

# To the workers advocating for change

Jun 20

**WINGS Note:** This is a letter from an online network of friends who are encouraging workers to start and continue taking action for a safer fellowship.

From the authoring group: *"This letter, published on June 17, was written by a young woman in our group to express our support and encouragement for workers advocating for change within the fellowship. The bullet points in the letter were formulated using input from members of the **Connected and Concerned Friends** group, our worldwide group of 1500+ members concerned about the prevalence of child sexual abuse and sexual abuse within the fellowship. We created our platform on June 4th, 2023 as a way to keep people updated, connected, having important conversations, and working toward positive change. In all of this, the goal is to uphold Jesus, and support the healthy examination of traditions."*

**Connected and Concerned Friends** <https://connected-and-concerned-friends.mn.co/>

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We see you. We appreciate you. We care for you. We are so thankful for your continuous effort to restore trust and to create a safer community.

We can't imagine how tremendously difficult it is for you right now. You're hearing the desperate cries just as we are. You're processing the layers of betrayal and distrust just as we are. You're realizing how you've contributed to a silent and unsafe community, just as we are.

You're receiving pressure to stand up, both from the crying souls around you and from within. There seems to be an expectation for you to suddenly get everything perfectly right without proper training. While you're still hurting. Sometimes your heartfelt, best-intentioned words are attacked, your intentions misinterpreted. We understand how much that must hurt. We see you trying, and for that we are so thankful. We want to encourage you to keep fighting, keep working for justice, for safety, for the victim-survivors, for the women, children, and men in the fellowship. It's ok if it's not perfect from the first try. We often learn best from the act of trying. We promise to do our best to be gracious and understanding with our feedback.

While all of this is going on, you're expected to maintain your position and routine in the ministry – continuing to visit homes, continuing gospel meetings and conventions, continuing to “be there” for everyone around you – while you're struggling to process

everything yourself. The ministry you've given your life to has betrayed you. Your companions, your overseers, those you've looked to for guidance, those you've confided in. And yet, you continue to have a love for the ministry, a love for souls. And that's why you keep fighting. You know God is still reigning, that God is righteous in His judgment and cares so deeply for the victim-survivors you're fighting for.

We see you facilitating the difficult conversations with the workers around you. We see you listening to the stories of the victim-survivors. We see you, all hours of the day, holding space and time for the needs of the people around you. We see you taking action and implementing change.

You're not sure how much longer your boss is going to be in his position. And yet you feel compelled to continue under his direction. There are so many conflicting commands surrounding you: from the concerned, from the victim-survivors, from the young workers, from the head workers, from those asking you to be silent. We encourage you to continue to listen to the voice that matters the most: our Heavenly Father's. And while we long to be an encouragement and support to you, we know that He is the greatest source of comfort, hope, and support for you, as well as us.

These are a few of the things we've been sharing in the "Encouraging Thoughts" portion of our group:

- "There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven" (hymn #54)
- Something good and pure will come from this. God will not be mocked. Stand true and faithful.
- Samuel listened to God. He heard the hard things and then he ACTED with the support of God. He stayed true during the hard times and God gave the victory.
- I'm thankful God can give us comfort even while we fight the battle. We may not have peace yet but God can keep us in the fight.
- The church is the plant, and God is the gardener, and He is using His loppers right now. This is what we must be willing for if we desire to remain His church.
- 2 Corinthians 1 gives such a beautiful illustration of what a healthy relationship between the church and our workers ought to be.

- I Peter 1:3-9
- Hymn #6 (When I survey the wondrous cross)
- Hymn #69 (To whom, Lord, shall we go?)
- Jesus is the only way, only truth, only light, only Son of God, only hope, only Word and only Redeemer! A church isn't the basis of Salvation. Rules aren't the basis of Salvation. Only Jesus is!
- A study of God using women: Rahab, Deborah & Jael, Miriam, Lydia, Phoebe, Priscilla
- God sees you. God knows exactly where you are. You may feel lost, but God has found you. He is already all around you.
- Psalms 147:3
- "Sometimes when you're in a dark place you think you've been buried, but you've actually been planted."
- The children of Israel trembled before Goliath, with none willing to go before him. It took a lad, with a sling and a stone to bring down a giant. David's brother was angry, questioning his motive in coming to the battle. Saul was willing to give David armor, but unwilling to face the giant himself.
- 2 Corinthians 4:16
- 2 Timothy 3
- Psalms 46:10
- "If He brought you to it, He'll bring you through it."
- "And though my lot be cast today, somewhere I would not choose, help me to know that in thy will, I shall but gain not lose" (hymn #259)
- Luke 16:10-11

And here are some words of encouragement that folks from our group (a group of nearly 1400 friends supporting you) have written specifically for you:

- Perfect love casts out fear.



- God is working with us thank you
- Truth sets us free. Any delay in removing predators implies guilt or complicity. Survivors have waited decades, years to feel safe in fellowship. Thank you for ensuring meetings are a refuge, not a torture chamber.
- Seek Jesus alone. Step out in faith with him.
- Jesus doesn't change, but we must. For all of these years, we have not. Seems like we've focused more on Paul than on Jesus (more on appearance than the weightier matters). We completely support all of your efforts to be more like Jesus. We are trying to do the same.
- "In the warfare we are waging For the truth and for the right, When the conflict fierce is raging With the powers of the night, God needs workers brave and true; May He, then, depend on you?" (hymn #372) Thank you for being among "The Brave and the True."

We are here, "waiting in the wings" to help with anything we possibly can. To support you, to work with you, to facilitate the needed changes within our fellowship. Please don't hesitate to reach out with anything we can do to be of help for the greater work currently happening.

Finally, if you are not ok, that is ok. There is support available, and it is ok to seek out that support.

With a unified purpose for truth, honesty, and God's will to be done,

Connected & Concerned Friends