



# Gloriavale overseeing shepherd appears in court for alleged sexual offending

Joanne Naish

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**Gloriavale overseeing shepherd appears in court for alleged sexual offending**

Gloriavale's overseeing shepherd is facing 27 charges of sexual offending spanning more than 23 years against 10 alleged victims.

Howard Temple, 83, faces multiple counts of committing an indecent act on a young person and of indecent assault. There are 10 female complainants, ranging in age from 9 to 20 at the time of the alleged offending.

He was given interim [name suppression when he was charged in July](#), but did not reapply to keep his name secret during an appearance in the Greymouth District Court on Wednesday.

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Temple pleaded not guilty and elected judge alone trial. He was remanded on bail to reappear in October. Outside court he declined to comment.

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Court documents show the charges date from between 1998 and 2022. Twenty-two of the charges are representative, meaning multiple offences of the same type are alleged to have been committed in similar circumstances.



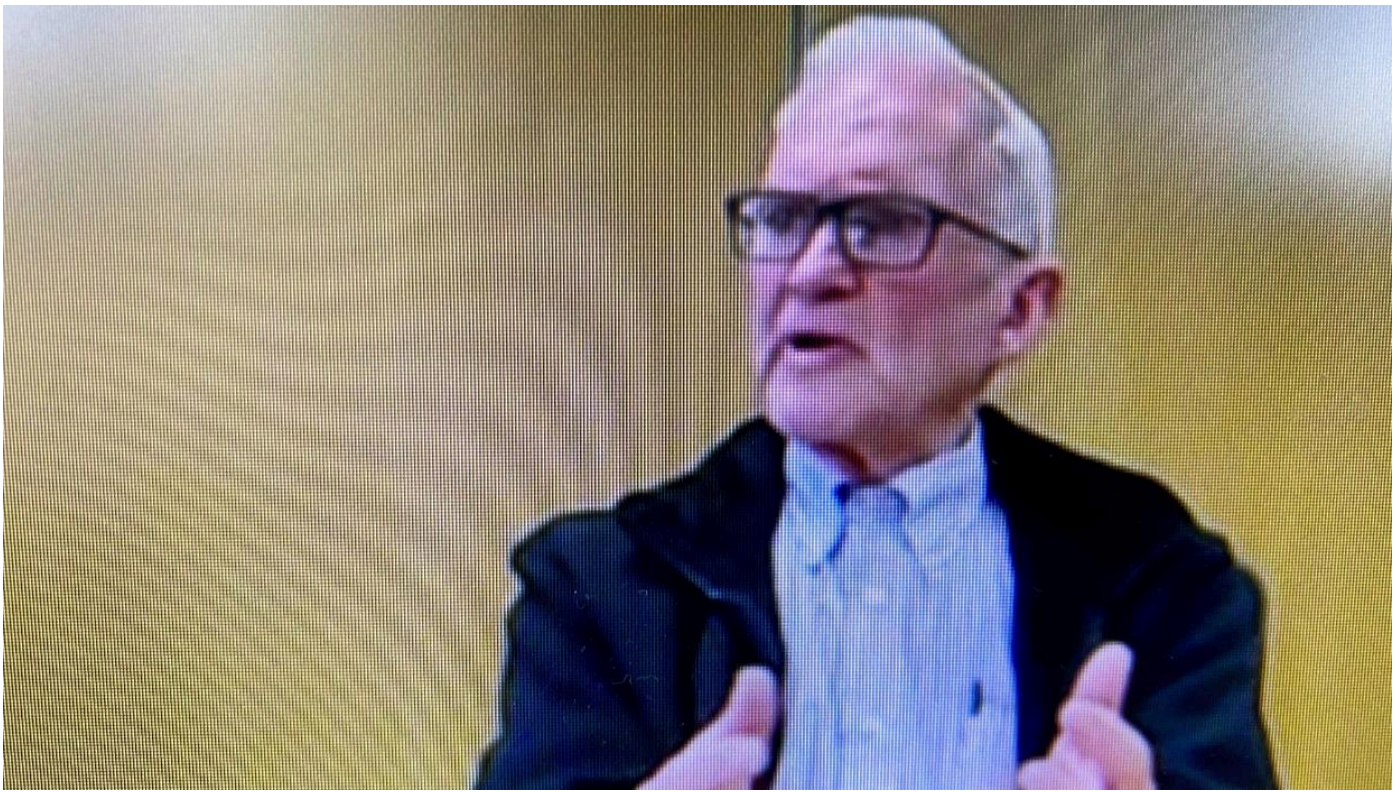
Howard Temple head into court to face charges of alleged sexual offending.

JASON BLAIR / THE-PRESS

*Stuff* understands Stephen Standfast has been acting overseeing shepherd since Temple's arrest.

[Standfast was chosen by Temple](#) to succeed him as overarching leader of the Gloriavale Christian Community. He will take the top job on Temple's death, like [Temple succeeded founder Hopeful Christian when he died](#) in 2018. [Christian went to prison for four years in 1995](#) for sexual offending.

Temple heads a group of shepherds who are Samuel Valor, Noah Hopeful and Standfast. The leadership team is also made up of servants Peter Righteous, Hopeful Christian's son Mark Christian, Maranatha Stedfast, Joshua Disciple and Michael Hope.



Temple answers questions at the royal commission into abuse in faith-based care.

JOANNE NAISH / STUFF

Temple, formerly called Howard Smitherman, is an American mechanical engineer who served in the US Navy. He visited New Zealand during his service, prompting a move here and marriage to a New Zealander. He and wife Joy joined the Gloriavale church when it was based in Rangiora, with Joy becoming the head of its school system. His main role until his promotion was principal of Gloriavale's "Community Garden of Children" – one of three early childhood centres within the community.

Temple [gave evidence at the royal commission of inquiry into abuse in faith-based care](#) about how the leaders dealt with sexual abuse of children and vowed there would be "no more abuse" at the West Coast Christian community.

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