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Subject: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

Posted by [james](#) on Tue, 28 Apr 2009 02:10:15 GMT

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It's been almost 2 months since we witnessed something, that to me, could have been avoided. The almost total wipeout of this forum by a spirit of division. I am wondering, although I never thought there were anywhere close to as many members as the register showed, how many are there? We had a poll a few months ago where out of the entire membership/viewers/users, there were only 8-9 people who answered the poll. Was it because everyone is shy, I don't see Christians as shy people, or was everyone intimidated by others writing styles or education? I don't think this is the case in the majority, So my question is, what really happened? Is it as some think, that the moderators (namely Hombre and myself) elevated ourselves above everyone else and people were turned away? Does the fact that now almost anyone can come in and delete posts, (that some of us spent MANY hours working on), bother anyone? What about people requesting all their threads, post, and messages to be removed...leaving others post looking like they were talking to the air, that bother anyone? If Hombre was the problem, in peoples minds, then with him gone now for almost 2 months, why aren't people posting and discussing Christian topics and sharing testimonies?

SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED? Anyone want to step up and share their thoughts...What about solutions to the problem (speaking of 'the problem' as I see it, of VERY little activity on the board) any suggestions on ways to OVERCOME the spirit of division and take back the forum to be used for the glory of God?

Don't everyone answer all at once

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

Posted by [william](#) on Tue, 28 Apr 2009 07:16:07 GMT

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Hi James,

I confess that I don't know how to answer your questions beyond a simple "I don't know".

You mentioned "shyness"... I don't know if you can describe an unwillingness to take a stand for something as shyness but maybe in some sort of weird way that is what it is.

We all talk a good game about how open minded we are and how much we've grown, but when it gets right down to it that is all it is--talk. Let someone disagree --and we ostracize, this is what we do... it's what we've always done.

First, let me make one thing clear. You have never done anything here that I would consider as contributing to a problem. I guess I should clarify that by saying that you have done nothing openly that I've seen that could be construed as a problem. I don't know what you may or may not have done behind the scenes. I suspect that you've done nothing privately. It would be hard for me to believe that you have presented yourself one way openly and another way privately. You just don't seem like the type of person who would sow discord among the brethren (privately) and be a model netizen openly. So there. You are not nor have ever been a problem in my view.

Secondly, if a person wants to delete their posts, I can't stop them. I hold no copyright to anything that is posted. Anyone can retract anything they want to. If it messes up the flow of thought then so be it. If, as it was in one case, a person feels that they are overexposed and feels the need disassociate their private lives from public scrutiny, then removing posts is a pretty good place to start. Personally, I think it's wise not to post too many details of my private life (like my home address); I don't want some pervert showing up on my doorstep. So I understand why a person might want to remove that information.

Along the same lines, I can understand why one might want to remove evidence that highlights the heart of a fool. We all deserve a second chance no matter how foolish we've been in the past.

When setting up the forum I made the decision to allow complete anonymity if one chooses... there are many reasons for this... one that stands out is the fact that there are those who don't really want to associate themselves too closely with our shared past... or worse, maybe they don't want to associate themselves with what we've become.

Thirdly, the members that have registered as far as I know are not made up members. I have a few test accounts that I use for different reasons (never deceptive reasons) with different privileges so that I can test different functions of the forum and determine how different viewers with different privileges see certain aspects of the forum software. I don't know how many, but I don't think it would be over 5 or 6 and I've never posted using them except maybe a test message.

One thing is for sure, those many members who have posted over the course of our tenure, are no longer posting. As to why, I'll leave that to your judgment, saying only that it can't all be because of shyness.

If I'm the cause of the lack of recent posts please show me where I've erred or what I've done wrong. I've been as transparent as possible (even to the extent of sharing my private correspondence with you all so as to be completely above board in everything that has transpired) so it should be easy to point out any blind spots that I'm not seeing.

Jesus gave us clear directions in this area-- if you have something against a brother you should clear it up as soon as possible... that applies here unless you don't consider me a brother in the

Lord.

From my perspective here is what I see:

I took a stand for the unjust treatment of a member here. One stand that seemingly was universally unpopular (at least it seems as if no one has stood with me). I clearly laid out the reasons for my disagreement. To date, no one has given me any objective reason as to why this stand was a mistake. (I should say here that there is at least one brother among you all that has kept the lines of communication open; that is refreshing.) I first took private steps to resolve the problem and only openly posted when I was mis-categorized openly.

No one, (beyond this one brother) has contacted me concerning any of this. That is a shame.

What else? The only other thing I've done is give the few regulars (or used to be regulars) moderator privileges so as to better simulate the level ground at the foot of the cross. Why this should be a problem among adults I know not, but apparently it is. If you can explain why, I'm all ears.

Oh, I did take away one person's moderator status, for reasons that you know and he asked me to remove all of his messages. I did.

That is the extent of it James. You and anyone else reading have all the information available to come to your own conclusions as to where you stand.

One other factoid... I found out a few days ago is that there is another forum that was spawned after the posts stopped here. I suspect (I don't know, because I haven't been invited, nor have I invited myself) you already know about it but if not you might find answers there... I certainly don't have any.

In Jesus,  
William

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [james](#) on Tue, 28 Apr 2009 14:21:34 GMT  
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I should have made myself easier to be understood, I wasn't asking so much about the results of what happened, as I was wondering what happened from a spiritual standpoint. And I wasn't seeking reassurance about myself, though I appreciate the kind words. I know the effort I put into

keeping peace between people,( to little avail).

And when I was writting the above, I thought if anyone responses it will be you, William; and maybe one or two others. And yes, of course there's been communication between a few people in private, just as there was all along. And you mentioned posts that seemed foolish, yes there were those, and I was part of it...I think I(and others) got into trying to be witty too often, rather than discussing things that would edify the readers and each other. I have personally gone through and deleted quite a few of MY OWN post that I, upon reflection, felt were just filled with come-backs and non-sense. Then I have also deleted messages, of mine, that made no sense after others had deleted their posts...it appeared the conversation was with just myself...

I DO think it was a mistake to turn everyone loose with moderator privileges, but that's just my opinion, I don't think that is the reason for the disappearance of most everyone.

Yes, I'm aware of the new forum, and have joined, and yeah, I can get opinions from others there as to what happened...but I already know their opinions, I was just wondering what those left here thought. I don't like the thought of Christians claiming to be overcomers, just giving up on what they obviously at one time thought was something good and glorifying to God. Of course I can only speak from my own heart, but I don't like the idea of giving up just because the devil doesn't like what is being done...Quiting just doesn't set well with me, that why I've continued to post scriptures and try to share what The Lord puts on my heart.

You said I have information available to draw my own conclusion to where I stand...I wasn't seeking to find where I stand, I already know that, I was trying to get people to talk about, share their thoughts, and try to understand how the devil brought the division about...in order to OVERCOME him in the future and not repeat the problem.

Maybe someone else will share their thoughts, it's not like we're clueless and powerless to discern the wiles of the enemy...are we?

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [Mark L](#) on Tue, 28 Apr 2009 15:32:20 GMT  
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Well I guess I just wish it hadn't happened. I really value this place. I don't post a whole lot. I don't have a lot of time and I'm not very talkative at the best of times anyway. I usually post when something catches my attention or when I have something I really want to say. (Like the apostles thread which I'm not finished with yet) I realize I'm not answering your question. I'm just putting my thoughts on. I really liked it when there was a community of people posting here regularly because it meant I could jump in and out as I had time. I'm just heading up north today for the rest of the week so maybe I'll give this some thought

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [william](#) on Tue, 28 Apr 2009 15:49:20 GMT  
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james wrote on Tue, 28 April 2009 09:21 I should have made myself easier to be understood, I wasn't asking so much about the results of what happened, as I was wondering what happened from a spiritual standpoint.

Here is what happened from a spiritual standpoint: Someone yelled "FIRE!" and added a 'thus saith the Lord' for emphasis and everybody ran. That's what happened from a spiritual standpoint. Same kind of thing has been happening for years in our circles... we never learn.

Quote:I DO think it was a mistake to turn everyone loose with moderator privileges, but that's just my opinion, I don't think that is the reason for the disappearance of most everyone.

Look, you've got to be fifty or so, and most of the people on here are probably pretty close to that. I believe that the vast majority who were participating here should have been trustworthy with something as simple as moderating.

This isn't Romper Room. We aren't dealing with kindergartners. If we are, then I give up! I've already raised my seven and I'm not going back into the baby-sitting business.

Quote:Of course I can only speak from my own heart, but I don't like the idea of giving up just because the devil doesn't like what is being done...Quiting just doesn't set well with me, that why I've continued to post scriptures and try to share what The Lord puts on my heart.

I'm not quitting. I'm still here. But you'll also need to acknowledge that it isn't just the devil that doesn't like what is being done; the others seem to be in agreement with him... they have left. (Yep, that was flesh --not the devil-- but I think I'll leave it in anyway.)

Quote:You said I have information available to draw my own conclusion to where I stand...I wasn't seeking to find where I stand, I already know that, I was trying to get people to talk about, share their thoughts, and try to understand how the devil brought the division about...in order to OVERCOME him in the future and not repeat the problem.

Maybe someone else will share their thoughts, it's not like we're clueless and powerless to discern the wiles of the enemy...are we?

No, we are not. We do lack intestinal fortitude sometimes and I suspect that is some of the problem. It is easier to just move on and not deal with issues, not be confrontational, than it is to choose to do what is right regardless of the consequences. I'm not saying that all of those members who have moved on over the years have lacked intestinal fortitude; could be they just

recognized that they could be more productive in pursuits where they wouldn't be continually mocked, ridiculed, and parsed, as if they were the devil sneaking in with some subtle deception. I cannot blame them at all.

I do blame the curse that permeates our circles... no need to belabor that point beyond saying that we all need to learn how to better deal with our relations with others whether online or in a Church. It's not like we don't have a whole lot of principles laid out in God's Word.

My message?

Hey folks, come on back. There never was a fire. It was a false alarm.

Blessings,  
William

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [Anonymous Please](#) on Sat, 09 May 2009 14:23:59 GMT  
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I don't believe that any issue should be left unresolved between Xians as far as possible.

As far as lies within any of us, we should be at peace with one another. Jesus calls those who strive to make peace, 'blessed'.

I was a distant observer on the other side of the ocean when things escalated online over something taken as a seriously perceived threat.

I do not know all the facts from all the parties and neither do I want to. Therefore, my response is by no means the answer you may be looking for James.

The point I would like to make, however, is this:

As I understand it, Overcomersonline is a forum dedicated to the glory of God and has attracted those of us who want to discuss or read edifying posts, in order to grow in our faith in God.

Since its inception, OO has, it seems to me, had an added advantage.

Many, if not most of us, have been linked together with very close bonds of affection because of our past membership at FA, or its related groups.

There is no doubt, there is a love and understanding that takes friendships formed during that era

and those formed since then, much deeper very quickly.

We understand each other in a far more profound and meaningful way than I have ever encountered elsewhere, thus making discussion lively, interesting and genuine because, for the most part, we all know where we have come from.

(...and it is not a love boat....)

If we are reconciled to God in Christ, it is only through Him that we can be reconciled with one another at all.

As the body of Christ we are called to function as brothers and sisters, with each others best interests at heart and it's

God who instructs how the xian life works, not me.

As William has stated and as many already know, another forum has 'been spawned'. Given the talents of its administrator, it is a great place to go and either visit, or join in and contribute as far as you can.

This forum here is equally a blessing to many and I hope members here will still contribute. It has been a blessing for me.

BUT,

....IF we are going to move forward in Christ together, without the schismatic atmosphere that seemed to pervade so much of what FA attitudes produced in the past, we need simply to accept the change, welcome another forum and move on with genuine love for each other.

Change needed to happen.

Splits are not always a bad thing, its how we deal with them that determines the outcome.

Emotions did run high when moderator privileges were dispersed equally. Some of us do not like the idea of a separate womens board either, but all of those changes are actually irrelevant when it comes down to the life of faith, which is, after all, why we have been drawn together to walk together at this point in time.

William, you as the site adminstrator and owner have the prerogative to do as you see fit in your dealings with issues that may arise, and as far as I can tell from what you have written, you have acted with intergrity. Although no forum is a church in the New Testament sense, nevertheless, it does not mean that our relationships should not be nurtured and guarded carefully.

That takes time, thought, prayer, effort and a lot of 'dying'.

We have nothing if we do not obey Him. The scriptures are quite clear what our dealings with one another should be like. We are called to do everything in Jesus name.

Whether anyone chooses to leave, or stay here, is not the point... we need to grow up.

We need to grow up in Him if we believe we are going to be caught up with Him...

...the rapture? His soon return?

...no I won't start a new topic...

but we should be prepared as the Day of the Lord approaches.

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

Posted by [james](#) on Sat, 09 May 2009 15:12:30 GMT

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Hello Rubio,

Welcome, although from your post you've been here all along, just not signed in as a member. Your response is EXACTLY what I was hoping for when I started this thread, I wanted people to discuss and share their thoughts on what had happened, why, and how to move past it...as 'overcomers' should. It doesn't matter to me if we don't see eye to eye on every little thing,( like you mentioned, moderator privileges, women seperated forum, ect.) but we do need to treat each other with respect and think the best of each other. We've had different views concerning women's place in leadership/5-fold/ministry; a Christians position concerning involvement in government/voting; how to apply the teachings of the sermon on the mount/nonresistance; we even had opposing views as to 'oneness' being heresy or not; yet even with these different views being held by people(and we all know, deep down inside, that WE'RE right...and the other party needs to 'read the bible'...lol) as long as someone isn't spouting heresy and causing division, we should extend them the same respect and love that we desire and expect ourselves.

You're right, it's all about JESUS, we've GOT to get on that cross and die...until we do, the flesh is going to get in the way of our walk HIM. Just a thought I just had, 'Dead people don't get offended'...( I speak of the death of the 'self life')



It almost made me physically ill(I said, ALMOST) when that spirit of division was able to cause such damage. We were warned and yet still it was allowed to succeed...Overcomers? I think that revealed a lot. But God has ways to get our attention, I think this can be a learning experience and we can grow from it...I know I sure haven't arrived yet, but I ain't giving up and quitting.

Again, Rubio, thanks for speaking out and sharing your heart, may more brethern follow your lead and join in.

james

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

Posted by [sparkles](#) on Sun, 10 May 2009 13:41:28 GMT

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Greetings Rubio!

I was blessed by your post, thank you. I have been reading Overcomers Online for a couple years and been blessed by most of the posts, although occasionally a bitter, mean spirited person would start posting. When people would discuss topics it may get fisty, but still would be a place to look at the different views that people have. This is not a bad thing, but a place where people could see where they may have to change some of their beliefs. Once a seed is planted then the Lord can do the change: one plants, one waters but God gives the increase. I remember back during the Faith Assembly days when one of my very good friends family started to have meetings in their home. I was a christian, even baptized in the Holy Spirit, but was doing some things that the father disagreed with. Nothing sinful, just not the things he felt I should. So he told his daughter, my friend, that unless I gave these things up that she was not to fellowship with me anymore. I had couple choices to make: either give the things up so I could fellowship with his daughter, or keep doing what I was doing and not fellowship with his daughter. I choose the second, and her and I agreed that her father would have a change of heart. She told her father that all she would do is pray for me and let God do the changing, not have someone force me to change outwardly, but not have the change be inward. I never forgot that. Well, he changed and so did I. I am very gratefull to my friend because it was her prayers that helped me see there was so much more God had in his storehouse of blessings, although not without cost.

I also felt the giving everyone moderator priviledges was a mistake. There is an old saying about there being too many chiefs an not enough indians(or something like that.) I guess I just didn't see the need to give everyone that priviledge. The ones who were the moderators did a fine job. In every area of our lives there is an order people live with. The man is the head of the home, supervisors at work make decisions I can't, the owner of a company is over everyone else, and a multitude of other examples. It isn't a matter of trust and having to babysit everyone, but a matter

of some measure of control. I wouldn't even mind it being changed back with only a few people having that job.

I enjoyed what you said about how we "need to grow in in Him if we believe we are going to be caught up with Him..."

Well, that's about all I have to say for now. I will continue to come to this board for encouragement and edification. Thank you William for all your hard work and may God continue to bless this site!

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [william](#) on Sun, 10 May 2009 18:28:24 GMT  
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I'm not sure why the Moderator privileges have caused such a stir, it baffles me. I've given my reasons for why I believe it is a good policy, however, since there continues to be a hubbub about the policy, I'm open for suggestions. Here is list of those who are moderators:

1faithassemblykid  
Abiding  
Duncan  
GWB  
Hardbones  
JWBTI  
NBF56  
Sageshroomer  
capturedbygrace  
djerving  
dscott  
grandom  
james  
jisamazed  
mark1124  
musicman \*Moderator of just the Music Section  
no\_dominion\_for\_death  
whitearizona

Of course, Hombre was removed yesterday, and Allanbook a few weeks ago.

So that is the list.

If anyone has any objection to any of these, or know of a reason they shouldn't be on the list, let me know (privately) and I'll take action.

By the way, this is in the tread "So What really happened?" I'd like to say that giving moderator privileges to those who didn't have them before shouldn't be a valid reason as to why some left... if I had taken away moderator privileges, I could see that as having a bearing on things, but as it stands, that did not happen.

Blessings,  
William

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [Anonymous Please](#) on Sun, 10 May 2009 23:30:58 GMT  
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I am not a moderator for this site so hopefully my questions are objective.

1) When you opened in approx 2006 (?), what selection process did you use to appoint your moderators at that time ?

2) What criteria did you use second time round when you broadened your selection to include those on the list above?

(I have no idea who most of them are anyway.)

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [Anonymous Please](#) on Mon, 11 May 2009 00:15:24 GMT  
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Quote: I will continue to come to this board for encouragement and edification.

I am glad to hear that Sageshroomer.

We need daily enouragement and edification in our faith walk.

Thank you for your testimony too, God IS who He says He is and Jesus will return.

Rubio

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

Posted by [Anonymous Please](#) on Mon, 11 May 2009 00:26:34 GMT

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Quote:

It almost made me physically ill(I said, ALMOST) when that spirit of division was able to cause such damage. We were warned and yet still it was allowed to succeed...Overcomers? I think that revealed a lot. But God has ways to get our attention, I think this can be a learning experience and we can grow from it...I know I sure haven't arrived yet, but I ain't giving up and quitting.

Division, although never pleasant , is something that does cause us to stop and think and (hopefully) mature. How we treat eachother as christians is vital for our testimony to those both 'inside' and 'outside'.

Jesus overcame the world, the flesh and the devil...we must go and do likewise...not easy ...but it's in Him we overcome.

I don't know that I gave a definitive answer as to what transpired here, but I am glad that what I wrote was a help

Thanks for your post

Rubio

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

Posted by [william](#) on Mon, 11 May 2009 01:31:26 GMT

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On Sun, 10 May 2009, Rubio wrote:

>

>

> I am not a moderator for this site so hopefully my questions are objective.

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- >  
> 1) When you opened in approx 2006 (?), what selection process did you use to appoint your moderators at that time ?  
>  
> 2) What criteria did you use second time round when you broadened your selection to include those on the list above?  
>  
> (I have no idea who most of them are anyway.)  
>

To answer your first question: I merely selected some of the posters who were on factnet... I didn't really have any selection guidelines. I just chose a few of those who seemed to be trustworthy brothers (I didn't know any sisters at the time!). In fact, one of them was a brother named Reuben who was made a moderator. He asked me to remove the moderator status shortly after we opened and later asked me to completely remove his account. He rejoined the forum later under a different name, but never asked to have moderator status restored.

Tomax (from the tomax7.com website) later joined the forum and I considered him to be a trustworthy individual and immediately made him a moderator.

(I don't want to leave the impression that those who were not selected were not also trustworthy individuals, <grin> most certainly are!)

To answer your second question requires a little more information about things that are not exactly relevant but became relevant as things progressed.

Back in March Hombre posted a note outlining what he believed to be moderator guidelines. He made the statement that there had never been much said concerning the issue. As you can see from my first answer, this was true... there had never been any formal "selection process", at all!

He proceeded to define what he believed to be the moderator position.

I didn't give it much thought, beyond thinking that it was odd that he posted this in the midst of a totally separate issue that was threatening to tear us apart.

Anyway, back to what happened. As I said, I was deeply concerned over what

was happening... I was believing God for wisdom cause I didn't know what to do.

All at once it came together! The moderator status was actually causing some of the problem... actions were being taken that were dividing the body of Christ... and these actions had the air of "officialness" because of the "moderator status". Personally I don't consider it proper for anyone (moderator or not) to lord over other Christians at all, so when the solution came (which I believe was wisdom from God) it seemed so simple: Make all of the regulars, moderators!

Sorry to disappoint those who expected a well planned, complex dissertation on HOW TO SELECT A MODERATOR IN TWELVE EASY STEPS.

Blessings,  
William

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [Anonymous Please](#) on Mon, 11 May 2009 16:41:45 GMT  
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I work for a company which is ruthless in its policy for hiring and firing staff.

My work is performance related.

I had five interviews for my present job and there is a constant review procedure which means: I know who I am dealing with, and they know who they are dealing with. Changes in management policy sometimes results in people leaving the company. So goes life.

In a spiritual setting, such as a religious online forum, the parameters for protocol and business practice are far less easy to define. If policy simply evolves as the 'thing' unfolds, then sooner or later it will run into trouble.

People, on the whole like to know in advance if the expectations from 'management' have undergone any changes. Here, it seems that some members went online one day to find themselves in a new and unexpected role. It would appear that the reasons for your changing things were subject to your interpretation of what was going on in the forum at that time.

This resulted in a unilateral decision on your part, based on perceived divine wisdom, in order to try and resolve the issues that confronted you.

Divinely inspired wisdom is a benefit that xians do have because of a relationship with a living God.

Jesus, however, does say that we can learn much from the wise business practices found in this world.

In my opinion, clearly defined order and structure are needed for the smooth running of any organisation, online or offline.

This is by no means intended as a criticism of your methods of operation William, but may in some small way, help to shed some light as to why some have now left, which is the intention of this thread.

It also requires no justification on your part, you are, after all, the site owner.

May we all increase in our wisdom in the way we walk with Him, so that the world may see by our good works that we really do glorify our Father who is in heaven.

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Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?  
Posted by [william](#) on Mon, 11 May 2009 20:46:58 GMT  
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Quote:I work for a company which is ruthless in its policy for hiring and firing staff.

My work is performance related.

I had five interviews for my present job and there is a constant review procedure which means: I know who I am dealing with, and they know who they are dealing with.  
Changes in management policy sometimes results in people leaving the company. So goes life.

Thanks for your interest in how the whole "process" worked.

Your "business experience" certainly seems quite competitive, complete with the requisite authority structure that is necessary to run an efficient organization.

Quote:In a spiritual setting, such as a religious online forum, the parameters for protocol and business practice are far less easy to define.  
If policy simply evolves as the 'thing' unfolds, then sooner or later it will run into trouble.

Are you implying that the recent "trouble" was a result of giving moderator status to other people? If so, I'll have to profoundly disagree.

If, on the other hand, you are speaking about other problems without stating those problems, then I suggest that you speak clearly and specifically as to your meaning. I'm not a mind reader, nor am I smart enough to read between the lines of your note (assuming that there are lines to be read... perhaps there are none).

Quote:People, on the whole like to know in advance if the expectations from 'management' have undergone any changes. Here, it seems that some members went online one day to find themselves in a new and unexpected role.

I think that you may have a misconception concerning OvercomersOnline and its purpose, and online communication in general.

This isn't a business. This isn't a church. This isn't a multilevel organization. We don't have paid staff. There are no banner ads that bring in income, (no bookkeeper!). It never has been, nor will it ever be any of these things.

OvercomersOnline is simply a place where other Christians can come and participate by discussing, and listening to, a multitude of subjects that relate to our Christian walk.

It is like a privately owned library that has been provided at my expense, for the purpose of refreshing the saints. There is no cost, you won't (at least not anymore) be accosted by a police force filled with self-importance and, to use your phrase, "perceived divine wisdom", or authority.

Anyone, anywhere, can download forum software and secure an internet server, and open up these forums. There are literally hundreds of thousands of such places all over the internet. Most of them are provided free of charge, just like here, and if you don't find any good books or fellowship, you can move on to the next one.

Those who want to be told what to do, or what to say, can surely find places where that kind of authority structure is present. Once in a blue moon you might even find a place online that is more comparable to your business model and where "the management" has your best interests at heart instead of their own interests. I have no aspirations to create such a structure here, nor do I have a desire to "run" such an organization.

Online communities prosper when the participants share a common interest, and don't feel intimidated when they take the plunge and start a discussion with the other members. Providing this non-threatening atmosphere is crucial for the success of such a community.



Christian online communities have an added advantage in this department. We should be seeking to follow the example of Jesus in our fellowship with one another, always preferring our brothers and sisters over our own interests.

I share this so that you can see that there are vast differences in an online community and the business world.

You said that your work is performance related. Mine is not, at least not here, and I don't believe that it is in the vast majority of online communities. Our "success" here isn't business related at all. In fact, as long as I "perceive" that there is a need here, I will happily provide all of the expenditures necessary to cover the costs of physically maintaining the forum.

Of course I will continue to pray for wisdom on how to assure that the guests who come to the library are as comfortable as possible, but as you know, our Lord promises to liberally supply us in that department.

Not that I don't welcome advice from others, quite the contrary, He often uses others to convey this wisdom.

Perhaps the other forum is set up in the way you describe? If so, I might recommend that they take a page from the bible and go from being business oriented to being more Christlike. I'm aware that Jesus said that we could "learn much" from the business community, but I'm also pretty sure that He would be an advocate of the business community utilizing His principles.

This is already a pretty long answer but if I could continue a bit more so as to give you a more complete understanding concerning how online forums may differ from the top-down organizational structure...

As "administrator" of the library (pardon the comparison, it just seems to fit) I have a few duties.

- 1) Database maintenance
- 2) Open or close sections based upon interest (probably need to do some housecleaning in this department!)
- 3) Answer questions on how to use the software
- 4) Lock the doors when wolf-like patrons are recognized. (Rather difficult at times but experience and the aforementioned wisdom from God helps tremendously... Jesus told us that we can learn a lot from examining their fruit, but He also told us that it is sometimes not wise to pull up the tares too quickly lest some of the wheat get uprooted as well.) Pray for me in this area, if you would.

An administrator also has the same duties as moderators. Basically these duties are preformed by using common sense.

For example, the difference between one who has the moderation switch turned on and the infrequent guest, is the ability to delete questionable material. We've had cases when a spammer will post a pornographic link and since I'm not here 24/7, I find it wise to have as many trustworthy people (Christians) as possible to be able to quickly remove offensive posts. The moderator can also move messages to different sections if the subject matter warrants. In case of a mistake, someone can always move it back! Moderators can also post announcements or create threads that can be locked if the subject matter is not one designed for discussion.

I've always taken pretty much a hand-off policy toward moderators and let them use their own good judgment in these areas. I don't have the time nor inclination to micro-manage these things and over the years there have been very few times where it was necessary to question the decision of the moderators. Like I've said before, (and this should be especially true with Christians) adults should be able to do the right thing when it comes to the moderation stuff. Just use common sense, and that will be sufficient.

As you can see there isn't much to it... no need for a lot of overhead or training. Of course you are right concerning the business model. It will require a lot of memos and training manuals to assure that the head-honcho's wishes are carried out to a tee.... but it isn't necessary here.

In the few instances where you might have a moderator "go postal," and do something fearful (like delete messages or move them to an inappropriate place) having a backup system is all that is required. (I do.) Actually it can be an advantage to have the sort of system we utilize here, because if there are disgruntled, prone to mischief loose cannons, they are immediately marked as such. No need to worry about plucking up the wheat when you boot them out! (All things work together for good to those who love Christ and are called according to His purpose!) You will always know them by their fruit, even if it takes awhile for the unsavory fruit to appear.

I've rambled enough.

So far I've received no complaints about any of the adults that are currently listed as moderators, nor have any complained about the extra duties that I've burdened them with (cause there aren't any... you don't have to do \*anything\*... just sit back and enjoy the fellowship!).

I'll end with this, although I don't think it needs to be said except maybe for those who haven't grown up yet... don't get puffed up about your "position", there are no corner offices with windows to aspire toward!

Let's leave "ruthlessness" to the business model and choose instead to serve each other with love.

Blessings to all,  
William

Subject: Re: SO WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

Posted by [Anonymous Please](#) on Mon, 11 May 2009 22:14:46 GMT

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Quote:Are you implying that the recent "trouble" was a result of giving moderator status to other people? If so, I'll have to profoundly disagree.

If, on the other hand, you are speaking about other problems without stating those problems, then I suggest that you speak clearly and specifically as to your meaning. I'm not a mind reader, nor am I smart enough to read between the lines of your note (assuming that there are lines to be read... perhaps there are none).

Thank you for your response.

I had no hidden motive in the way that I wrote, nor was I trying to make a point by writing 'between the lines'.

I believe that by attempting to address the issues that were raised in this thread, I now find myself swimming in shark infested water of suspicion and mistrust.

I think it would be best for me to withdraw, so please delete my account