

Jane Doe: Former Light a Candle Long-term Missionary to Iraq (2018-2021)

Introduction: Jane Doe has provided a detailed account of her experiences as an intern and missionary with Light a Candle (LAC), an organization led by John "Sean" Christopher Feucht, from 2018 to 2021. Her statement alleges various forms of misconduct, including financial mismanagement, spiritual manipulation, emotional distress, and sexual abuse. This is a summary of her experiences, highlighting key incidents and quoted statements, while using "Jane Doe" and omitting specific names for safety and protection.

Early Experiences and Internship (2018–2019): In August 2018, Jane Doe applied for a LAC internship to fulfill her third-year requirements to complete the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry (BSSM) program in Redding, California. Jane Doe was one of two interns chosen by Sean Feucht to complete the year-long internship under his mentorship. Per BSSM policy, Feucht was expected to provide monthly mentorship opportunities that provide interns with direct experience and would lead to their successful transition from students to full-time ministry work. Despite these policies, Jane Doe did not officially meet Feucht until three months into her internship, when he asked her to babysit his children. By contrast, the male LAC intern recipient, Andrew Steele, had regular contact with Feucht and was given near-monthly opportunities to travel with him on ministry trips and directly participate in a wide variety of missionary and evangelical work. In addition to babysitting and providing music lessons to Feucht's children (a task never assigned to Andrew Steele), Jane Doe was assigned menial tasks such as cleaning Feucht's garage and doing his yard work. Many of these tasks were assigned to her before her initial introduction to Feucht.

Feucht's controversial attitude toward women was evident to Jane Doe early on. In one of their initial meetings, he made derogatory and inappropriate comments towards her, stating that she *"needed to go to Iraq to find a husband and be more effective in ministry"*. She also recalled occasions when Feucht joked about her *"finding her Mohammad"* and insinuated that it would be easier for her to *"find a husband in the Middle East because Arab men all wanted white wives"*. These remarks reflected a broader organizational belief that single women were incapable of effective ministry work without a husband, as they were seen as distractions to both Christian and non-Christian men. This culture of gender discrimination set a troubling precedent, which laid the groundwork for the spiritual and sexual abuse that Jane Doe would come to experience as an intern in BSSM and a long-term missionary in LAC.

“These comments Sean made about women needing to be married to do ministry made me feel like there was something inherently wrong with who I was as a person and as a Christian. I would never be “good” or “pure” because no matter what, I was a woman and therefore a distraction. Sean often made comments about how single women were not only “distractions” to “unsaved” men, but to the men in the church as well.”

Misconduct of LAC Leadership during BSSM Internship: During her internship, Jane Doe was introduced to a leader within LAC leadership who came to function as one of her bosses. She regularly answered to him and interacted with him in her professional capacity. Sean Feucht and others in leadership frequently commented on the potential for Jane Doe and this leader to form a romantic relationship, citing the two’s shared interests along with the perceived advantages of marriage in ministry work. These comments created pressure on Jane Doe to consider a relationship with this leader, who was more than a decade her senior, and whom she might not have otherwise pursued.

A significant incident occurred between this senior LAC leader and Jane Doe when a driving lesson was arranged to prepare Jane Doe for her move to Iraq, where LAC’s vehicle required proficiency in driving a manual transmission. After the lesson, the leader invited her to his apartment, where he kissed her, and the situation escalated beyond her comfort level. Caught off guard by this physical escalation, Jane Doe left feeling confused and isolated. She was unsure of how to address what happened and wanted to confide in someone trustworthy within LAC. The next day, the leader clarified that he was not interested in having a relationship and asked her not to disclose the incident to anyone in the LAC organization. He then conflated his statement by informing her that he felt the need to pray and ask God if he was to be her husband and subsequently be called to Iraq with her, assuring her that, in this case, what they did would not be used against her. Considering this leader’s assertions, Jane Doe did not report the incident to anyone.

“He just said things like “it never should have happened” and that it was just because I was single and he was lonely, not because he was interested in me.”

Move to Iraq and evidence of Financial Misconduct

(2019–2020): In September 2019, Jane Doe officially relocated to Iraq as a missionary for LAC. She had undergone no training, and before this, had only visited the country for 10 days. Upon arrival, she found the LAC house severely in need of basic furnishings. She was informed by the current missionary that the limited furnishings had arrived just one day before, and that this missionary had been living without air conditioning despite extreme heat and had made a makeshift bed out of a foam pad to sleep on for several months. According to this missionary, LAC had finally decided to send furniture in anticipation of Jane Doe’s arrival in the country. *“They finally sent the money to try to look better for your arrival.”*

“When I arrived at the LAC house in Iraq, I noticed that there were large boxes everywhere. The former missionary (who had been living by herself in Iraq for several months) told me that the boxes were from the furniture that was delivered the day before my arrival. I asked her to elaborate, and she said that the whole house had not been furnished until that day- no living room or bedroom furniture, no A/C units installed (in 120F Iraqi summer) because LAC kept forgetting and/or refusing to send money for these things. She stated that LAC expected her to furnish the whole house and the LAC office (located in the team house), because she was LAC and they “did not owe her anything.”

During Jane Doe’s long-term placement in Iraq, the LAC supervisors neglected to allocate funds consistently or on time, leaving her and the other on-site missionaries destitute and incapable of performing essential missionary initiatives. Like their predecessor, they were expected to furnish the house where LAC missionaries lived, the LAC office, and pay the organization’s rent on a meager \$850 monthly donation. LAC’s ability to retain its legal organizational status under Iraqi law was dependent on having an official office space. In spite of the absence of support from LAC leadership, the cooperation of the live-in missionaries kept LAC free from liability for illegitimate organizational functioning within the country.

“ We also had asked if we could use LACs platforms to fundraise for furniture/other daily needs, we were told no and that we could only use our own personal connections to fundraise for things that would have been used by LAC even after we left Iraq.”

Correlating to the above-mentioned neglect, financial misconduct was a recurring issue. Donations intended for missionaries were frequently delayed or “went missing”. For example, Jane Doe never received a \$3,000 donation directed to her from a personal sponsor. When she brought this discrepancy to LAC oversight, she was instructed to lie about its use to encourage further donations. Andrew and Kirsten Steele, responsible for distributing funds and providing pastoral care, were often unreachable, leaving urgent questions unanswered for days or weeks. In June 2020, during a LAC website update, the Steeles failed to communicate new donation processes to the team, causing further financial uncertainty. When Jane Doe raised concerns, Kirsten Steele reprimanded her, stating, ***“you need to stop questioning the leaders that God has put in your life.”*** She further accused Jane Doe of having “trust issues” and not acting “in line with the Holy Spirit,” quoting Psalm 139: “I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” urging her to pray until she aligned with this view. Per Kirsten, Jane Doe’s questioning of financial handling was an indicator that she ***“was not acting in the way that God created me to act.”***

“I noticed that when someone sent an amount of \$500 or more to me, I would not receive it. I never got answers as to where the money went. There was one time that a donation of \$3,000 directed to me went missing, and I was told to lie to the person who sent me that money about how I spent the money in hopes that they would donate to me again.”

“Situations like this, in my mind, confirmed the idea that there was something inherently wrong with me, whether or not I knew about it. Comments by the Steeles and Sarah Fisher, like, ‘we see things about you that you don’t see, through the gift of discernment’...I felt as if I was always messing up, sinning in these massive ways, just by accident, with no idea of what I was doing wrong or how to stop doing it. I felt completely hopeless.”

A Pattern of Lies and Manipulation: During COVID-19 lockdowns, LAC pressured the Iraq team to misrepresent their activities, claiming they were hosting worship nights to align with Feucht’s “Let us Worship” movement, despite local restrictions. A direct quote to Jane Doe from one of the LAC leaders after he was vaccinated to visit his family in another country was, *“Please don’t tell Sean I got the vaccine. I needed it to travel to see my family, but I’m afraid he might get mad at me and not let me help with Let Us Worship if he found out.”*

“From March of 2020 to March of 2021, we (LAC in-country missionary team) had a good work routine in place. Now that we were a team of 3 and we had a man on our team, we felt unstoppable. We began working with homeless refugees in the city, fundraising to buy them food on a weekly basis. We also started hosting worship nights at the LAC house, except during COVID lockdowns enforced by the police. LAC instructed us to lie on various accounts, stating that we were continuing worship nights during COVID lockdowns, as Sean Feucht at this time started his movement (organization?) ‘Let us Worship’, founded during the COVID lockdown in the United States. During the lockdown in Iraq, we did not do much work, but we sometimes exaggerated to the Steeles about what we did because we knew that they did not agree with lockdown restrictions. We were living in a warzone where men with guns patrolled right outside our house, men who did not speak any English and were instructed to ensure everyone stayed inside their homes. We explained this situation to LAC leadership, and they still encouraged us to break the law. I suspect this was largely because they wanted to be able to include the story in their ‘Let us Worship’ movement.”

“The Steeles organized a phone call with all of us in Iraq regarding what they called the ‘3 Times Rule’. Our team worked with homeless refugees in our city in Iraq, and we had regular funding from LAC donors to buy food for these families on a weekly/bi-weekly basis. We would often see the same families every week, and tried to extend our reach to at least 1-2 new families every week as well. We were instructed to implement this new ‘3 Times Rule’ immediately, per the Steeles.”

Below, a description by Jane Doe of the “3 Times Rule”. This policy was mandated by Sean Feucht and was introduced to the team by the Steeles, who enforced the policy.

“The rule was that we were to visit a new homeless refugee family and bring them food on the first visit and share the Gospel with them. If they refused the gospel or would not listen to us, we were to leave the food for the family and plan another visit for the next week. On the 2nd

visit to the family, we were not to bring any food but to have it in the car without telling the family, and attempt again to share the gospel. If they accepted the gospel and converted to Christianity, we were to get the food from the car and give it to them. If not, we were to schedule another visit the following week and promise food to them next time. On the third visit, we were instructed to bring the food inside with us but not give it to the family. We were to share the gospel and were told only to give the food if they converted to Christianity. If they again declined the 'good news', on this visit, we were told to leave and take the food with us. I did not like this rule and did not follow it, but I knew better than to openly question the Steeles' leadership at this time, as it only led to being reprimanded."

Sexual Assault and Abuse : In Iraq, Jane Doe faced grave abuse, particularly from one of her core team members, who had joined the team in 2021. This member romantically pursued her in secret, claiming that God had ordained their relationship. This behavior escalated to include him making non-consensual sexual advances and ignoring her objections.

"He often spoke to me about how he thought he was supposed to marry me, and that must be why he was called to Iraq; to find me. While I was very religious, at first, I believed kissing him was okay because he was supposed to be my husband. He gave strict instructions not to tell anyone else in LAC that we were together, not until God told him it was okay."

During one incident, he forcibly removed her shirt and continued touching her despite her protests, stating, *"You know you liked that."* *"He did this outside in Iraq, and threw my shirt away from me so I would have had to expose myself/my body in public to put my clothes back on."* In another, he took her clothes off and pinned her down, biting across her body while ignoring her pleas to stop. This left her with bruises that lasted for weeks. These incidents were compounded by the organization's culture, which normalized and legitimized men's claims of receiving "divine guidance" concerning marriage. This dynamic left women like Jane Doe vulnerable to sexual predators and dependent on these men's confirmations from God, a process she was excluded from.

Spiritual Abuse & Emotional Manipulation: Following one of the Steeles' week-long visits to Iraq, they accused Jane Doe of dressing inappropriately. Jane Doe asked them directly what she had worn that was inappropriate. In response, *"they both looked me up and down and told me my clothes were fine, but it was my attitude that was in question."* She never received a clear explanation as to what this meant, although the accusation continued to be used against her. For example, the LAC leadership and her teammate, Sarah Fisher, accused her several times of having a "promiscuous spirit" but failed to provide her with examples or tangible guidance to avoid these slip-ups in the future.

In July 2021, Sarah claiming a "gift of discernment," accused Jane Doe of being depressed and "pulling away from the team" without evidence. Despite Jane Doe assuring Sarah that she was

not depressed, Sarah organized and led a traumatic surprise "intervention" where the entire team confronted Jane Doe based on Sarah's claim that she was not only depressed, but also suicidal. Jane Doe describes the feeling of "blacking out" during this event, only recalling Sarah's rant for about 20 minutes, with Adam (co-country leader) attending by Zoom, and the rest of her team present. She endured claims that she was depressed, suicidal, and a whore. Sarah ended the intervention saying, ***"The Lord is telling me that it's time for you to leave Light a Candle and go home."*** Immediately after, Jane Doe was excluded from team activities and locked in her house for 24 hours. Left feeling betrayed, isolated, and unable to speak on her own behalf, Jane Doe decided to resign from LAC in October 2021 (see resignation letter). These events solidified her choice not to report or share with LAC leadership any incidents of sexual assault or harassment, as she felt that she would inevitably be discredited and blamed.

Aftermath and Continued Harassment: After leaving LAC, Jane Doe was diagnosed with PTSD, which her therapists attributed to the "intervention" incident. Despite her efforts to move on, former team members and LAC leaders continued to contact her, all under the guise of "reconnecting". In 2022, her former LAC "boss" from her BSSM internship made inappropriate advances during a phone call, suggesting they could continue such interactions despite not pursuing marriage. In late 2023, her former pastoral care leader, whose original contact information had been blocked, contacted her with an unsaved number and identified herself as Kirsten. She asked where she was living. In 2024, the core team member who had previously assaulted her repeatedly contacted her via different social media platforms, prompting her to delete her accounts.

Summary Table of Alleged Misconduct

Category	Details	Key Quote
Financial Misconduct	Missing donations, delayed payments, and missionaries funding organizational costs	<i>"You need to stop questioning the leaders that God has put in your life." ~ Kirsten Steele</i>
Misogyny	Derogatory comments about women needing husbands for effective ministry	<i>"he joked about me 'finding my Mohammad'..." ~Sean Feucht</i>

Sexual Abuse	Non-consensual advances by LAC core team member	<i>"You know you liked that."</i> ~ Name not disclosed.
	Non-consensual advances by "boss" in LAC leadership	<i>He felt that he needed to pray and ask God if he was to be her husband. Then he would be called to Iraq, and what they did would not matter.</i> ~ Name not disclosed
Spiritual/Emotional Abuse	Traumatic "intervention" accusing Jane Doe of spiritual instability	<i>"The Lord is telling me that it's time for you to leave Light a Candle..."</i> ~ Sarah

Conclusion: Jane Doe’s statement highlights a consistent pattern of alleged misconduct and abuse. She suffered significant harm within LAC, including financial exploitation, gender discrimination, misogyny, sexual abuse, and spiritual manipulation. These experiences, if substantiated, suggest egregious issues within the organization’s leadership and culture, particularly under Sean Feucht’s oversight. Her PTSD diagnosis of religious trauma and continued harassment underscore the lasting impact of these events. While these allegations are based on her personal account and require further investigation for verification, they emphasize the need for accountability and reform in religious organizations to protect vulnerable individuals.

“For years, I lived in a war zone. There were bombs and armed military men on the streets. But this isn’t what gave me PTSD, Iraq didn’t give me PTSD, LAC did.”