

Responses to Malia Forzas letter to the workers

Update: some have expressed interest in hearing responses from my letter I sent out. I had a wide variety of responses that were largely very considerate and compassionate which I'm deeply grateful for...I sobbed in gratitude receiving some of these messages where it felt like they were truly sorry, truly wanting change, and are truly advocating. While some responses were very long and well thought out, others were brief and to the point. I'm grateful for all, that at the very least responded. The couple workers that did not respond, were the most hurtful responses of all...being met with silence in the face of exposing some of the most vulnerable parts of your heart and life is a punch to the gut. Below are some anonymous bits and pieces of worker responses - please keep in mind what is shared below is only portions of what was written to me:

"I recognize how vulnerable it makes you feel when sharing this kind of detail and wanted to let you know you are heard and believed. I am so sorry for all you have suffered!"

"I go through this horrible feeling of sadness and anger every time I read or hear of stories like yours, it takes something inside of me and crushes it...I am so sorry. And saying I'm sorry feels so shallow to me. You take away our excuses and you are strong, brave, and so many other words that express the best of mankind, not the worst. I don't know to advocate, I don't know what you need, I don't know what to offer, I don't know sooo many things. But I hear you, and I weep with you. Thank you for your advice, many of your thoughts I've seriously thought of also. Thank you for the movie references. I don't even know how to find them to watch them, but I'll try. I was recommended a book by someone and read it, was very worth reading. And I would be happy to fit in watching those movies too."

"Though my influence right now is little, and I feel so powerless most times, I trust that God will give me the strength to and the direction to do what is right and what is necessary. God uses people to do His work, so I just need to be open and ready for action every time he gives direction. I pledge to always listen to hear and understand, to always believe the victim/survivor, no matter who the perp is, and do everything I can to support and advocate for victims. My heart breaks for all the innocence that has been ripped away from our precious children current and past. I have shed many tears and I will shed many more I'm sure."

"I appreciate the call to collective repentance very much, but my cynical gut says that it could be met by a professing population with callous derision, or worse, a Pharisee performative repentance for appearances and the self soothing smugness of lip-service. I'm more trusting of a potential undertaking of that process by convicted individuals. And those processes possibly won't be public, but the fruit and power of them can and will be shared. I could be wrong. I'd be ok with being wrong, and I want to be careful not to be blinded by my assumption, and thereby miss a miracle. I look forward with hope almost as often as I look around with despair. Thank you for articulating your list of hopes - I haven't been brave enough to look mine in the face and name them. I'm wary, get God has never had a problem making extravagant and bold promises, so I'm trying to pin those down and capture them, trap them in my heart, and live like they're actually mine. There's transformative and liberating power in those promises that's severely underutilized by me, among others. It's needed for this and every journey."

"It feels unfair for me to tell you it hurts to think of what you've been through. Like how can I tell you it hurts me when it really, REALLY hurts you, you've experienced it. Like it feels like I'm minimizing your pain in a way or trying to act like I have the same amount as you do and I don't want you to feel that from me. But I appreciate your suggestions and rather than quietly feeling like the inexperienced, easy-lifed, privileged person that I am, I'll try to express those feelings more to be a help to others. When a member of the body is hurting, the whole body much care for them and definitely feels the pain they're going through. I also get frustrated with the traditions in our fellowship, lifting up of workers, shaming of others; an outward focus rather than a focus on the heart, people saying "this is the way"; NO! Jesus is the ONLY way! It annoys me that people praise others that are spiritual and praise the humble. That praise needs to be directed to God

and Jesus, not to people, they have done the work, not us. I want to help people to realize that. We men need the wisdom, input and social observations of our women. There's things we don't notice and don't usually experience. My place is to listen and be a help. Please know that I will report predators, no one gets impunity, no matter how "good" or "respected" they are."

"I feel exactly like you about all of this horrible stuff. It's like it's a corrupted system, but there's still good people in it. I'll always speak up. Enough of this hiding stuff!"

"Thanks for the strength to write your story. It made me cry. I'm so sorry for what you've gone through. You make good points. Good to watch the sound of freedom the other night and some of those others."