

Cindy Clemishire: Jesus Got Her Through Morris' Abuse, 'I Have Never Stopped Praying'

Allegations that Gateway Church founder Robert Morris molested a 12-year-old girl in the 1980s sent shockwaves throughout Christian circles and the media last month.

Two days after admitting to "an inappropriate sexual behavior with a young lady," Morris resigned from Gateway Church. His accuser, Cindy Clemishire, claims she was anything but a "young lady" when the incident occurred.

"It was a crime," she said. "I was a little girl."

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Clemishire, now a 54-year-old mom and grandma, told CBN News it took years for her to fully grasp what she endured.

"I was 12," she said. "I was not a teenager yet. And I told when I was 17—and it did go all the way through ... the full year of being 16."

Clemishire continued, "He told me the very first time, 'You can't tell anyone because it will ruin everything,' and, as a 12-year-old, I had no idea what that meant. And, as I ... grew and got older, I still didn't really know what it meant, because, when I told, I felt like it ruined everything in my life. It ruined everything in my family's life."



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Clemishire said she doesn't believe anyone should be in the pulpit if that person was a Christian when such sexual abuse

or sexual immorality unfolded.

"I believe in forgiveness," she said. "I believe that Robert can still repent. ... I don't believe there's been repentance, because it's been continued deceit, but that's between him and the Lord."

Clemishire said too much time has passed to pursue legal remedies against Morris. Regardless, she hopes her story will help other victims find healing.

"I do know I want to help other victims," she said. "I want people to be free of shame and ... it's a lifelong journey."

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Additionally, Clemishire has a strong position on changing the laws to help people who face situations that fall outside the statute of limitations.

"We need to change the statute of limitations across the country, not just in my state or Texas," she said. "I live in Oklahoma. It happened in both. ... I want to be active in any way I can with changing the laws to protect the victims and not the predators."

Through it all, Clemishire said she has never given up hope.

"I have never stopped praying," she said. "I've never stopped reading my Bible. I mean, it truly has been about my relationship with Jesus. I don't know how anybody could get through any of this without that."

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