

Kelsay Yung Letter to the hurting

I hardly know where to begin.

Perhaps the best place is this; I am filled with grief for the people who have been abused. I am so sorry that you experienced evil. I have been doing what I can to try to be a help to the people I know. I want to do all I can to help healing. My efforts feel weak, far from enough. Words seem so empty.

For me, there has been comfort that while I am very limited, God is not. I know that hasn't been comfort to some who have been hurt, and I'm saddened how severely faith has been damaged. I have admired the strength of survivors. I'm thankful for every one who has done what they can to help and heal.

I finally feel able to reach out beyond the ones that I know closely. I'm sorry if it seems too late, I simply haven't been emotionally well enough myself. I'm repairing a broken heart, as many of you are. It's been slow, because it keeps taking a beating.

There is a lot of emphasis on help, and I very much, unequivocally support anything that will help those who have been hurt. Yet I know that won't change what has happened, and the many people who have been hurt by the ones that they should have been able to trust. Far better that it had never happened, even once. Child sexual assault (CSA), sexual assault (SA), or any kind of abuse is wrong, and shouldn't happen. It has. Much too much, much too often. While I'm glad it's been brought into the light, it fills me with grief and sorrow as well.

I have been dealing with so many of my own questions, and I still don't have very many answers. I have no intention or desire to defend a system, or to justify evil. I have not, and will not, cover up CSA, SA, or other abuse. There have been so many things brought to light that I had no idea about, and each one has made me feel more sickened. It's made me want to walk away from it all.

Rob Newman is my uncle. One grandmother spent 2 years in the work, the other grandmother had 2 sisters who were workers. Glen Yung was a cousin to my grandfather. My sister is in the work. I'm 3rd generation on the shortest "professing" branch of the family tree, with the other branches going farther. I also understand how the very fact that I have been a brother worker, and because of family connections, you may have no trust towards me.

Why do I bring up my family connections?

None of that gives me salvation. None of that makes me right with God. Being a worker doesn't get me any closer to heaven. Being a disciple of Jesus is my hope. He is the way, not "us." I will stand alone before God. When I die, the thing I will be most thankful for is the blood of Christ, given for me in love. And what will matter about my life is what I have done... Not what I have said, or what people think of me, or who my family is. What God knows. I have no interest in lies.

I have been in the work for the past 17 years. Mark Huddle has been my overseer for most of my time in the work. I stood behind Dean Bruer in a worker picture just weeks before his death. I've tried to serve with my whole heart, as honestly and best as I've known how. I've been shocked to learn of the things my fellow workers have done, and then shocked more deeply by reactions of other fellow workers. It's made me feel conflicted, dirty by association. I have hoped to see the Love of God. It's been hard to see.

Yet, while knowing that those sins are not mine, I am not without sin. If you look for someone to be perfect, I cannot claim even close to that. I have been quiet when I should have spoken. I've felt deep and strong violence inside towards those that hurt who they should have protected. Though I've prioritized honor in relationships, I have struggled with my attraction to women. God knows the list of ways that I have been wrong. This isn't a letter to justify myself, or to come across as if I am on higher ground. I am not.

This is a letter to reach out to those who are hurt and are questioning. I am too.

It is in my heart, more than ever, with greater desire than ever, to follow Jesus. I know I am not alone.

I believe that God is perfect, and Jesus did his will perfectly. So there is no mistake in ANY thing Jesus did, or said, or lived. The Holy Spirit will never contradict Jesus. This has been my anchor.

One thing I feel sure of: our only hope as a faith, is in truly following Jesus. Many of us have searched like never before, and we're finding that we've been wrong. Have accepted what isn't true or right as if it is. Have not searched scriptures and not been as honest and real in prayer as we could have been. Have stood by quietly when we could have spoken against wrong. Have feared men more than God. Have attributed things to God's spirit that are not His Spirit. Have done things because "it's what we do," rather than seeking what God really wants, what is scriptural. Have been more Pharisee than good Samaritan.

It helps to read the Bible, and the New Testament in particular, as if I don't know a thing. Having a thought and then searching to justify it isn't safe. It's arrogant. Being open and accepting of what

God wants, and searching for that, is what has brought me peace. Jesus brought God's will perfectly. It's so beautiful.

In a strange way, it's also been a comfort to see problems throughout the Bible, and to know that God continued to work with his people. Sometimes they were bad at responding. We are the same humankind. He is the same God who is alive and working.

I'm not active in the work. It wasn't my choice... I simply wasn't able. No one asked me to step away. The future is unknown to me. I feel that too is in God's hands, me being where I am. Since being "inactive," I've felt God's help and leading in very real ways. I have told Kent Williston and Darryl Doland that I'll be needing a year at least out of the work. (I have been on the California staff, on loan from Washington.) I'm in Bakersfield, California, and plan at this time to get a job and routine for my health.

If it would be of any help, reach out. I have withdrawn from social media, though still have Instagram... so kelsayung@gmail.com is probably best to get in touch if you'd like. If you are reeling, but want to truly follow Jesus, know that you have a kindred spirit in me.

This is an open letter. Share it to who you will. I will forewarn you that I'm not in the best state to be your strength... I'm weak myself. Please, know that you're not alone.

With love and care,

Kelsay Yung

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