

Open Letter from the International Board of Directors of RZIM on the Investigation of Ravi Zacharias

It is with shattered hearts that we issue this statement about the allegations against RZIM's Founder, Ravi Zacharias.

Following allegations made in late August of 2020 that Ravi had engaged in sexual misconduct and abuse in connection with two day spas, we commissioned Miller & Martin PLLC, a law firm with experience in corporate and sex crimes investigations, to conduct an independent investigation. We gave Miller & Martin a broad scope to pursue any avenues that they judged to be relevant to the accusations, and we emphasized that our only purpose for the investigation was to ascertain the full truth.

Having received the results of the investigation, we are publicly releasing the investigation report in the exact form that we received it. We have been waiting to make an extended statement in the hope that the full findings of the investigation would allow us to speak more accurately and meaningfully. We also wanted to ensure Miller & Martin's independence in their investigation, assessments, and reporting of the findings.

To be victimized by unwanted sexual contact, advances, and behavior is horrendous. It is diametrically opposed to everything we believe about the value and dignity of every single person. We believe not only the women who made their allegations public but also additional women who had not previously made public allegations against Ravi but whose identities and stories were uncovered during the investigation. Tragically, witnesses described encounters including sexting, unwanted touching, spiritual abuse, and rape. We are devastated by what the investigation has shown and are filled with sorrow for the women who were hurt by this terrible abuse.

These women told their stories on conditions of confidentiality and anonymity, and we fully intend to respect their wishes by not disclosing their names or any other identifying information. We are deeply grateful to all of the courageous women and other witnesses who came forward in this investigation.

We would like to thank each journalist, advocate, and concerned member of the public who brought accusations of sexual misconduct and abuse to our attention. Their efforts paved the way for us to recognize the truth and to have the opportunity to respond to the truth. For that we will always be thankful. We would also like to thank all of those, including our own staff, who raised questions and concerns. Input from all of these sources was of great help, especially in enabling us to identify and begin to take responsibility for our failures.

The investigation's conclusions have caused us to think very differently about the allegations Mrs. Lori Anne Thompson made against Ravi in 2017. We were wrong. Our trust in Ravi's denial of moral wrongdoing and in his deceptive explanations of emails and other records that became public was severely misplaced, and our failures in 2017, including our failure to commission an independent investigation at that time, allowed tremendous pain to continue to be caused in the Thompsons' lives.

We believe Lori Anne Thompson has told the truth about the nature of her relationship with Ravi Zacharias. It is with profound grief that we recognize that because we did not believe the Thompsons and both privately and publicly perpetuated a false narrative, they were slandered for years and their suffering was greatly prolonged and intensified. This leaves us heartbroken and ashamed. We are deeply grateful for their longstanding commitment to making the truth known and admire their strength to carry on even when they were not believed. It is our hope to seek a redemptive way forward with Mrs. and Mr. Thompson and seek their forgiveness, while recognizing that we have no right to this and wanting to be led by them in terms of what might be most helpful.

It must have been deeply painful for the victims of Ravi's abuse and misconduct to tell their stories and to relive their terrible experiences as they participated in this investigation. To you we say directly: Words cannot come close to expressing the sorrow that we feel for what you have been through or the gratitude we feel for the bravery with which you have responded. We are so thankful to you, and we are so sorry.

The findings of this investigation and their public release will be devastating to Ravi's wife, son, and daughters, and to his entire family. Our hearts are broken for them, and we grieve with the weight of being part of this unimaginable pain. We pray for the Zacharias family and mourn with them in this time of severe loss. It is our hope that they will receive the healing and restoration that God alone can provide.

Repentance

We are shocked and grieved by Ravi's actions. As Ravi Zacharias was the founder of our ministry and the leader of our staff, community, and team, we also feel a deep need for corporate repentance.

As followers of Christ who passionately believe that every person bears the image of God, we detest any sin of abuse. We now know based on the investigation that Ravi engaged in a series of extensive measures to conceal his behavior from his family, colleagues, and friends. However, we also recognize that in situations of prolonged abuse, there often exist significant structural, policy, and cultural problems. It is imperative that where these things exist in our organization, we take focused steps to ensure they are properly diagnosed and addressed.

That a leader under our care sinned against others so grievously pains us. We were trusted by our staff, our donors, and the public to mentor, oversee, and ensure the accountability of Ravi Zacharias, and in this we have failed. The findings of the investigation have caused us to take an extensive and humbling look at ways that we have fallen short, made mistakes, and failed to love well. This is an ongoing process that will take significant time, but we are committed to it.

We regret the statement that we released on September 15, 2020. It lacked compassion and concern and did not communicate that we would take the allegations seriously. Also, it gave the impression that all of RZIM's staff shared the opinion that the allegations were false.

Our statement was wrong in tone and wrong in the impression that it represented our entire staff. We deeply regret that statement, and we are very sorry for it.

We regret that we allowed our misplaced trust in Ravi to result in him having less oversight and accountability than would have been wise and loving. We also regret the ways that many of us have publicly extolled Ravi's character and the impact this will have had on victims of his abuse. We now know our words have been hurtful, and that causes us deep sorrow. Moreover, in the wake of the accusations brought against Ravi by the Thompsons in 2017, we communicated our confidence in Ravi's denial of these accusations, and others trusted Ravi because they trusted us. Through our failure, we made it more difficult for victims to come forward. This grieves us intensely and makes us so thankful that the truth has ultimately been revealed.

These are some of the ways that we have fallen gravely short. There are undoubtedly other ways as well that we have not yet had the wisdom and humility to identify and fully appreciate. We confess that there has been pride and arrogance in our hearts, and we are committed to the ongoing process of repentance. Both for what Ravi did and for all of the ways that we have fallen short, we are so sorry. As an organization, we understand that we have no right to forgiveness and that even if forgiveness is possible, it may take time. We also recognize that earning trust is a process and is dependent on the steps that we take moving forward.

Restitution Plan and Organizational Reform

Our ministry has two priorities right now. We want to help the victims of Ravi's abuse, and we want to thoroughly understand what has taken place in our organization so that we can do everything we can to make sure nothing like this happens again. To that end, we are beginning by making the following commitments:

- We have engaged victim-advocate Rachael Denhollander to act in two roles. As a consultant, she will educate and advise our Board and senior leadership in understanding trauma and abuse as well as best-standards practices. Rachael also has been retained to serve as a confidential liaison with survivors and to help guide the process of care, justice, and restitution for those who have been victimized. Survivors or their legal counsel, advocate, or representative may reach out to her confidentially at rjd.requests@gmail.com.
- We have engaged Guidepost Solutions, a management/compliance consulting firm, and are providing full disclosure to them to conduct a thorough evaluation of RZIM, including its structures, culture, policies, processes, finances, and practices. Guidepost was chosen for its independence, depth of skill and expertise, and emphasis on top-down and grassroots cultural reform. This assessment will contain three main components:
 1. Survivor Care: Guidepost will provide confidential avenues for any survivors and witnesses, including any who have not yet come forward, to disclose information related to abuse or harassment at RZIM or by anyone employed by RZIM in the past. Survivors will also be encouraged to contact Rachael Denhollander for

further assistance. In addition, anyone is invited to disclose any information relevant to the scope of the investigation, even if they have not directly experienced abuse or harassment. This will include the option for anonymous reporting, including witness statements. Guidepost will investigate any new information that is brought forward, including allegations related to mishandling or enabling abuse or harassment. Guidepost will also review how accusations against Ravi were handled in 2017 (and all other relevant years).

2. Cultural Assessment: Guidepost will perform a thorough assessment of the culture of RZIM related to abuse, harassment, whistleblowing, and disclosures. This will include assessing communications; tone of leadership; actions taken; knowledge-base of leadership and employees; and the impact of policies on RZIM's culture.
3. Policy Assessment: Guidepost will perform a thorough review of RZIM's policies related to abuse, harassment, and disclosure, and of overall organizational and corporate structures and their impact on abuse and harassment-related issues. In sobering recognition of the severity of what has occurred and the importance of policy and cultural reform, we have asked Guidepost to examine any corrections that need to take place.

We are committed to change, and we believe we will benefit greatly from Guidepost's scrutiny. Additional information regarding Guidepost's work, including intermediate protective steps and corrective actions RZIM will be taking, and confidential channels for reporting, will be released as quickly as possible.

Going Forward

Our prayer has been that the truth would be known. For this answer to prayer we are thankful, even though we express this gratitude through tears. The humbling process of seeking counsel from survivors and advocates and of writing this statement has made us profoundly aware that even what we say now is vastly insufficient and merely a starting point for all that needs to be said and done in the days ahead.

In light of the findings of the investigation and the ongoing evaluation, we are seeking the Lord's will regarding the future of this ministry. We are learning much through this time and hope to have the chance to apply these lessons in the future. We remain passionate about seeing the gospel preached through the questions of culture. We will be spending focused time praying and fasting as we discern how God is leading, and we will speak to this in the near future.

The findings of this investigation have convinced us more than ever of the necessity and sufficiency of the gospel. No one is without the need for a savior. Sin resides in the heart of every human being. Jesus is the only person who is exactly who he says he is and the only savior worthy of our ultimate trust and worship. Jesus is fully committed to truth and to justice, and he unqualifiedly stands with victims.

The International Board of Directors



3755 Mansell Road
Alpharetta, GA 30022
USA
770.449.6766

101-250 Front Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5V 3G5
CANADA
416.385.9199