

My name is Jessica Lebsack, but many of you knew me when my name was Jessica Mitchell. When I got married I became Jessica Hagedorn. Throughout the past 20 years, I've had a front row seat, watching a whole lot of things happen at Valleybrook Church. It's been up close and personal for me, ever since I was a little girl. I've been waiting for God to give me the chance to talk, while everybody else has now said what they want to, publicly and privately. I have been waiting patiently, and I know that it's my time to say something about what I've seen and what I've experienced at Valleybrook Church. I have perspective that no one else does. So now I want to share my perspective with whomever it may concern.

As Jessica Mitchell, I was Greg Mitchell's daughter. Over the span of 20 plus years, I've watched things change at Valleybrook. I watched pastors change, members change, volunteers change, leadership change, overseers change, and most importantly, from the moment Doug Lebsack walked into that church, I watched lives change, including my own. I was there from the very beginning, and like a little bird perched high in the corner, I watched and heard it all until the very end. I was one of the cute little kids in Sunday School. I was your daughters' friend. I was one of your youth, as a middle schooler and a high schooler. I took care of your infant, toddler, and elementary-aged children while you were in church. I babysat for you at your house. I watched and played with your kids in my parents' basement while you were having Bible study with my parents, or meeting with them to talk about your marriage. Then I grew up and volunteered with your middle schooler and your high schooler. As a child, I was always at the church with my dad helping to build, paint, clean, and repair things many nights during the week to make sure that you had a place to worship. I was your next-door neighbor. I taught you how to braid your daughter's hair. My husband and I bought your mom's house after we got married. I attended your adult small groups and led small groups of my own. I attended your women's nights and retreats. I led you in worship with my husband. I sat with your wives one-on-one and talked them through their pain and doubts. My children and I attended your music class. I invited you to leadership meetings at my home, where I served you meals, and you helped yourself to anything in my fridge and stayed as long as you needed. I prayed with you at prayer meetings. I talked with you during gatherings at my parents' house. I spent hours talking with you on the phone. I friended you on Facebook and emailed you back when you had a question. I stayed home alone with my kids, sometimes several nights a week, so that you could meet with my husband and Doug as overseers, church leaders, Wounded participants and leaders, and hurting people because "you just had to talk with them ASAP." Your marriages were failing. Your children were struggling. Your addictions were out of control. Your families were falling apart. You didn't know what to do, so they did their very best to say "yes" as much as they could to each one of you. Each Sunday I got my three young children ready for church, bringing them to and from church alone so that you could hear my husband lead worship and teach. I cooked meals and fed my kids after church by myself so that you could have the attention of my husband and Doug in the lobby after church without an appointment.

As much as was humanly possible, I was invested in Valleybrook Church at every level for as long as I can remember. It's the only church I really knew, and I loved it like few people have. I watched lives change, addictions be broken, unhealthy relationships severed, children adopted (yes, even adult adoptions), relationships restored, wounds healed, and I saw people begin to understand the love of a Father. God did miraculous things at Valleybrook. I will always cherish the memories of what God did there for all of us.

I will never forget when Doug came to Valleybrook. Everyone was so uncomfortable, because Doug was all about the truth. This caused many reactions. Some people left the church. Some people stayed and pretended each week. And some people experienced healing and freedom from God. In the middle of it all were people, as my dad always said, who were "rotten apples." He would say, "It only takes one rotten apple..." Come to find out, the reason he knew that so well was because he was the big rotten apple at the core of the whole thing, and it was rotting everything around him.

Over two years ago, my dad walked out of my house as I begged him to get help, to love me and give me his heart, and I've never seen him since. Over this time of separation, God has given me a chance to reflect and remember, to finally see and understand what has always lived in the heart of Greg Mitchell. It's crystal clear what really lives inside of him and what he actually worshiped, and it wasn't God. I would be able to leave all that alone, except for the fact that there were too many people who saw him as a spiritual leader and all-around great guy! When he abandoned my mom, his kids, and his grandkids to pursue his sexual addiction, people blamed everyone but him. It was my mom's fault. It was my fault. It was Doug's fault. We threw him under the bus. People wanted so bad to believe it wasn't true that they tried to find excuses for him – it was his concussion, or he had to leave because of “the cult.” Something that has become very clear now is that Greg Mitchell was an idol to many, many people at Valleybrook and in the Chippewa Valley. They wanted his attention much more than they wanted God, so they worshipped Greg. That's why I can't leave it alone. Because with Greg Mitchell as your god, you're going to be just as rotten as he is at the core! My dad was the lead overseer, and he was hiding filth that was deep inside of his soul. That filth formed the foundation of Valleybrook Church.

I was really surprised how people tried to capitalize on our move to Texas and make it into something dark and evil. All this drama happened as Nate's biological mom kept acting like she didn't know where Nate was, like he had been kidnapped. Cries went out on Facebook to “help this woman find her son.” Are you serious?! He's a 33-year-old man with a wife and four kids; our address was on the Internet! But she pretended that Nate didn't know what he was doing and was “taken” into a family without realizing it because he was so brainwashed. I was there when Doug and Robin offered to adopt Nate if he ever wanted to legally become their son, since he had severed his relationship with his biological parents a few years earlier. They told him it was completely his choice, and that it didn't change their hearts towards him, no matter what he chose. They felt that Nate was a son to them regardless of whether he had the same last name or not. They wanted him to have a true family, if he ever wanted one. I'm the one who had the conversations with him as he weighed his options and what adoption as an adult would mean to him. I told him, “I don't need this for me at all. But if this is something that you need, whenever you want it, I will fully support you.” I can't believe that the Leader-Telegram would write a story like they did, just because Jody wanted them to. And they used a picture of our wedding and defiled our wedding day.

In the middle of all of Nate's biological mom's drama, she would post things about our kids and claim them as “my grandkids.” Recently my dad got married to a woman from the Philippines, and his new wife posted the same proclamation on her Facebook page – “I'm a grandma now!” It's very important to me to say very clearly today that just because you publicly proclaim something doesn't make it true. Nate's biological parents were never true grandparents from the very beginning when Brinnley was born. We didn't trust them then, and we certainly don't trust them now. Anyone who knew us at that time would know how we felt about his parents, even way back then. We set boundary after boundary until finally after we could see that we were not going to be respected, we made the decision to walk away completely. We walked away years before Nate chose to be adopted into a new family that loved who he was and supported completely who he was becoming. And Joy (my dad's new wife) needs to understand that Greg Mitchell forfeited his rights as a grandpa to my kids the day he walked away from my family and never planned to come back. Joy, in marrying him, you certainly did not inherit grandchildren. Nobody owns my children whether you proclaim it or not! And on the same note, publicly proclaiming that someone is a cult leader, or lying down in the fetal position and claiming that you've been spiritually abused, does not make it true. It doesn't even make it true when you get people to rush to your defense after making such a proclamation.

I really thought people sincerely wanted to get well at Valleybrook. I know that some did, but it's become so clear to me that more than anything, most people wanted control. I was truly surprised at how badly people wanted to ruin things for my family, how badly they wanted to make Nate's adoption into something dark. He never had parents who gave a crap about him, and now he does. But people wanted to ruin that for him instead of celebrating it. As for me, I finally have a dad in Doug who sees me and loves me. I think that more than anything, people didn't want to see Nate and I become Lebsacks. They tried their best to destroy Doug and Nate's reputation, driving it into the ground with the hopes that it would destroy our family too. It didn't work.

I know the truth about Nate's growing up, and the truth about his relationship with his biological parents. I was there to see and experience it all in its full dysfunction. Being adopted was one of the best decisions Nate has ever made! We were waiting for the perfect moment to share his adoption with more people, but we knew it would cause waves for some people. The Assistant Lead

Pastor at the time decided that he was the authority on all of it and had the right to announce it to the world. He did this because he needed something to hang Doug for, something that would make people feel like they couldn't trust our family. It didn't take long after that for Nate's biological parents to take it to the papers. They failed their son miserably in life, and then they publicly tried to make him look like an idiot, all in the name of "love." I couldn't believe people actually got on board with that!

What really hurt was that we loved the people in that church. We prayed for them all the time. We gave our lives and our time to really invest in them. And then when Doug and Nate resigned, the overseers told them to stay home that day because of threats that people were going to come and interrupt the service and the overseers felt that if we were there, the people might riot. They didn't tell the violent people to stay home, they told the pastors who were resigning to stay home. And then the overseer who read "our resignation letter" to the church, decided to modify our letter, so that Doug and Nate could never express their hearts to the people they loved and served all those years. Yes, this whole entire story was full of corruption and lies, to the point that you couldn't even hear our family's heart for Valleybrook Church on our resignation day. We couldn't even tell you goodbye that day because we were blocked by the corruption that lived in that place. I couldn't come and walk through that building one last time, the place that meant so much to my heart and my story. I really couldn't believe it when I found out. It made me so sad. The new lead overseer after my dad was clearly living in the same darkness as my dad. What a coward! This overseer even had the nerve to come over to my house every Monday morning to have time each week with my husband and Doug because he wanted relationship with them so much. Then he suddenly was the one that led the charge to destroy Doug and Nate publicly after we had left. He suddenly changed his mind about all of it? It has to make a person wonder what that man is really up to.

I've been learning a lot about codependence, and Karpman's Drama Triangle pretty much sums up my life as a Mitchell and what lived at Valleybrook Church. Codependent people only want to feel what they want to feel, and they only face what they want to face. They only form relationships with other people who will support them in their codependent fantasy. Greg Mitchell only let people get close who would support his fantasy. The only friends he ever had were people that he looked down on. He talked about all of you like you were idiots, and he let you close because he could be a "hero" and in return you would support his fantasy. This is what many codependent people do. Greg Mitchell never let anyone close who could challenge him and help him grow; it's why he refused to have a relationship with Doug. How many others acted in this same way? Maybe this is why some people didn't like Doug, because he wouldn't support their fantasy or be codependent with them. He told them the truth instead, even when they didn't want to hear it or feel it.

Something that has fascinated me in the middle of all this drama is that people have been so bold in their attack. I mean, Doug knows things about some of you that have the potential to ruin your lives, if he ever told. Some of you would lose your jobs and your families. I know a lot of what you've done from just listening in my house over the years as a child and as an adult. It's some crazy stuff!! I've wondered why you aren't more afraid, but then I realized why. Even though you've accused Doug of just about everything under the sun, deep down, you're still counting on his Godly character to not expose you, because you know that he really does love you, no matter what you've said or done. You've always counted on that. How ironic that you're still counting on him to be that man, even after you've publicly bashed him and claimed that he's something else.

As a family we live unashamed. We know the truth of what God did at Valleybrook and the truth about all of the stories and lies. We have nothing to hide. Here is everything that was set against us.

Leader-Telegram:

Article 1)

<http://www.leadertelegram.com/News/Region/2015/04/19/In-God-s-name.html>
(<http://www.leadertelegram.com/News/Region/2015/04/19/In-God-s-name.html>)

Article 2)

<http://www.leadertelegram.com/News/Region/2015/04/26/Whose-morality.html>
(<http://www.leadertelegram.com/News/Region/2015/04/26/Whose-morality.html>)

Article 3)

<http://www.leadertelegram.com/News/Front-Page/2015/12/06/Born-again.html> (<http://www.leadertelegram.com/News/Front-Page/2015/12/06/Born-again.html>)

You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpKjUTvc1pw> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpKjUTvc1pw>)

Tales from the Cult Blog:

<https://talesfromthecult.wordpress.com/> (<https://talesfromthecult.wordpress.com/>)

I think it's also important to shed some light on the young man who wrote "Tales From the Cult" and is constantly quoted in the Leader-Telegram articles. I want to share what I saw in him. This boy never had a dad, and it was evident that this left a big wound on his heart. This was why Nate and I, as his high school youth leaders, had a lot of compassion for him. It's why Nate tried to care for him and be there for him. This was not a friendship at all; it was a caring leader reaching out to help a sad young boy at the youth group. Later in the story, Nate started an internship at Valleybrook around the same time that this boy did, and soon after, Nate was asked to join staff part time. This boy did not become part of the staff team. He just remained responsible for some technical things for the youth group and for helping with stage sets. The church even paid him a small stipend each month to encourage him. But after Nate and I were married, we talked more about the unhealthiness of this young man. Nate decided that he had to set boundaries with this boy, which made the young man really upset. Shortly after setting these boundaries and saying "no" to this boy more often, we were able to see by his reaction just how unhealthy that relationship truly was. This young man has made many claims, but one thing worth clarifying is that he wasn't fired from a staff position at Valleybrook. He was asked to be done as an intern and that was for many reasons that don't need mentioning. I am sharing this information because I think it brings a lot of clarity to the whole picture. The way I feel about this young man is that he doesn't deserve anything but compassion, because he is truly lost and dying for connection. He needs help, and I really hope he gets that. Seeing him declare camaraderie with Nate's biological mom only reveals to everyone how broken and truly dysfunctional he is. Maybe the Leader-Telegram should consider paying for him to get counseling instead of exploiting him on the front page of the newspaper.

In everything that I've mentioned, here's the bottom line. As I have seen the truth of my dad, Greg Mitchell, I've come to understand just how much his double life has affected and infected so many other people's lives. The fruit of their hiding, sin, and codependence sits squarely at his doorstep. No, he is not responsible for all of it, but he stood up in leadership for all those years, pretending to be one thing but living something out that was completely different. Here's what it all comes to down to for me: if you want to know the true character of a man, ask his children. Talk to his wife. He might be able to hide in public, but he can't hide at home. Who he really is will play out behind closed doors. I've lived on both sides of that reality now. It holds true for Greg Mitchell as a father. But it also holds true for Doug Lebsack as a father. But I think most of you already knew this, didn't you? That's why none of you ever asked any of the Lebsack kids about their dad. That's why you never talked to Robin about any of it. And that's why you didn't come to rescue Nate and me from the "cult" in Texas. You didn't want to hear it from "us Lebsacks" either. You knew that none of the lies were true. You didn't want to face the truth; it would ruin your public display of victimhood, and it would take away from your codependent fantasy.

So yes, after everything we walked through, we were obedient to His call and we moved to Texas. Something that Valleybrook overseers, staff, and key leaders knew was how God was speaking to us that our time at Valleybrook was coming to end. Doug and Nate even talked with these leaders about probably moving to Texas, several months before we left. We knew it was coming, but didn't know exactly how or when it would happen. Doug and Nate even started meeting with two other pastors and a couple of overseers each week in preparation for whenever that day came. There were even a handful of people that came into Doug and Nate's office and confirmed this to them in prophecy on several occasions. The amazing part of the story is that God used people like my dad and other leaders who lied, manipulated, and controlled to open the door for me and my family to move to Texas.

I had to laugh at the whole "fled to Texas" in the newspaper! We were so done in Wisconsin, and God made it so obvious that we were supposed to leave right away, by opening every door to lead us forward. We were led into something very new and

unexpected in Texas. The way that He unfolded each step of His plan for us, the more our trust for Him grew and our love grew for each other as a family. What a relief it was to come here and feel so free and alive! I truly love it here, and what my life and family have become. I didn't know life could really feel like this every day. What others meant for evil, God certainly meant for our good. And what I've really come to see in all of this is that no person, no spirit, and no circumstance can get in the way of God's sovereign plan for our lives. No one can stand in our way. This is the beauty of being chosen, the beauty of God's love for us.

Attached below is the actual resignation letter that no one got to hear. I wanted to attach it because it means a great deal to me for you to hear our heart. I'm also attaching a letter I recently wrote to Greg Mitchell, the man who was my father. I didn't choose to walk away, he did. This is the man that was the face of Valleybrook, the man who so many worshipped as an idol. This is your beloved leader. This is what really lived at the core, and if you followed him, this is probably what lives at your core too. This is my story.

[jess_to_greg.docx \(/uploads/5/5/5/7/55579449/jess_to_greg.docx\)](#)

[resignation_letter.pdf](#)