

Written Notes on Verbal Apologies at CAJ Retreat

November 11, 2022



Christian Academy in Japan (CAJ) Statement by Anda Foxwell

I wish I could respond personally to each of you today, but to all of you – thank you for being here, thank you for speaking out against injustice, thank you for the pain this has cost you.

My role today is as a representative of CAJ. However, when I hear your stories and see your faces, I also can't help but process this pain from my roles of being someone's mother, a sister, a friend. Your stories break my heart. They make me angry that you were harmed and cause me to feel helpless in the face of your trauma. Words are not enough, but words are what I have today. I am so very sorry for the pain you experienced while you were students at CAJ. I am deeply grieved that we did not care for your needs as we should have, that some of the people who should have cared for you and nurtured you actually caused you great harm. I am also sorry that either you did not feel safe enough to tell your stories, or that no one listened to you or believed you. We failed you, and for that, I am sorry. I repent, as a leader of CAJ for the systems we had in place that contributed to a sense of abandonment, neglect, and abuse: physically, emotionally, sexually, and spiritually.

I am also sorry that when I first learned of some of the things that happened to you or to other CAJ alumni, I did not understand the way these childhood experiences color the rest of life. I wish I had responded faster, and I apologize to you that this did not come fast enough.

I also want to assure you that though I have just stepped down as CAJ's head of school, that David Mawhinney, the new head is committed to the promises we have made.

I want to thank you for your courage in writing, speaking, encouraging, advocating, and for being willing to be so open today. I know it was difficult and that you had to relive your pain, in order to shine light into dark places and to tell the truth about CAJ. I hope you feel heard and loved today. Again, from my heart, I am deeply sorry. I truly hope that today might be a step forward in a healing process in your lives.



OMS Representative's Words to CAJ Alumni

My name is Bob Fetherlin and I am willfully here to represent One Mission Society (OMS), where I served as President from mid-2014 through June of this year and am now serving as a Vice-President at Large. Jeff Edwards, the current President, invited me to be here at the retreat on behalf of OMS.

This afternoon you have entrusted to me and other mission leaders here a precious, incredibly valuable gift: your stories. I have listened . . . with my head and my heart . . . and feel deep, gut-wrenching sorrow over what I have heard. I am so, so sorry for our part in what you have suffered.

Before coming to OMS, I served with The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) in 1998 when we were working through the pain of abuse perpetrated at the Mamou Alliance Academy in West Africa. This occurred in the late 1940s through the mid-1960s. In this process, I realized the C&MA's policy requiring parents to send their young children to boarding schools was fraught with risks and dangers. It was unhealthy and in so many cases left scars. I concluded if we wanted to keep Mamou-like situations from happening again, this was a system that had to be changed. In 1998, I was placed in a leadership role where I could lead in making this change.

Several denominational administrators said that the C&MA Board would not agree to such a change. However, in sidebar conversations with some Board members, they shared their openness to approving it once an acceptable plan was presented. Some even expressed this change was long overdue.

A first step was to embrace a new value: "We will make every effort to keep missionary families together." This meant placing the well-being of families, especially children, above the mission after many decades of considering the mission as paramount. Within two years, a carefully-crafted proposal went to the C&MA Board. It included an embrace of homeschooling, local international schooling, online learning and satellite / cooperative educational models. Several professional educational consultants were put in place to help missionary families maximize their educational choices for their children. The C&MA Board approved this new plan unanimously. Many C&MA missionary families around the world rejoiced and were greatly relieved. This was a major systemic change.

It resulted in the C&MA disengaging from its oversight of multiple boarding schools and closing many boarding school dorms around the world. An unhealthy system had been replaced with a much better one. The C&MA was one of the last missions to make such a needed paradigm shift. OMS has chosen a similar path, and thankfully there are no OMS students in boarding situations today.

On behalf of OMS, I offer to all of you a sincere apology. I am so sorry for our part in your pain and anguish. We failed to provide a quality educational opportunity in a culture of care, nurture

and safety for our most vulnerable, our children . . . and this has resulted in tremendous hurt. We are so very, very sorry. (Closed with Dogeza, first toward the OMS couple in the room and then toward all alumni gathered for this retreat.)

Bob Fetherlin, Vice-President at Large

One Mission Society



Christian Reformed World Missions Apology Summary

I am Joyce Suh representing Christian Reformed World Mission (not Resonate Global Mission). I have other leadership standing with me who are not here--The director of Resonate Global Mission and the General Secretary of the Christian Reformed Church who were invested throughout the process. I heard and understand that an apology can be empty but I want to share an apology however inadequate. I did not want to calculate what I would say, but thought there are some things I felt should be named even though this is not by any means an exhaustive list.

I APOLOGIZE on behalf of Resonate for:

- pain, suffering, loss of innocence, loss of childhood, damage to family/relationships adult wounds of a lifetime
- that Resonate personnel are among the perpetrators of physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual abuse
- and Resonate personnel were in leadership when others were abused and there was a failure of leadership--and that the leadership were abusers themselves
- propping up & perpetuating a system and culture that failed to care for and protect you
- the time it took to take small steps toward truth (failure to take leadership)
- that although we were on a mission for God, we tainted God (and Ruined God for some)

This is not academic for me. I did want to be here and feel a calling to be here. I want to say that personally I am sorry that you had to experience what you did.

Thank you for the opportunity to bear witness to your stories today.

Thank you not only for your courage, but for your leadership. You have been the leaders in our lack of leadership.

Yours,

Joyce Suh

Global Area Director

Update: I meant to add that I called our team forward to bow especially in apology for the leadership failure at CAJ.

WorldVenture

I am Jeff Denlinger and serve with WorldVenture. Listening to your stories this afternoon has produced within me a range of emotions I have only experienced once before: while visiting a Catholic Church outside of Kigali, Rwanda, a site where thousands were slaughtered in the 1994 genocide. I feel sick to my stomach while simultaneously I feel the internal effects of anger that such events occurred to innocent people. It is a bitter taste in my mouth.

I am grateful for your courage to share your stories with us, to entrust them to us as a stewardship that this not happen again. Your stories are now our stories. You have put faces and emotion to the data of the investigation report. Thank you.

Though my wife and I served in Venezuela as missionaries in a context very different than Japan, I am the husband of an MK/TCK and the father of two adult MK/TCKs with deep pain that this happened to you.

On behalf of CBFMS/WorldVenture, I offer you my sincere apologies for all that you experienced and have endured these many years. I apologize to you that our mission did not ensure a loving and caring environment for you at CAJ. I am so sorry.



Serve Globally

Dear Debbie, Brenda, and Janet, and the CAJ alumni survivors,

Thank you for this opportunity to write what I shared at the CAJ retreat. I am grateful that the mission leaders had a chance to respond to the stories we heard in our afternoon together. My desire was to speak from my heart and not have a script, so I did my best to recollect what I shared in the moment.

“My name is Grace Shim, and I am the new executive minister of Serve Globally, formerly Covenant World Mission, part of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Before I stepped into this position, I served as a full-time therapist for missionaries for the last 14 years. I remember well listening to clients who had grown up in missionary boarding schools and had suffered abuse. I remember feeling sick to my stomach, feeling the rage on behalf of, and feeling the grief of what they suffered. I started in this position of leadership two months ago. As I sit here and listen to each of your stories, I feel that same sickening feeling, that same rage, and that same grief except now as a leader of a mission organization. For some of my former therapy clients, it was the first time they had ever spoken their story as they sat in my office, what courage that took. And for you all, it is the first time you are sharing your story, not in the privacy of a therapist’s office, but before this entire group of people. Your courage and honesty amazes me—you are heroes for the bravery you demonstrate today.

This morning the mission representatives spent time in corporate repentance. As I prepared last night to lead that time, there were words that stood out of what the systems and the mission culture have done and of the impact on you—of being robbed, parts of you that were lost, taken, things that can never be recovered, things that had been put on you that didn’t belong to you, parts of you that have died. We were part of creating that system. I am so sorry. We failed you.

I also know that abuse, especially against children, takes away their power and their voice. Many of you have spoken today of being silenced, of the feelings of being powerless and voiceless, not only in the face of the perpetrators but in the face of leadership and organizations that didn’t respond as we should have. Today, I hear the power of your voices. I also recognize that I am now in a place where I can influence and examine the culture and systems which cultivated an environment ripe for abuse. One of you said that it takes a village to abuse a child. We are part of that village. I would also say that it takes a village to heal a child. I see that as I look at the way you hold each other in this room through tears and how you have come together in your healing. We cannot do this alone, your voices help us to move forward together. Serve Globally, Covenant World Mission, all of our missions, have an opportunity to do it differently. Thank you for your courage, thank you for sharing your stories, your stories have deeply impacted me. I am so sorry for how we have failed you. I am Korean by nationality and I also want to bow in apology to you in the way I know how . . .”

Statement to CAJ Alumni

Dave Hall, International Director, TEAM
Colorado Springs, CO
2 November 2022

My name is Dave Hall, and I serve as the International Director of TEAM, The Evangelical Alliance Mission. Accompanying me in this gathering is Jan Stump. She serves as the recently elected chair of the TEAM board of directors. I know that Jan and the other leaders of TEAM agree with what I am sharing with you today. There are four messages I want to leave with you.

1. I applaud your bravery in speaking so openly and candidly today. You did not have to do so. In fact, you might have been tempted to avoid this meeting. But you did not. You have laid your souls bare before us, and as such, you have given us a gift for which I thank you. As you leave this gathering, please know that here in this place and with this group of people you have been heard, and your stories have been received... as painful as they are to tell and hear. Here and now, the injustices committed against you are no longer in the dark.
2. What I have been learning throughout this investigation of the last few years and what each of you has shared with us today grieves me, breaking my heart. It is appalling. No child should ever experience what you did. And while my TEAM colleagues of today and I were not present with you in those years in Japan, you were there... and so was TEAM. As an organization, and in some cases as individuals, we failed to provide a safe and flourishing environment for you. There were failures in policies, procedures, and oversight. People were placed in positions of power and responsibility for children who should not have been. I cannot tell you adequately how very deeply I regret all this. On behalf of TEAM, and fully realizing that words alone cannot heal these wounds, you have my most sincere and humble apology.
3. All this serves to increase our resolve as an organization to do all we can to see that no child for whom TEAM is responsible ever again has to endure the harm you have reported to us today. I am referring not only to the harm inflicted on you many years ago as a child, but also to the harm that has followed you over all the years since. Your willingness to bring these matters to light will serve to motivate TEAM to have sound principles and practices in place to safeguard the care and well-being of children and youth. Your action does make a difference.
4. Lastly, without any expectation on my part, please know that should you desire further conversation, my door is open to you. This does not have to be the only or last conversation we have if you do not want it to be that. But if telling your story today is all you desire... and I could understand that... then that is OK as well. You have given us a gift today, and for that I am most grateful.