



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 28, 2009

## The Fellowship Foundation: Secret and Scrutinized

Unwelcome scrutiny intensified of a controversial and secretive “C Street Center,” as a number of former residents were caught in sex scandals.

Specifically, the adulterous affairs of Senator John Ensign (R-Nev.) and Governor Mark Sanford of South Carolina drew attention to the brick townhouse near D.C. and the shadowy organization that established it and zealously protects its inhabitants.



The “C Street Center” is a dormitory in Washington, D.C., tied closely to the Fellowship Foundation, a self-described conservative, Christian group. The house has been the part-time residence of several prominent politicians including Ensign and former Congressman Chip Pickering, himself also accused of carrying on an extramarital affair while living at C Street. Ensign, Pickering, and the others pay about \$600 a month to live in one of the rooms at the townhouse, the ownership of which is shrouded in mystery.

The house, reportedly valued at \$1.1 million, is owned by the C Street Center, an auxiliary arm of the Fellowship Foundation. The “Fellowship” or “Foundation” is a group registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a church. In fact, it is the group that organizes the annual National Prayer Breakfast, although the group’s name is nowhere listed in the program. As a matter of fact, few members of the organization ever talk about the group or its purpose.

The exception is Richard Carver, former assistant secretary of the Air Force in the Reagan administration. Carver is a member of the Fellowship’s board of directors and is the public face of the organization. According to Carver, “Our goal is singular — and that is to hope that we can assist them [those lawmakers living in the C Street house] in better understandings of the teachings of Christ, and applying to their jobs.” Despite such noble undertakings, the Foundation has become the hub of controversy and the focus of criticism in the wake of the scandals that have plagued its members and associates.

Most notable and damaging of all the critics is Jeff Shallot, who in his book *The Family: The Secret Foundation at the Heart of American Power* claims that the group “began as an anti-New Deal organization in the 1930s when the founder [Abram Vereide] believed that God gave him a revelation that government regulation was a tool of Satan’s.” Sharlot further claims that the leadership of the group preaches power as the ultimate goal of Christianity.



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The group counters those accusations by declaring that their purpose is “trying to follow the teachings of Jesus, and we’re trying to encourage other people to do the same.” Whatever the true aim of the Fellowship Foundation may be, there can be no doubt that the increase in recent attention and the scandals drawing such attention can do nothing but bring disrepute to a group already under such a searing spotlight.



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