitting because there was no room to express criticism of Israel in the synagogue, which is Reconstructionist and one of the most liberal in Montreal.

Forty-seven years after Israel's victory in the 1967 Middle East war — celebrated by Jews worldwide — Israel's occupation of Arab lands won in battle and its standoff with the Palestinians have become so divisive that many rabbis say it is impossible to have a civil conversation about Israel in their synagogues. Debate among Jews about Israel is nothing new, but some say the friction is now fire. Rabbis said in interviews that it may be too hot to touch, and many are anguishing over what to say about Israel in their sermons during the High Holy Days, which begin Wednesday evening.

Particularly in the large cohort of rabbis who consider themselves liberals and believers in a “two-state solution,” some said they are now hesitant to speak much about Israel at all. If they defend Israel, they risk alienating younger Jews who, rabbis say they have observed, are more detached from the Jewish state and organized Judaism. If they say anything critical of Israel, they risk angering the older, more conservative members who often are the larger donors and active volunteers.

The recent bloody outbreak of fighting between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip may have done little to change the military or political status quo there, but rabbis in the North American diaspora say the summertime war brought into focus how the ground under them has shifted.

“It used to be that Israel was always the uniting factor in the Jewish world,” said [Rabbi Aigen](#), who has served Congregation Dorshei Emet in Montreal for 39 years. “But it's become contentious and sadly, I think it is driving people away from the organized Jewish community. Even trying to be centrist and balanced and present two sides of the issue, it is fraught with danger.”

Israel is still, without a doubt, the spiritual center and the fondest cause of global Jewry. Many rabbis said that Hamas's summer assaults on Israel, by rocket fire and underground tunnels, the anti-Semitism that erupted around the world and the rise of the terrorist group that calls itself the Islamic State in neighboring Syria left them feeling more aware of Israel's vulnerability and more protective of it than ever.

“There's just been a tremendous outpouring of support, a sense of real connection and identification with our brothers and sisters in Israel,” said Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly, which represents the Conservative movement, summing up what she heard during a recent “webinar” for rabbis preparing for the High Holy Days.

But many rabbis said in interviews conducted in recent weeks that, though they love and support Israel, they feel conflicted about its direction. These are rabbis in the Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements — not the Orthodox, who make up about 10 percent of American

Jews and tend to lean right on Israel. Some are rabbis who believe that the expansion of settlements in the West Bank is undermining the possibility for Palestinians to have a state of their own. They believe Israel must defend itself, but they questioned the Israeli bomb strikes in Gaza that killed so many women and children. Now, they said, they are more reluctant than ever to be open with their congregants about their views.

“There is the sense that the ability to criticize Israel has been diminished because of the war, because of the atrocities that Hamas perpetrates among its own people, and because Israel needs our support since the international community is so overwhelmingly anti-Israel,” said Rabbi Jonathan A. Stein, a recently retired senior rabbi at Temple Shaaray Tefila in Manhattan.

“The easy sermon for a rabbi to give this year will be on the rise of anti-Semitism across the world. That is a softball,” said Rabbi Stein, who is also the immediate past president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which represents the Reform movement. “The more difficult sermon to give will be one that has any kind of critical posture.”

His sentiments were echoed by others who did not want to be identified because they felt they would risk their jobs. In a recent effort to quantify the phenomenon, one-third of 552 rabbis who responded to a [questionnaire](#) put out last year by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs said they were reluctant to express their true views on Israel. (Most who responded were not Orthodox.) The “doves” were far more likely to say they were fearful of speaking their minds than the “hawks.”

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, executive director of [T’ruah: The Rabbinical Call for Human Rights](#), a liberal group with 1,800 member rabbis, said: “Rabbis are just really scared because they get slammed by their right-wing congregants, who are often the ones with the purse strings. They are not necessarily the numerical majority, but they are the loudest.”

One Midwestern rabbi in the Conservative movement, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he is raising money from Jewish donors, said he was rejected for a position at a temple after he told the board that “there’s not just one Jewish point of view” on Israel. Another rabbi’s board put a note in her file saying she cannot speak about Israel.

After she read the names of children killed in Gaza, Rabbi Kleinbaum found herself vilified on social media. But she retained the backing of her board at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, the largest gay synagogue in the country, and some new members joined, she said. Her message, she said in an interview, is not so controversial. “If we as Jews don’t feel the pain for the loss of life of children,” she said, “we’re losing a piece of our soul.”

There is more space to be critical of Israel in Israel than in North America, said Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, a former president of the Union for Reform Judaism, who wrote an article for the current issue of [Reform Judaism magazine](#) on rabbis who feel “muzzled.” He said in an interview, “There are a range of opinions in Israel, and there should be a range of opinions here.”

Rabbi Yoffie suggested that synagogues draw a “red line” excluding those who support boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel. Few rabbis who publicly support the “B.D.S.”

movement lead congregations. Rabbi Brant Rosen, one of the few, announced to his congregants in a mournful letter this month that in the coming months he will step down from leadership at the [Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation](#) in Evanston, Ill., after 17 years because “my activism has become a lightning rod for division.”

Rabbi Rosen said in an interview: “For many Jews, Israel is their Judaism, or at least a big part of it. So when someone challenges the centrality of Israel in a public way, it’s very painful and very difficult, especially when that person is their rabbi.”

Last year, the [Board of Rabbis](#) of Southern California of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles tried and failed to organize an event exploring how to have a dialogue about Israel, in part because of logistics and in part because it was just too contentious, said Jonathan Freund, vice president of the board.

“It was kind of ironic,” Mr. Freund said, “because we couldn’t in the end figure out how to talk about how to talk about it.”

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Mormons Say Critical Online Comments Draw Threats From Church

By [LAURIE GOODSTEIN](#)

JUNE 18, 2014

Rock Waterman, a retired innkeeper in California, writes a blog called [Pure Mormonism](#), which attracts Mormons so orthodox that they believe their church is not sufficiently adhering to its own doctrines.

Last month, Mr. Waterman posted a combative challenge addressed to one of the Mormon Church’s top leaders: “Stop making up your own rules and try preaching the Gospel of Christ for a change.”

Two days later, he said, he was summoned to a meeting with his bishop and told to either stop blogging or resign his church membership. If he did not resign he would face excommunication, he said the bishop told him, on orders from another official higher up — one of the church’s leaders known as an Area Seventy.

From California to Virginia and states in between, more than a dozen Mormons interviewed in the past week said they had recently been informed by their bishops that they faced

excommunication or risked losing permission to enter a temple because of comments they had made online about their faith, the [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#).

These members said their bishops had questioned them about specific posts they had made on their blogs, Twitter and Facebook, in the comment streams of websites or in conversations in chat rooms.

The kinds of comments that have attracted the scrutiny of bishops and stake presidents, who are regional supervisors, include support for the ordination of women; advocacy for [same-sex marriage](#); serious doubts about church history or theology; and, as in Mr. Waterman's case, protests that the church demands more in tithes than its doctrine requires.

Michael Otterson, managing director of the church's public affairs office, said: "There is no coordinated effort to tell local leaders to keep their members from blogging or discussing their questions online. On the contrary, church leaders have encouraged civil online dialogue and recognize that today it's just part of how the world works."

However, he said, church leaders do grow concerned when discussion is used to recruit others for campaigns to change church doctrine or structure.

"When it goes so far as creating organized groups, staging public events to further a cause and creating literature for members to share in their local congregations," Mr. Otterson said, "the church has to protect the integrity of its doctrine as well as other members from being misled."

The crackdown is much broader than the action taken last week against [two prominent Mormons](#), who were threatened with excommunication: Kate Kelly, the founder of the [Ordain Women](#) movement, and John P. Dehlin, creator of the [Mormon Stories](#) podcast and an advocate for gay Mormons.

It has affected Mormons perceived as dissidents from across the ideological spectrum: liberals such as Ms. Kelly, Mr. Dehlin and others who support same-sex marriage, and conservatives who devoutly believe Mormon teaching and Scripture but criticize the church as straying from it, such as Mr. Waterman and Denver Snuffer, a lawyer in Utah who blogs and writes books about Mormonism. Mr. Snuffer said on his blog that he was excommunicated for apostasy last fall.

"This is clearly boundary maintenance," said Jan Shipps, a professor emerita of history and religious studies at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, who has written extensively about the Mormon Church. "They had essentially created a porous boundary, but once you have a porous boundary, sooner or later you're going to have to maintain a boundary that says, 'This is as far as you can go.'"

Mormons are such active bloggers and voluble writers that they have created a whole universe of sites, which they call the Bloggernacle, where they go to discuss their faith. The church cannot police them all or shut them down, but it can demonstrate to members where it draws the boundaries of acceptability by scaring those who stray.

The church, in a statement this week, said that disciplinary actions were handled by local leaders and were not coordinated or directed by church headquarters. But some of the Mormons facing disciplinary actions said they had been told by their bishops that the instruction to investigate Internet activity came relatively recently from more senior leaders.

“It feels scary to have all the words I say on Facebook and Twitter monitored,” said Kevin Kloosterman, a mental health therapist in Sycamore, Ill.

Mr. Kloosterman, who was a bishop from 2007 to 2012, attracted headlines and scrutiny for an emotional talk he gave at a conference in Salt Lake City in 2011 apologizing to gays rejected by their Mormon families. He also lobbied for same-sex marriage in his state. But there were no consequences until March of this year, when, at a meeting, his bishop cited a Twitter post by Mr. Kloosterman congratulating the first gay couple to be married in Utah.

“Jesus would never do that,” the bishop said, according to Mr. Kloosterman. He said his bishop informed him that an Area Seventy church leader had weighed in on his case (Mr. Kloosterman declined to name him), and that leaders had been monitoring his Internet activity and knew he supported groups that disagree with church teaching.

The bishop revoked Mr. Kloosterman’s “temple recommend,” denying him entrance to the temple, where important rituals like baptisms and marriages are held and where he and his wife used to go regularly for spiritual uplift.

“It’s been devastating,” he said. “I’m in shock still.”

Some supporters of the Ordain Women movement who have posted profiles and pictures of themselves on the movement’s website have also recently had their temple recommends withdrawn or been removed from church volunteer positions, according to Ms. Kelly and Ordain Women leaders.

Ms. Kelly’s parents, who live in Provo, Utah, were among those who lost temple privileges, as was a higher-profile leader, Hannah Wheelwright, who just graduated from the church’s Brigham Young University and founded a group called [Young Mormon Feminists](#).

But there are also those who never sought the spotlight, like Dana, a member in the church’s Buena Vista stake in Virginia, who did not want her last name used because she has family in the church. She was very active in the church but supports the ordination of women and same-sex marriage, which church doctrine prohibits.

She said that soon after she posted comments anonymously in an online chat room, her bishop sent her emails quoting what she had written and questioning her about her beliefs. On June 1, she said, her bishop phoned and told her to stop posting or face a church disciplinary hearing. Instead, four days later, she and her family resigned their church membership.

“It was just bizarre,” she said. “I was trying to quietly leave the church because of doctrinal reasons, and I hastily left the church because of my bishop.”

As for Mr. Waterman, the blogger in California, he has refused to resign and is willing to face discipline. "I'm not trying to get the church to change," he said. "I'm trying to get the church to abide by its doctrine."

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