

# Friends letter to all victim survivors of sexual abuse and child sexual abuse within the fellowship

Jul 4

When we try to imagine the pain you've endured, it breaks our hearts.

The abuse you've received.

The times you've relived it in your mind.

The way it's infiltrated every part of your life.

The dismissal you've received.

The lack of understanding and compassion.

The times you've relived it as you bravely shared your story.

The times you haven't been believed.

The self-doubt it's caused.

The lack of confidence it's created.

The depression, anxiety, lack of trust.

The suicidal thoughts.

The loneliness.

The sleepless nights.

The fears.

And so much more.

A victim over and over again, and yet you are a survivor. Continuing forward.

We are sorry so many have had to share their stories so publicly and vulnerably in order for you to be heard and to be believed.

We hear you, we see you, we believe you.

We are angry. We are heartbroken. We are devastated.

Knowing that people we've trusted so deeply have inflicted harm upon you... it feels like the definition of hypocrisy and betrayal. We are sorry you suffered (mostly) alone. That the friends and the workers didn't stand beside you to fight for safety and love in the fellowship. That you were silenced and many of you were ex-communicated for speaking up. That those who advocated for you were silenced and ex-communicated. That those

who claimed to represent "The Truth" did everything they could to hide the real, ugly truth.

We admire your courage, your bravery.

We wish there wasn't a need for you to be so courageous and brave. That the safety of men, women, and children wouldn't be a fight; instead, it would be a right.

We hope you know and truly believe the abuse was not your fault. It never was.

The things your abuser did and said are not ok.

The dismissal and lack of belief of the people around you is not ok.

The fact that this has been allowed and covered up within our fellowship is not ok.

We are sorry for any and every time we behaved in a way that was hurtful.

When we said something without thinking about what it really meant.

When we followed the status quo blindly.

You've been on the receiving end of so much pain, so much evil, so much wrong.

We are sorry, and yet that will never be enough.

It won't take away the past.

It barely touches the tip of the deep heartache we feel.

And we likely will never know the depth of the pain and suffering you've endured.

We are sorry for times we believed the perpetrator.

We didn't know about the abuse, but we believed the lie.

The lie that you were doubting, losing your revelation, losing your faith.

The lie that you left the fellowship because you were bitter.

Words will never be enough.

We are humbled and honored to join you in this battle.

This battle that you never chose for yourself.

This battle for truth, for honesty, for love, for righteousness, for justice.

We hope we can create a community where you are safe. Where we are safe. Where our children and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, and parents are all safe.

A community where the love and standard of Jesus is truly the emphasis, both in words and actions.

We promise to fight for national and international policies that prevent the hiding and moving of predators, a genuine commitment to find and reveal the abusers and those that have covered for them, and an apology tour hosted by the overseers.

You are not alone.

Whether you've chosen to share your story or not, you are believed and loved.

Thank you.

Thank you for being you.

Thank you for standing up.

Thank you for bringing these things to light.

Thank you for fighting for the truth.

Please know that we are here for you.

Please reach out to any of us individually if there's anything that we can do to help you.

If you haven't been able to yet, we sincerely hope you can find healing and closure.

Your soul is beautiful.

With so much love,

**Concerned Friends of Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and beyond**

Abi Voorhees

Albert Tripp

Anna Borys (Winnipeg, Canada)

Beth and Reid Lindsay

Bonnie and Archie Cameron (Minnesota)

Brian and Mindy West

Charles Kelsoe

Chelsea and Arun Mohan

Christy Hockaday

Dan and Suzanne Thompson

Deborah and Larry Morton

Devon Wijesinghe

Diana and Dan Nicolaisen

Elda McGrath

Garrett Lepak

Gracie Gillis

Heather Morton

Jana Schaefer  
Jeanette Herting  
Jen Martin (Wyoming)  
Jenna Helms  
Jessica and Eric Brist  
Joel Riggs  
John and Darcie Carr  
John Mulford  
Karla Filibeck  
Kayla Martineau  
Lisa Shue  
Loyd Heimbruch  
Mark and Abigail Hobbs  
Nelson and Brenda Helms  
Nyana Thompson  
Rachel Lundstrom  
Rolland Sarver  
Shane and Nikelle Garner  
Shantel Victor-Cole (Antigua, West Indies)  
Sharilee Stafford  
Sharon Douglas  
Steve and Amy Wellein  
Sue Battle  
Teena Daize (Canada)  
Tim and Shelly Borys (Winnipeg, Canada)  
Whitney Nelson

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**WINGS Note:** This letter was drafted on behalf of the concerned friends in the writer's region (NC/VA/MD/DE). They have been meeting on Zoom calls, and on the first call their opening topic was "how can we support the victims?" and this letter is one of the results from that conversation. When it was shared online, several folks from other regions also opted to have their names added.

They have asked for it to be shared on WINGS "**to help victims feel seen, heard, and believed; and so they know that we are safe people that they can talk to**