

# *ihart*

## Bolivia Historical Investigation Summary Report

Theresa Sidebotham, IHART Coordinator

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IHART wants to thank all who testified in this long and difficult investigation. For some allegations, we are fairly confident that we found the truth. For others, the truth is hidden in the fog of history and memory so that we could not be sure exactly what happened—the final truth will come out when God reveals the hidden things. The anonymous histories were shared with New Tribes Mission USA (NTM), and are being used to improve NTM’s child safety practices, leadership, and accountability.



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## OBJECTIVES OF THE IHART INVESTIGATION

*We started this journey by stating we were committed to humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God since He “resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.” We are faced with this grievous sin. It should cause us to fall before God and for His grace and wisdom in dealing with it.* Larry Brown, CEO of NTM USA

New Tribes Mission USA commissioned the Bolivia investigation for the following reasons:

- To understand the truth about what happened to children on the Bolivia field, knowing that this understanding would help keep other children safe;
- To value MKs and the suffering that many have endured by giving victims/survivors (V/S) an avenue to tell their story;
- To provide a means for counseling or other support services for any V/S who desire it;
- To remove any perpetrators who might still be current members from its midst and hold people accountable;
- To analyze organizational and leadership environments to identify possible root causes of how abuse occurred, and identify ways for NTM to improve organizationally;
- To comply with appropriate legal standards; and
- To make reports to law enforcement.

Some have asked why NTM has commissioned historical investigations when there is no legal obligation to do so, as well as whether it is a good use of mission resources. NTM’s response is that its hope would be to accomplish as many of the above goals as possible, but more importantly, to allow these efforts to give every possible opportunity for the redemption of the past. NTM wants to make every effort to express to MKs that it values their lives, and NTM deeply regrets the suffering they have endured.

As many readers know, several investigations for IHART were commissioned, and this is the second Report released in 2016. Because of the striking similarities in child protection issues in the early years of the mission fields and boarding schools, we have repeated relevant information in more than one Report. In addition, there are obviously similarities in the IHART process. Finally, some of the stories and comments from MKs are strikingly similar from one field to another.

A historical investigation process cannot deal with the past once and for all. It may well be that not everyone has even yet told their story, and in many cases, an investigation may not uncover the truth. The point of this process is to widen knowledge and understanding of what happened and to seek truth, justice, and reconciliation, not to achieve absolute answers.

## DEFINITIONS AND STANDARDS

*One of the problems with missions is that the kids are sometimes a casualty of the work.* MK Student

*Tambo brings up such a vexing paradox of emotions when I sit and think about this topic. It can hold a piece of my heart, yet breaks my heart, all within the same thought. It was my home from –th grade to –th grade and the final home of several of my dear friends, who died at Tambo.* MK Student

The time frame investigated in this investigation was from 1952 to 2003, or just over 50 years. Abuse allegations received by IHART were of incidents from 1952 to 2000.

### **Vocabulary Used**

In the sensitive situation of an abuse investigation, not only are there many possible vocabulary terms, but different terms may be offensive to some, while others may prefer those terms. We explain the terms used by IHART and apologize for any terms that unintentionally make people uncomfortable, as this is not the desire of IHART.

Some persons who have suffered abusive behavior refer to themselves as a “victim.” Others prefer the term “survivor.” Here, we use “V/S” to encompass both terms.

Persons are “alleged offenders” (AO) until they are determined by a preponderance of the evidence to have met the standard for abuse or criminal activity. Then IHART calls them “offenders.” But it is important to note that any status as offenders is not legally established—only that investigators have reached the point of “more likely than not” for an internal investigation.

Persons who have grown up on the mission field are often called Missionary Kids (MK) or Third Culture Kids (TCK). Some prefer the term “former MK” and others take the view that “once an MK, always an MK.” For convenience, IHART uses the term “MK” throughout, but other terms are equally valid.

### **Standards and Definitions for Child Abuse**

New Tribes Mission has patterned its abuse definitions after those set forth by the World Health Organization. In the time frame of the Bolivia allegations, which went up to around the year 2000, NTM did not have specific definitions of abuse. Given that our cultural understandings of child abuse and appropriate child discipline have changed over the years, it is not appropriate for the investigative teams to use current definitions to evaluate events from decades ago as child abuse (primarily in the areas of physical and emotional abuse). The investigative teams seek to use culturally appropriate standards for abuse and discipline, as do the Recommendations Panels. This does not suggest in any way that V/S did not suffer pain from these actions, nor are we

suggesting that no one should be held accountable for certain actions, only that it is not appropriate to hold people accountable under standards that did not exist at the time.

The exception is the standard for sexual abuse, which has remained fairly consistent over time. NTM's current definition of child sexual abuse is:

“Child sexual abuse is evidenced by the involvement of a child in sexual activity by an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. Sexual abuse can include, but is not limited to verbal, visual, and/or physical behavior.”

However, the understanding of inappropriate behavior and boundary violations, including what is considered appropriate physical touch between adults and children, is highly dependent on culture, and has changed in many ways over the years.

Severely injuring a child has always been considered physical abuse. However, previous understanding of corporal punishment in many settings was that marks were acceptable. Severe beatings, extensive bruising, and breaking the skin would all have been considered abusive in previous decades. As one MK stated,

*The definition of abuse has changed greatly from that time to this. The threshold of abuse back then was lower than it is now, meaning that harsher discipline was more normal than it is now. Hence it's easy to read abuse back into past situations with current standards. I had many experiences that would be considered "abusive" today, but which I did not consider to be abusive at the time.*

However, this MK went on to recount stories of staff that were overly harsh even for that day, and caused a deep hurt in students, emotionally as well as physically.

For the purposes of this investigation, corporal punishment that would have been considered appropriate by USA church culture of the day is not synonymous with “causing injury.” We understand that spanking will cause pain, but because of the cultural acceptability of spanking at that time, pain does not equal injury for the purposes of this report.

Emotional abuse and spiritual abuse (considered to be a form of emotional abuse) were not well-understood in previous decades. In previous times, such abuse would have had to be severe to trigger concerns. Not infrequently, IHART identified behavior that would be considered abusive today, and caused great pain to the MK, but was likely not considered abusive at the time that it occurred.

When investigating, a team must work to a standard of evidence. These standards differ depending on the type of investigation. For instance, law enforcement investigations must generate evidence that can be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. This would be a very difficult standard to meet in most historical investigations. However, if law enforcement does take action on any of these reports, it will use that high standard.

Most non-criminal investigations determine whether there is a preponderance of the evidence that the allegations occurred. This means that it is more likely than not that the actions took place. In other words, the evidence gets to 51%. IHART uses this standard.

This means that even if a V/S's history is not found to be true by a preponderance of the evidence, IHART recognizes that it still may be true, by some percentage chance under 50%. And if someone is found to have offended by a preponderance of the evidence, IHART recognizes that the person still may be innocent, by some percentage chance under 50%.

## IHART INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

### **Overview of IHART's Commission**

In 2011, NTM USA commissioned IHART, which stands for Independent Historical Allegations Review Team, to conduct an independent investigative process of child abuse on the Bolivia field. This review was largely, though not entirely, of the Tambo School.

IHART has the duties to receive and investigate allegations of child sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, find out the truth where possible, and preserve confidentiality within defined parameters (for instance, law enforcement action may make full confidentiality impossible).

IHART's commission involves seeking truth and justice for both those who bring abuse allegations and those who are accused. IHART applies standards of due process that seek to protect the rights of all concerned. The IHART process seeks to:

- Conduct fully independent investigations using professional best practices;
- Assemble the findings into clear reports and deliver them to those closely involved and also appropriate NTM personnel;
- Recommend outcomes for individuals who violated either the law or the policies of NTM, as offenders or as leaders;
- Connect individuals who have been hurt with helping resources;
- Make reports to law enforcement as appropriate.

### *Role of Coordinator*

The IHART Coordinator is responsible to appoint investigative teams, keep the investigation on track, communicate with NTM in requesting documents, give generalized reports to NTM about how the investigation is progressing, post public updates, handle budgetary matters, bring together a Panel, and coordinate all Master and Summary Reports. The IHART Coordinator does not generally perform interviews or make factual findings. Interviewing and making factual findings are the responsibility of the investigative teams. Because the IHART Coordinator out of necessity has some connection with NTM, she avoids interviewing and fact-finding, in part to keep that process independent.

### *Role of Investigative Teams*

IHART works with independent investigators who are professionals, trained in law enforcement or other government investigations. The investigative teams have no direct contact with NTM other than interviewing NTM personnel, members, or former members as needed. This is structured to preserve their independence.

These investigators review extensive documents. They reach out to potential witnesses, including V/S, AO and leaders. They gather information and do interviews. They write summaries of these interviews, make factual findings, and create reports. They work independently, with some guidance and feedback from the IHART Coordinator. For the Bolivia investigation, the same Bolivia Team was in place throughout, from gathering documents and histories, to writing reports.

The investigators are sympathetic to the histories and sufferings of the MKs. But their primary function is to be impartial and seek the truth, neither assuming that an allegation is true nor that it is not true. It is necessary for the process to be fair and impartial if both V/S and AO are to receive justice.

### *Role of Panels*

Once the IHART investigative team has generated a Report with factual findings, a Panel meets. The Panel is comprised of persons who have both mission field experience and professional credentials. The following types of experience are represented: cross-cultural experience; pastoral experience; counseling experience; leadership experience; missionary experience; and being an MK. A Panel is comprised of people who are impartial. They should have no bias towards either V/S or AO, and should have no direct connection with the fields or the individual investigations. Also, they have no current employment with NTM USA.

The Panel reviews the Master Report generated by the investigators and makes recommendations to the NTM USA Executive Board, which then uses these recommendations in making final administrative determinations.

### *Confidentiality and Publicity Standards*

Both within the investigation and afterwards, IHART considers many questions about how to handle information.

Most V/S and many witnesses prefer not to reveal their identities. IHART takes care to keep confidential the names of those alleging abuse, as that is part of its commission from NTM. The names of those who report abuse, any interview notes, documents received or created, and all contact information are held by the particular investigative team reviewing that situation. Access to this information is available only to those team members, their team leader, and the IHART Coordinator and IHART staff. Any information necessary to report abuse to the authorities will be used for that purpose. The IHART Coordinator and all those involved in the investigation are

specifically tasked with preserving confidentiality. At the end of the investigation, this material is carefully stored at a location independent of NTM.

There are those V/S who want their history personally acknowledged as part of the healing process. This is the individual's choice, not the choice of NTM or IHART. This choice may also change at different points in the individual's personal journey, and this should be respected. NTM stands ready to receive these personal histories and to have personal meetings, if that is desired. NTM offers this in its individual apology letters.

While confidentiality plays a vital role for some V/S individuals in helping them feel safe to come forward, keeping V/S and witness names confidential also weakens the investigation. Because these names should not be revealed to alleged offenders and alleged culpable leaders, it is not always possible to question people thoroughly about certain situations, and it is harder to establish certain facts. This reflects another difference between an internal investigation and a criminal investigation. In an internal investigation, the confidentiality of V/S and witnesses is hugely important, while in a criminal investigation, the effort toward confidentiality is not considered except in regard to the public not knowing the names of current minors.

Confidentiality is handled differently in the case of those found to be offenders and in the case of leaders. For these persons, NTM is informed of the names so that it can take appropriate action, and can maintain a personnel record. The IHART process is not a legal action or part of the criminal justice system, and so personal information about offenders and leaders will not be shared broadly. Because of the standard of preponderance of the evidence, IHART cannot fully establish guilt. Broad sharing is less appropriate where there have been no legal proceedings, as we cannot state that actions are fully established when there has been no judicial process.

These different confidentiality concerns and rights explain in part why IHART does not share stories in full detail, but only summarizes the overall investigation and its findings. However, at certain points in the report, IHART has used anonymous quotes from those interviewed that seem to capture the views of many in a poignant way.

Several strains of thought exist even within the NTM MK community about how broadly the investigations should be discussed, and IHART has heard a number of perspectives. One community of MKs who have suffered has a deep suspicion and mistrust that NTM will "cover up" abuse. This community's desire is to see the entire situation handled with full transparency, and with broad acknowledgement of any allegations. This community would generally prefer to see alleged perpetrators and leaders publicly named and shamed.

A second community has had different and more positive experiences and memories. While generally supportive of the first group, this community has expressed frustration at having its MK experience denied and marginalized as inauthentic, and having its more positive voice shut down in the MK groups. Many of those who are accused of abuse by the first community are seen as loving authority figures by the second community. Some in this second group flatly deny

the allegations made against certain individuals, and believe this is injustice and that the allegations are false.

A third community acknowledges that abuse happened and that adults in authority committed wrongs. With certain exceptions for more serious abuse, this community takes the perspective that people erred and sinned according to their spiritual maturity and the knowledge base of the time. This group believes that, while serious wrongs should be dealt with, given the changing societal norms of acceptable behavior, the past was not perfect and cannot be made to be so. Honest, heartfelt apologies and reconciliation from adults concerned are viable options for this group.

At least one more community exists of those who believe there is not much use in rehashing the past, holding that the investigation is an intrusion on their privacy and the privacy of others, and it is better to move on. This group says, “let bygones be bygones,” and there is no need to resurrect the past or bring back bad memories for others.

Some MKs are in pain because of their own stories; some for the sufferings of other MKs; and some because someone dear to the MK has been accused of abusing children, in some instances falsely or with a level of evidence that they believe is unconvincing. These strains of thought, and probably others, have appeared at different points in the IHART investigative process—at times even in relation to the same individuals.

These different perspectives do not determine NTM’s response to findings of abuse, which is set by Board policy and Panel determinations. However, they are reflected in IHART’s choices about what to reveal. Each community of MKs deserves to be treated with respect by IHART. This is in part why IHART has chosen to provide a Summary Report that gives a fairly in-depth perspective, without sharing personal information.

### **Required Participation for Members**

New Tribes Mission expects members to participate in the investigative process, as needed. Refusal to participate may lead to administrative action up to dismissal. This applies to alleged offenders and to leadership, but does not apply to those who may be V/S, since V/S always have the choice whether or not to share their history.

## PROCESS OF BOLIVIA INVESTIGATION

### **Investigatory Stage**

*No matter the outcome, we recognized the difficulty for V/S and witnesses to come forward and make their voices heard. It took courage to do so. We truly are thankful to you for allowing us the privilege of meeting with you and hearing your experiences and observations. You opened your homes and hearts to us and we will never forget the experience. We want to recognize and acknowledge that not all V/S were ready to open up for an interview with us. We respect your wishes and desire your healing and peace. The fact that we are aware of your possible abuse is a credit to those witnesses who felt you were abused in some way at the Tambo school and wanted to help; to recognize your pain. IHART Bolivia Team*

Initially, Pat Hendrix led the IHART process as Coordinator, and indeed, was greatly instrumental in designing the IHART process. Initial reports were received on Bolivia in 2011, and Pat Hendrix set up the Bolivia investigation in early 2012, appointed an Investigative Team, and guided it initially. After it was well under way, Theresa Sidebotham took over as Coordinator of the IHART process.

The IHART Investigative Team was comprised of experienced professional investigators, both from the private sector, and retired law enforcement. Each member of the team felt a burden for V/S, and a strong desire to find the truth.

The Team gathered massive amounts of documents, initially reviewing files and reports. To gather documents, the IHART Coordinator asked NTM for information on members and former members from Bolivia during the time frame being investigated. NTM was not informed of the specific reason for these requests. NTM further safeguarded individual privacy by having a few designated individuals, who are committed to confidentiality, handle all such requests.

Historical records were incomplete. Committee minutes were often general and rather vague, both for Field Committee and Executive Committee notes. This was common in the culture of the day. In addition, there is no “best practices” standard that requires an organization to keep records permanently or to some level of completeness. It is common for records to be incomplete, particularly when they span multiple countries and many decades. While IHART regrets that complete written documentation may not have existed, or may have been lost, it appeared that NTM cooperated to the best of its ability.

The Team reviewed records, including Tambo school records, personnel files, Executive Committee notes, Bolivian Field Committee notes, and Tambo Committee notes.

During the first stage of the investigation, the investigators combed through the Tambo School records to identify the students who had attended Tambo. The investigators attempted to locate and interview as many as possible of the former students (out of a total of over 1000) of Tambo

School. Due to the enormous spans of time involved, just over 50 years, many were dead, could not be found, or were otherwise unavailable.

The Team interviewed approximately 245 MKs, including V/S, witnesses, and AOs. These interviews were arranged based on over 300 contacts made with MKs, MK parents, and Tambo staff. They interviewed those reporting abuse and others, as well as alleged offenders where they were still alive and willing to be interviewed. IHART is particularly grateful to the many witnesses who were not alleging abuse themselves, but made the effort to share their experiences and observations of the environment. The Team also interviewed former school administrators and faculty, parents, dorm parents, field committee and school committee members.

Many who were contacted chose to be interviewed, and others declined. IHART expresses gratitude to those who chose to be interviewed and respects the privacy of those V/S who chose to decline. Clearly, if the person declines to be interviewed, the person loses their chance to have information regarding their perspective or knowledge included in the reports. (AOs or leaders who are current NTM members are required to participate.)

The Team did hundreds of hours of interviews and gathered thousands of pages of information. The Team took all this information and drafted a Master Report. This Master Report made findings about abuse allegations, alleged offenders, and leaders as best as could be determined. Then all names of those alleging abuse and other witnesses were redacted in the Master Report. The redacted Report was provided to the Panel and to the Executive Board. (Interview notes or other supporting material or identifying material were not provided to NTM, per IHART policy and NTM instruction.)

### **Panel for AO and Leader Culpability**

A Recommendations Panel met to review the Master Report that was compiled by the Team, and make recommendations to the NTM USA EB. Panel Recommendations were then sent to the EB. The Panel Recommendations ranged from letters of reprimand to recommendations of dismissal, based on the Panel's evaluation of findings in the Master Report.

### **Actions of the Executive Board**

The EB accepted all Recommendations that fell within the scope of NTM USA policy. It is understandably difficult when there are confirmed allegations against an individual, but the individual is deceased. While NTM, and IHART, would wish to be able to take action that would be helpful to a V/S looking for closure in those situations, no actions are available aside from a SoF for the V/S acknowledging their pain. We regret that this is so.

In a few instances the EB took further action than was required by the Panel. For instance, in the case of one AO, there was insufficient information for an outcome to the preponderance of the evidence, but knowing that NTM had taken action against that individual previously, the EB reiterated to that individual that despite a lack of findings, the previous action would remain in

effect. The Panel will be informed of the recommendations accepted. The EB created a letter of notice with outcomes clearly stated for each identified offender and each leader with identified culpability.

## **Statement of Findings and Summary Report**

Packets were prepared for all those who alleged abuse and all those who were accused of abuse or leadership culpability. A letter from IHART, Statement of Findings, and a Summary Report were included in the packet for each individual. All V/S were provided apology letters from NTM USA. An administrative outcome letter was prepared and included for each identified offender or culpable leader.

Because of the scope of the investigation, and because allegations may be ambiguous at times, it is possible that a V/S could have been inadvertently missed in this final process. If anyone feels that is the case, please immediately let the IHART Coordinator know at [contact@ihart.care](mailto:contact@ihart.care). In addition, if witnesses would like to receive a hard copy of the Summary Report, IHART would be happy to send one.

After known V/S, identified offenders, and leaders are sent their information packets, and there has been a reasonable time for delivery, the Summary Report will be provided to NTM USA members and made available to interested persons via the [ihart.care](http://ihart.care) website.

The material gathered for the investigation will be collected by the IHART Coordinator and archived appropriately at a designated legal firm.

## **Reports to Authorities**

IHART made child abuse reports. Any allegation that seemed credible on its face, involved a living AO, and was of a type of allegation that could potentially concern law enforcement,<sup>1</sup> resulted in a report. It was not necessary for the allegation to reach a finding by a preponderance of the evidence to have a report made.

As part of finishing the investigation, IHART did a final review of reports to authorities already accomplished and additional reports were made as necessary. IHART is aware of no responses by authorities, except in one case. In this case, the AO was alive for the investigation and for the authorities in the home country to take initial interest, but has since died.

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<sup>1</sup> Reports were not made when the AO was dead, or the alleged abuse would not have been of interest to law enforcement, such as bruising from spankings in Bolivia.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR INVESTIGATION

### Overview of Timeline

1949	Boarding School set up in village of Robore
1951	Boarding School moves to Cochabamba
1952	Tambo opens
1952	Time frame for occurrence of first abuse allegation <sup>2</sup>
ca 2000	Time frame for occurrence of last abuse allegation

### Understanding of Child Abuse in a Historical Context

*[T]here were plenty of staff who, to this day, I have very fond memories of and [who] never contributed knowingly to any abuse that I'm aware of.* MK Student

In the decades before the 1990s, child abuse was poorly understood by government institutions, mission agencies, and others. Society as a whole, including mission organizations, failed previous generations of children by not understanding the prevalence of child abuse or its damaging effects. NTM, like other organizations, had a limited understanding of child abuse at that time. Other additional issues for NTM were high staff turnover, lack of adequate training and supervision, an attitude of putting ministry first, poor management of difficult people, and childcare modeled on a system of elite boarding schools that originally developed in the UK.

With greater research and understanding, child protection standards have changed greatly and become much more stringent. Organizations are doing better at understanding organizational

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<sup>2</sup> Note that this is the time frame for the abuse happening, not the time frame in which the abuse was reported. Relatively little abuse was reported contemporaneously. Most abuse was not reported until the IHART investigation.

responsibility for keeping children safe, and putting plans into place both for prevention and for reporting and dealing with issues.

An investigation of historical abuse involves a look into the past. First, it is important to note that many staff at Tambo were not accused of any kind of abuse. Still, abuse was often widespread, and was very little understood. This lack of understanding on the part of many allowed perpetrators great freedom to act. In addition, standards of behavior have changed. Harsh physical discipline or harsh verbal interaction that were not considered abusive in the past are quite unacceptable today. This created a situation where persons engaging in behavior were not held accountable, and caused great pain without much awareness by responsible adults.

Most of the reports for this investigation were significantly delayed for decades until this investigation started (and we believe some have never reported). It is important to understand that this delay is normal, particularly where the V/S were very young, or the offenders were in a position of trust or authority. Delay is normal and is actually more likely where the abuse is more serious. While delay often makes it difficult to gather sufficient evidence to reach a finding by a preponderance of the evidence, in and of itself, delay does not have a bearing on the truthfulness of the report.

Much institutional harm to children or inappropriate personal interactions did not then and may not now fall into the category of criminal child abuse. Where the IHART process did not make a finding that a particular behavior would have met standards of child abuse, it does not mean that IHART approves the behavior or that NTM approves the behavior. When people were harsh or unkind to lonely and powerless children, it increased the children's sense of abandonment and caused wounds that in many cases linger to this day. The behavior can still be wrong even if it did not fit the definitions of child abuse at that time (or perhaps even now).

### **Difficulties of Historical Investigation**

Unfortunately, in a historical investigation, it is not always possible to establish facts definitively. After so much time, witnesses or documents may be unavailable, or memories may have faded. While it is natural that MKs would support each other through these difficult experiences, discussing events affects an investigation. Research shows that such discussion creates significant social contamination that affects the credibility of the testimony.<sup>3</sup>

Some abuse memories are recovered much later. This does not necessarily mean they are untrue, or that the person is lying (which is rare in abuse investigations). Yet because of significant scientific challenges to recovered memories, best practices require that recovered memories be supported by other corroborating evidence. This evidence was not always available. While certain behaviors could not be substantiated by a preponderance of the evidence so long after the

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<sup>3</sup> Bright-Paul, A., Jarrold C., Wright, D. B., & Guillaume S. (2012). Children's memory distortions following social contact with a co-witness: Disentangling social and cognitive mechanisms. *Memory* 20(6), 580-595. doi: 10.1080/09658211.2012.690039.

event, this does not establish that the behaviors did not happen. Nor does it mean that IHART is minimizing the emotional suffering of those who testified.

## **Early NTM Organizational Culture and Bolivia Leadership**

NTM was established shortly after World War II. The military influence was apparent in early mission terminology, such as calling missionary training “boot camp” and arranging for it to be a rigorous experience. NTM initially had a hierarchical leadership structure. NTM was distinguished from other missions at the time in that it would take missionaries without advanced academic degrees. Indeed, there may have been a preference for NTM training over having advanced degrees, particularly those from secular institutions. An advantage of this approach was that people of many different backgrounds were able to serve on the field and NTM was not elitist. A disadvantage of this approach is that NTM in the early days had less access to contemporaneous scholarship on psychology, child development, education, or leadership than those groups with more rigorous academic standards.

Prior to 2007, the NTM Executive Committee was the central leadership team for all members and ministries worldwide. This team regularly met in Sanford, Florida, which was the NTM International Headquarters. Each field was governed by a Field Committee. The Field Committee in Bolivia also allowed a Tambo Committee to exist at the school to assist the Director/Principal. The school principal and the Tambo Committee were responsible for oversight of the school missionaries and MKs.

NTM theology was very conservative, towards the fundamentalist side of evangelicalism. As was common in that era, this tended towards a legalistic approach. The Field Committee had enormous amounts of power, as it was not specified when it needed to inform the Executive Committee in the U.S. of its actions. Each leadership team (Executive Committee and Field Committee) had a chairman, but significant decisions were made by plurality, or consensus among the committee members. Nevertheless, there appeared to be times when individual Bolivia Field Committee members tried to raise concerns, and were ignored.

There was a strong perception that the Field Committee operated as a “good ol’ boys’ club” and had favorites, leading to inconsistent disciplinary actions. Whether this was true or not, because of the strong hierarchical structure, missionaries often did not appear to feel free to share problems with the Field Committee or did not feel they got a good response if they did.

Supervision by the Executive Committee was sporadic. Communication in the early days was inconsistent and unreliable due to limited (and expensive) telephone access and the slow postal system in Bolivia and internationally.

Tribal work—planting churches and Bible translation—was seen as the most crucial and important work. Administrative work, or work at the missionary boarding school as a teacher or dorm parent, was often seen as secondary, to be accomplished by those who did not have the gifts to do tribal work. This meant that adults working at the school were sometimes

insufficiently trained or talented, and were sometimes embittered with their assignment. Some commented that people who failed at everything else were then put in charge of the children—that only those who could not do tribal mission work went to support roles. In addition, few of the teachers or dorm parents had received any formal training for their roles, or possessed degrees in education or child development. But the situation was not all dark—MKs agree that there were also some great teachers and dorm parents, and that most students were well-prepared for their continuing education.

There were indications that in the mission culture, people may have kept silent rather than reporting to leadership because they did not trust leadership. In addition, there was testimony that school leadership did not always share important information with parents, or even with school staff.

### **An Internal Revolution—Grace Rediscovered**

In the 1990s, NTM experienced a leadership change that some called “the Revolution” or “Grace Rediscovered.” At that time, there was a conscious effort to turn away from an authoritarian leadership style. NTM had conducted a survey of its members, which revealed a number of leadership problems within the mission. In January of 1997, the Executive Committee sent out a letter to all NTM missionaries.

This letter confirmed the survey results and outlined a number of problems with NTM leadership. Many of these problems were similar to ones that MKs complained of in the IHART investigation, and which created an atmosphere that allowed abuse to take place.

They included:

- Paternalism and failure to respect people;
- Failure to value previous experience or education;
- Questioning others’ commitment to Christ;
- Reacting defensively to questioning and accusing questioners of “rebellion”;
- Having to be in control and emphasizing “submission”;
- A negative emphasis towards people, creating fear and suspicion.

The letter went on to say in part:<sup>4</sup>

We want you dear missionaries to know that we, the men of the Executive Committee, take responsibility for this problem that we have described above. We have been wrong in practicing a leadership style like this. We have produced a system of legalism and negativism in our training and on our fields. Up until now, we have not sensed the gravity of the problem to the place where we would say,

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<sup>4</sup>The full letter is posted on [ihart.care](http://ihart.care).

“We can’t go on hurting people like this. Let’s stop and take a serious look at our system and really ask God to open our eyes to the root cause.”

. . . .

We would like to ask you, personally and individually, to forgive us for how we have hurt you directly or indirectly, through the autocratic system that we have practiced. Please pray for us that we will see and acknowledge all that God wants to show us.

While institutional change takes time, many within NTM believe today that this was the turn of the tide, and that NTM is a different organization from what it was then. We note that the abuse allegations brought forth about the Bolivia field for the most part predated this letter. Whether or not it is causally related, it is also around this time that NTM instituted child safety policies for the first time. These child safety policies have been continually updated and improved over the intervening years.

### **Later Changes in Leadership Structure within NTM**

After 2007, global leadership for NTM was decentralized and the NTM Executive Committee was dissolved. The NTM USA Executive Board was formed, largely with different members, but after this date had responsibility for NTM USA only.

The new structure for NTM worldwide is a Global Ministry Agreement that governs the working together of various partner entities. NTM USA does not control any of the other entities. This approach is more respectful of international sovereignty and the independence of national churches. However, it can make it more difficult to enforce policies, such as those related to Child Protection. Enforcing Child Protection policies internationally is an ongoing effort, but all member entities of the re-organized NTM must have a child safety policy and procedures in place for their individual country.

### **Historical and Political Situation in Bolivia**

Bolivia is a landlocked country in South America, where the Andes Mountain split into three mountain chains, with mountains of up to 22,000 feet. The majority of Bolivia’s population lives in the plateau highlands, though parts of the country are low and tropical.

Bolivia was ruled by the great Inca Empire, until it was conquered by the Spanish. The Spanish ruled for over 200 years, until Simón Bolívar led the country to freedom. Bolivia is named in his honor.

Bolivia’s political history has been turbulent. Wealthy landowners, the military, and neighboring nations were often in conflict, and Bolivia lost sizable portions of its territory to other countries. Eventually, the country stabilized into a democratic republic controlled by the military.

Bolivia is home to about 39 distinct tribal groups, some of them quite primitive and hostile. Early leaders of New Tribes Mission felt called to reach those tribes, and Bolivia was the first country NTM entered.

The first NTM missionaries to go overseas, a team of ten adults and six children, left for Bolivia in 1942 from New Orleans. They settled into the tropical town of Robore. One of their goals was to reach the Ayore Indians. Just a year later, five of the men were killed by Ayore. One of the leaders, Cecil Dye, had written, "I don't believe we care so much whether this expedition is a failure so far as our lives are concerned, but we want God to get the most possible glory."

The rest of the team stayed, and one of the widows worked on capturing the Ayore language. In 1947, NTM missionaries had their first friendly contact with the Ayore Indians. In the late 1940s, more missionaries arrived. Although the mission's aircraft was confiscated by the government after a revolution in 1952, the new government gave it back.

The years after 1952 were tumultuous, with coups, countercoups, and caretaker governments. In the 1980s and 1990s, the country moved towards democracy.



## Boarding School Culture

*Parents sent children to school believing that they were sending their kids to people who loved the Lord and wanted to serve as much as they did.* MK Student

*The hardest part of being an NTM missionary in Bolivia was sending your kids to Tambo . . . as a parent you were kept in the dark and you had to trust that your children were being cared for by fellow Christians.”* Missionary Parent

Boarding schools evolved out of the British tradition, which dated back to medieval times. During the colonial period of the British Empire, children were sent home from India and other countries to boarding schools for health and educational reasons. In addition, the British upper class commonly sent children to elite boarding schools, a tradition that continues today. Boarding school was thus seen as a high-end option, the educational choice of privileged classes.

As time went by, mission and colonial agencies founded boarding schools in host countries, so that the children could be closer to parents. Instead of seeing parents once in several years, children would see their parents several times a year. This was seen as an educational and personal advancement. During the early twentieth century, it was believed that children got a good education and did well in these settings.

There was an expectation in NTM during those decades that missionaries had to make sacrifices for the work of the mission, and that sacrifice involved sending missionary children out of the tribal locations to live at the missionary boarding school. Missionary parents generally trusted the individuals who were appointed to teach and care for the children.

In the decades pertaining to the IHART investigations, NTM put considerable pressure on the missionaries to put their children in boarding schools. NTM policy was that children were required to go to boarding school, and very few families fought this—or were successful if they tried. This same boarding school policy was common to many major missions. NTM and other missions developed this policy for several reasons.

First, the culture in the tribes often included much sexual behavior that was abusive or inappropriate, and children were taken out of the tribes to protect them from sexual abuse or explicit knowledge. Many of the reports of sexual abuse on the field involved incidents that happened in the tribes. Interviewees described the tribal people as overtly sexual, and said MKs that stayed in the tribe would be exposed to immoral behavior, including promiscuity, child sexual abuse, and tribal girls being married at a young age.

Home schooling was very limited at the time due to lack of training and curriculum materials (the Internet was not accessible in the tribal areas even after it was otherwise available, and the homeschooling movement had not gotten underway). Few parents had the educational background or resources to homeschool, as materials were not readily available at the time to do so. Successful homeschooling in that day took a level of brilliance and effort that was almost prohibitive. Further, it was thought important that children have the society of and socialize with other children. (It should be noted that this view changed as the homeschooling movement grew, so that by the mid-1990s, support was being provided for homeschooling families.)

Another important reason was that the mission wanted both parents contributing fully to mission work. For these reasons, NTM essentially required missionaries in the Bolivia Field to send their children to live at the missionary boarding school at Tambo.

As it played out, this often conveyed the message to children that ministry was more important than they were. This last reason in particular has caused great resentment in many MKs, who believe that they were deprived of their childhood and abandoned by their parents because of this philosophy.

The boarding school was a sheltered environment, and intentionally so. One MK who attended in the 1970s commented that it was like being raised in the 1950s, which was the era of what the

adults knew. Many of the students got an excellent education and made lifelong friendships. It was generally acknowledged that the students were well-prepared for higher education.

But boarding schools were problematic in ways that were not well understood in that era, by NTM or by other missions. First, few understood the deep sense of abandonment experienced by many children. Many children felt abandoned by parents. What made it much worse was that children went to boarding school at age 6 (or occasionally younger). Most if not all of these children were not mature enough to be separated from their parents. Many MKs explained that taking children from their parents at a young age was traumatizing.

Modern theories of child development agree that taking children away from parents at a young age for boarding school can be harmful, though IHART has seen no scholarship that categorizes it as neglect or abuse. While the failure of many mission organizations to understand normal child development and needs was due to ignorance, and boarding school life has never been classified as abusive per se, the level of pain that these early separations caused is difficult to over-estimate. Some never were able to establish close family relationships, and essentially suffered from attachment disorders.

Worse, the school sometimes had a harsh or even abusive environment. In addition to the separation issues, a number of students complained that they were expected to transition immediately, and not be homesick. They were supposed to act like adults, and not express emotion.

While adult MKs relate that NTM's schools were educationally effective, the schools were not always emotionally healthy for children. Some teachers and dorm parents were gifted with children, were wonderful, and were well-loved by the children. But in other cases, the adult personalities were not suitable to working with children, and they did not appear to love children. Some adults were cold and emotionally unavailable, some were harsh, and some crossed the line into engaging in actual abuse. Because school and field leadership also did not have adequate training or even awareness of what they should be looking for, harsh or abusive environments were often not corrected. In some cases, harsh adults also succeeded in entrenching their power within the leadership structure.

Children wrote regularly to their parents. However, dorm parents might read the letters and sometimes censored them, under the theory that unhappy letters from children would make it harder for parents to keep doing God's work and distract them from the ministry. Students believed that their mail was screened, though other students stated that staff checked the letters



just to make sure that the children were writing home something of substance. Children could talk on the ham radio, but this was also not a private form of communication.

An unusual number of dorm children wet their beds, sometimes for years, which quite likely had psychological origins. Some of the dorm parents reacted harshly to this, creating public humiliation, or even spankings for the bed-wetters.

Some also testified that the dorm parents were those who were unsuccessful in other areas of mission service. Teachers and dorm parents in those decades received little training, and did not necessarily have educational backgrounds in caring for and teaching children. In many ways, teachers and dorm parents were inadequately trained in basic child care principles.

Adequate reporting structures did not exist in boarding schools, in part because child safety reporting had not evolved as a concept, and in part because children and parents were not encouraged to complain and were not always believed if they did complain. Because of the MKs' lack of communication with parents, the parents often did not know what was going on. Families could not know what was happening in boarding schools on a day-to-day basis, and children often did not report what was happening even when they went home. If parents did know, the problems in leadership structure could make complaining risky.

In later years, the major missions, including NTM USA, came to understand that boarding school could be detrimental to children, and ceased making it a requirement.

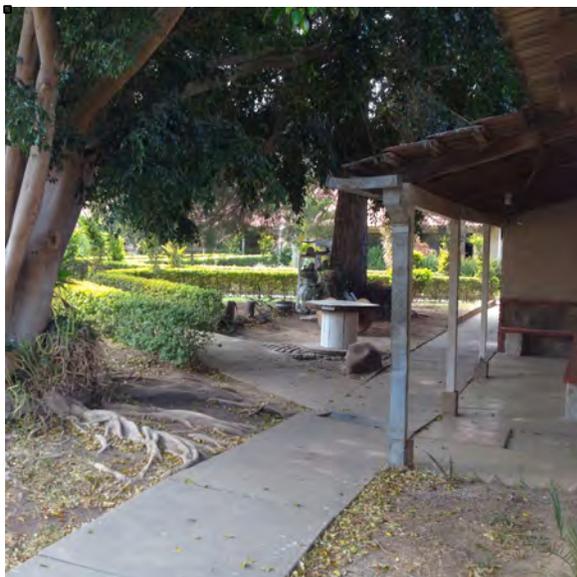
## **Educating Children in Bolivia**

*Tambo is a Quechua word for "little place of rest."*

*I'm reliving a lot of experiences that I never was able to deal with because we were never allowed to deal with them properly at Tambo; most of the steps in grieving, for instance, were seen as wrong to express. From my first negative experience at Tambo—missing my parents and being told I shouldn't cry and this was God's will—we were told we should repress our emotions, suffer silently for Christ, and not question him. MK Student*

*I want to emphasize that I was not abused in any way. I did have some hard times, but even while there and feeling I was not understood or liked by staff, I have to tell you, there was much God was working in my life due to the hard times I was going through. I am deeply grateful to my time at Tambo because I believe it became the vehicle to my own personal journey to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. MK Student*

When the Bolivia Field opened in 1942, there were only four children of school age. They attended the boarding school for another mission. For some of these early years, they were essentially homeschooled, or schooled in a small group.



In 1949, an NTM missionary arrived in Bolivia in order to set up a boarding school for elementary children. The school was initially set up in Robore, with a small, mud-wall house with a palm roof and dirt floor. The school moved to Cochabamba the following year, which was in the highlands at over 8000 feet, a healthier location. NTM rented property, a large, thick-walled adobe building. The garden had a swimming pool and lots of fruit trees. By 1951, the school outgrew this space, and moved to a larger facility.

Shortly after this, the mission purchased a piece of land of about 500 acres, for \$810.00. This was intended to be the school's permanent location. Dormitories, classrooms, dining hall, and kitchen were constructed, and in 1952 Tambo was opened. It was already called a "tambo," an overnight stopping place in travel, so they kept that name.

As time went by, the school came to resemble a small village. It reached an enrollment of about 120 students, from ten different missions, from Bolivia and surrounding countries. Tambo staff would typically be about 20 people. Through the years, over 1000 children were educated at Tambo, from NTM and also from other mission agencies.

The experience at Tambo was not uniformly bad. Some students had wonderful experiences at the school and with staff, and attribute many successes in life to lessons learned there. Some of the staff were warm and loving.

Students told stories of good times at Tambo: riding horses; hiking in the mountains; swimming in the nearby river; playing soccer and other sporting events through the region against other villages and schools; speech recitals; and singing in choir tours to the main cities. Tambo also had a working farm.

While there was a medical clinic at the school, some students complained that the medical care was inept, such as wrapping an arm injury in an elastic bandage when it was actually broken, or forcing students sick with malaria or hepatitis to participate in school events. One student who was sick with hepatitis complained that he was made to get up and apologize to the "whole school for slacking off," because he was "sick and weakly." Other students reported that the medical care was good.

Parents were not told very much of what happened at the school, as school personnel believed it was their duty to deal with problems without parental input. This could be carried to an extreme, as one family was not even told that their daughter was receiving treatment for a significant head injury.

At least at some periods in the school's history, MKs believed that siblings were deliberately split up, causing the students to lose sibling relationship as well as parent relationships. One student commented, "even if your sibling was there it didn't feel like a family at all," because they were not encouraged to interact.

Whether intentionally or not, MKs were put under a great deal of pressure to be strong and courageous in being away from their parents so that parents could share the gospel with people and keep them from going to hell. Often, this was not stated explicitly, but the children had an "understanding" that this was the case. One MK said,

I was reminded several times...the advancement of God's work was much more important than my situation and we all needed to make sacrifices for God, which was what my parents were doing.

In the children's minds, this created an environment where they would not or could not talk about problems in the boarding school environment.

The rules were often implemented very legalistically. For instance, several MKs complained that they were harassed and interrogated over their dating relationships, and they were not believed when they said they were not "doing" anything.

Another MK student stated,

[T]he first year of Tambo was excessively difficult. Most nights I wept in my bed, not able to understand why my parents forced me to go to this hell-hole, feeling alone, abandoned, and helpless. . . . I vividly remember being ridiculed by several staff members for being too much of a "mama's boy" that first year. There were certain staff members . . . who seemed to enjoy verbally poking fun of younger students who were having trouble being homesick.

In fairness, the boarding school situation was always complex. Some MKs did well and really enjoyed the environment. Others have mixed feelings, valuing the fun and enriching opportunities, but identifying inappropriate behaviors and sources of pain. For others, the experience was filled with torment. These different reactions were caused by a complicated mix of the individual temperament of the child and the particular adults who had the most impact on the child's life. At times, in the histories told to IHART, different teachers and dorm parents are almost unrecognizable as the same person from one MK's account to the next.

### **Early Years of Child Safety Policies within NTM**

In the early years, like most organizations, NTM lacked child safety policies. It began addressing child safety issues in the 1980s, and continued evolving its policies in the 1990s.

Most adults did not have a well-developed understanding of child abuse, and knew little about what to ask or look for. In the time frame of the allegations in question, the understanding of

child sexual abuse was not well developed, even in the United States, as it was, unbelievably to us at this present time, considered rare and not harmful. It was often not recognized, even within the general culture.<sup>5</sup> NTM was a fundamentalist mission and the topic of sex was often considered taboo, and so was less likely to have been discussed. This was complicated by the fact that an atmosphere like Tambo lagged behind the general culture by perhaps two decades.



In the mid-1990s, Scott Ross, legal counsel at NTM headquarters, instigated the formation of a Child Protection Committee and child protection policy. He was instrumental in helping form the inter-mission Child Safety and Protection Network and created a series of training programs to aid NTM missionaries' understanding of child abuse. While early steps were not without their shortcomings, Ross was a pioneer in the Evangelical missionary context in regard to improving child safety and protection.

In the early years, any discipline policy at Tambo was unwritten. This created the opportunity for excesses. Later, a policy for corporal punishment was developed that appears to date to the mid 1990s. It stated that: (1) spanking should not be done in anger; (2) an adult witness was required; (3) one adult present must be the same gender as the child; (4) the principal or dorm parents must be consulted; (5) the punishment must be explained; (6) corporal punishment was reserved for major offenses; (7) it may not be excessive in number of swats or create black and blue marks; and (8) a written record must be kept.

NTM child safety policies were neither significantly ahead of the general understanding in the culture, nor were they behind. Our culture's understanding of child safety issues has changed considerably since that time, and continues to grow and change. NTM makes significant efforts to stay current.

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<sup>5</sup> Monica Applewhite, Ph.D., "Development of Organizational Standards of Care for Prevention and Response to Child Sexual Abuse : A Historical Analysis Using Research, Organizational and Public Policy Benchmarks," pp. 5-6.

## BOLIVIA INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

NTM USA initially commissioned the Bolivia Field investigation due to an allegation made by an MK who had attended Tambo. The student alleged a beating from a teacher. NTM USA decided to have the Bolivia Field investigated.

### **Summary of Allegations and Findings by IHART**

The IHART investigation covered the time frame from when Tambo opened in 1952 to 2003. The time frame of the allegations ranged from 1952 to as late as 2000, but few allegations were made past the early 1990s, and most were much earlier. Therefore, the span of the investigation was roughly 50 years. Over that 50 years, there were many AOs and allegations of abuse, as follows.

The Team received the following allegations: 63 of physical abuse; 50 of emotional abuse; and 75 of sexual abuse. While physical and sexual abuse are also obviously emotionally damaging, the allegations of emotional abuse were of behavior that stood alone as emotional abuse only.

For some allegations, investigators were either not able to obtain sufficient information to support the allegations to the point of inclusion, or the allegations were too vague to be useful. Some individuals were accused of actions that would not have been considered abuse at that time, or were accused of actions that would have been considered abuse, but evidence supporting the allegations did not allow the Team to reach a finding by a preponderance of the evidence. In some cases, no apparent basis for the allegations could be found. In some cases, a witness gave an account, but no V/S could be found to support the assertions made. These allegations also included inappropriate behavior by students that did not meet the definition of child abuse, due to age similarity between the AO and V/S. Factual discrepancies were also noted in some cases.

The allegations for which the Team reached a finding by a preponderance of the evidence were as follows: 41 of physical abuse; 37 of emotional abuse; and 50 of sexual abuse. These numbers do not represent 128 separate V/S, because a student was counted more than once if he or she made multiple allegations or allegations against a different AO.

The IHART Team found 31 individuals who had findings of fact to a preponderance of the evidence of some level of misconduct, ranging from boundary violations to abusive behavior to leadership culpability. Of these 31 individuals, 11 were already deceased.

Witnesses stated that they believed there were potentially many more allegations, involving other V/S, whom the Team did not have the opportunity to interview. This was true for some of the AOs who were harsh in physical abuse, and also for AOs who had a finding of sexual abuse.

IHART found five leaders culpable to various degrees of failure to protect the safety of children at levels requiring actions up to and including dismissal. While IHART was not able to make more specific findings on individual leadership failures, due to the length of time that has passed

and the incomplete historical records, this Report highlights many ways in which there was collective leadership failure. Some of these leaders were also included in the listing of AOs at various levels by the preponderance of the evidence.

All of the allegations of sexual abuse that involved touching, and for which there was a finding by a preponderance of the evidence, were attributed to 13 AOs. Some were previously dismissed and/or deceased.

For the individuals where preponderance was not reached, it **does not confirm that the abuse never happened**, but that the investigators could not determine that it did happen to a level of preponderance of the evidence. A finding of failure to reach preponderance of the evidence is not intended to diminish any person's history, but acknowledges that the truth is sometimes not accessible in investigations, especially historical investigations. And on the other hand, if preponderance was reached, it does not confirm that the person was guilty, but rather that the investigative team confirmed the allegation to a level of at least preponderance of the evidence.

### **Summary of NTM Actions Taken**

For the 31 individuals found with culpability in the investigation, the following actions were taken by NTM, following Panel recommendations tailored to the level of offense found.

- Sixteen individuals had actions that were determined to be at a level that required dismissal by NTM policy standards.
  - Current members with findings at this level were dismissed.
  - Most of these individuals were not current members of NTM. Nonetheless, their permanent records were amended to show a final status of “dismissed.”
  - Six individuals had been previously dismissed from NTM.
  - One of these individuals was a minor, and did not receive a dismissal notice since he was never employed by NTM.
  - Six of these individuals, including some previously dismissed were deceased and no notice of finding was prepared.
- Fifteen individuals were found with levels of culpability that required action, though less than dismissal.
  - Five of these were deceased.
  - NTM took action on the remaining individuals. These individuals were reprimanded for various levels of failure to follow NTM policy, or for their direct

actions which, though not covered directly by policy, were not in the best interests of the safety and well-being of children.

- Some individuals were reprimanded for failure to be proactive in protecting children. It is understood that historically, the understanding of child safety was not as well understood as it is today, but nevertheless, NTM felt that certain individuals should have been more proactive in their efforts.
- One additional individual who had been previously dismissed from NTM was investigated, but there was insufficient information to determine whether current allegations would have risen to the level of preponderance. However, at an earlier period, NTM had dismissed the individual for allegations that were known at the time. That dismissal stands per NTM EB decision.



## **Historical Child Abuse Allegations in Bolivia**

*I did, however, learn to pray. I was so sad that I cried myself to sleep each night, counting the hours until the generators would shut down, then listening to the sounds after all was dark. I found praying made this time go past a little more easily. V/S*

These are the allegations of child abuse in the Bolivia field, many of which were corroborated. Without revealing the identity of individuals, the histories of the V/S should be heard. It is important to note that NTM's involvement with these different stories varied. Much abuse was never reported until this investigation. Some abuse was known at the time, and dealt with at the time, as a number of AOs were dismissed at some point. Some abuse appeared to be common knowledge, or to have been reported, but was dealt with inadequately.

The abuse affected children differently, and of course, the frequency and severity of abuse would have played into that. Some appeared to be able to shrug it off. Some were angry. Others were depressed to the point of thinking about suicide. Many MKs reported that abuse had a long-term impact on their lives.

## *Allegations of Physical Abuse*

*How did [physical abuse] affect me and impact my life? Those are hard questions to answer. It definitely gave me an unhealthy fear of authority figures that I dealt with all my life, although I've come a long way with that. V/S*

*Spankings could be administered by anyone. When allegations were made by a student, they were brought before a committee, usually comprised of Tambo leadership, and the staff member against whom the allegations were made. The staff member was usually allowed to defend themselves prior to the meetings, and the student brought in for "interrogation," and never believed. MK Student*

Allegations in the Bolivia field of physical abuse were primarily of corporal punishment. Teachers and dorm parents at Tambo spanked frequently, and corporal punishment was considered to be the godly way of disciplining children. In theory, spankings would be a few strokes, and would not break the skin or bruise the child. Long paddles were often used, sometimes with holes drilled in them, and some staff swung these like baseball bats. Another implement was something like a leather horse harness. A belt and buckle was also common, and on occasion, children were hit with the buckle. Often, discipline was excessive. But some students commented that they received spankings that would be considered abuse now, but fit within an acceptable range at the time.

While some dorm parents really loved the kids, others apparently did not, and the children sensed it and reacted to that environment. For many MKs, it was not specifically the spankings or the rules that hurt them, but the sense of being abandoned by their parents and not being loved by their dorm parents and teachers.

During the era of the allegations, most personnel approved of spanking and thought it was necessary for Biblical discipline. However, there was general acknowledgment that certain staff spanked hard. Allegations were made against some dorm parents for regularly and frequently giving vicious spankings that left marks, or for enjoying spanking children. Some adults appeared to believe that the spanking was not effective on a spiritual level unless the child cried. If the child would not cry or otherwise express repentance, it was seen as defiance, and the spanking could become too severe. Some spankings went well beyond a few swats, to 10, 15, or even more swats. Not all the stories of the frequency of spanking were corroborated, but enough were corroborated to establish an atmosphere of frequent spanking and at times, harsh physical discipline.

Problems with spanking that IHART identified were: (1) some of the children were too young for the degree of the spanking they received; (2) some spankings were much more than two to three swats; (3) some spankings became a battle of wills; (4) some staff spanked very frequently (daily or multiple times a day) rather than occasionally; (5) some spanked for bedwetting; (6) some students were hit with a swinging belt buckle; (7) some staff screamed and yelled at the students as well as spanking them; and (8) some staff gave repeated group spankings to force

confessions. Also, not only were some children spanked severely when they were too young for such spankings (age 6 or 7), but in some cases children were spanked up into their teens. Credible testimony was given of spankings of both teenage girls and teenage boys, which was considered acceptable at the time.

In addition to regular spankings that may have been extreme in frequency or severity, certain MKs reported severe beatings that caused bruising or bleeding. One child stated he was beaten so hard he lost control of both bowel and bladder. Another said that his back was hit so hard that he collapsed, with a white flash and a feeling of being electrocuted, which caused his back to spasm. While spanking

was a much more acceptable form of discipline in the decades covered by the investigation, and occasional marks were fairly common, severe bruising or bleeding would have been considered abusive at that time as well.

One child complained that he was literally lifted off the floor by his ears, which was agonizing, and caused ringing in his head and trouble with balance. Another child complained of being slapped repeatedly in the head with an open palm.

One child complained of being smacked on the head with a textbook, which gave her ongoing headaches.

There were some individuals who were known for beating and emotionally abusing many children. Some disciplined with great show of anger or other emotion. Yet some of these were also said by MKs to be good teachers, and some MKs said that spankings given were not excessive. During interviews with IHART, at least one teacher acknowledged being too aggressive in the use of corporal punishment, and asked for forgiveness, while stating “but I realize that does not make it up to these children.”

The investigative team reached a preponderance of the evidence on the truth of a number of these allegations, finding physical abuse. Although some of the accounts were not substantiated, either in severity or frequency, reports of physical abuse were corroborated for a number of AOs.

#### *Allegations of Emotional Abuse*

*If you looked at me cross-eyed you had better beware. Even the adult women were afraid of me and would make complaints. AO*

*An example of the negative tone would be that they would tell a kid that they knew they were up to something; they just couldn't prove it yet, so “I can't punish you*



*yet.” This continual negativity and belittling of the kids drove the kids to giving up. If a kid is constantly being knocked down and made to feel worthless they start to believe it in themselves and stop trying. MK Student*

There were also allegations of emotional abuse, either in conjunction with other forms of abuse, or separately. Some testified that the constant legalism gave them a feeling of guilt, and that they were inferior and would “never measure up.” One student stated that what made Tambo a “living nightmare” was how an activity would be approved one day and the same activity would be a punishable offense the following day. On occasion, children who were sad or depressed were told that this was because they had a very sinful life.

Some MKs commented that the boarding school culture was a toxic one of spiritual shame. Although hard to pinpoint, the environment of shame created an experience of wounding even in those who were not actually abused.

Some children with a slightly different Christian background were told they were heretics, or worse yet, other children were told not to associate with them. Some children were lectured and told they were going to hell for religious differences in their beliefs. Other children developed the belief that they could never be good enough for God. Some students felt that the spiritual atmosphere was “cult-like” in not allowing questioning, or shaming people who questioned spiritual teaching.

One teacher would sometimes tell children there were things in their letters home that their “parents did not need to know, because they were busy doing the Lord’s work.” According to one MK, this teacher censored letters and taught children to write a “fake letter.” Another MK complained that a male teacher would rage, saying that “if you didn’t remember the exact day, minute, and hour that Jesus entered your heart you would go straight to hell.”

Some dorm parents had unreasonably strict standards for making beds, cleaning rooms, and other performance issues. For example, one student told of cleaning sneakers with a toothbrush. Living under these strict standards was difficult for many children.

Some dorm parents were cold, had anger issues, or played favorites—among the children, with their own children, or even preferring pets. Some dorm parents appeared to have ongoing personal emotional problems with anger or depression.

Some dorm parents had unreasonably strict standards for romantic relationships between students, not only imposing rules, but overreacting and attacking students with spiteful and belittling language (like calling girls “sluts”).

One small boy was stripped and then diapered in front of other boys, because he had had a toileting accident. The boys were told, “This is what happens to you if you soil your pants like a baby.” Similarly, a female staff member made two students wear “mammoth flannel diapers and plastic pants,” because “bedwetters were lazy.”



One dorm parent would tell children they were hanging on a string over hell if they weren't dressed nicely, or if they didn't pick up a gum wrapper. He would also shame bedwetters, make public remarks to females about body odor, and speak harshly in the classroom.

At least one child was told that he was effeminate, and that he walked and talked funny, and his masculinity was attacked on that basis.

One painful point for several students was being falsely accused of lying. If a student was accused of lying, the student experienced both social pressure and stigma. Some students complained that they received no apology when the

accusation was proved to be false.

Apparently, many students did tell lies, to avoid being shamed. One MK commented, "The culture bred pathological liars via their methods . . . You learned that if you told the truth, you would suffer deeply, one way or another."

It is impossible to reach an absolutely accurate evaluation of what happened, and the investigators did not reach a preponderance of the evidence finding on all of the above allegations. Again, MK perceptions of these environments vary greatly. Some MKs did not feel that the dorm life was emotionally abusive. Some teachers and dorm parents were kind, such as the dorm mother who would play the piano after the children went to bed, so that a musically gifted child could enjoy it.

While emotional abuse is difficult to define even today, standards have changed greatly over the years, and determining exactly what occurred in the distant past is not always possible. What seems clear is that, for many MKs, living in the dorms created memories ranging from unpleasant to painful.

### *Allegations of Sexual Abuse*

The allegations of sexual abuse fell into several categories. The allegations ranged from accounts of sexual abuse, by V/S or those who witnessed abuse, to accounts of people whom certain students avoided because they were "uncomfortable," or accounts of inappropriate comments. While this investigation necessarily dealt with allegations against offenders who were identified, there were also accounts of children being sexually abused by tribal members, sometimes severely. In some cases, though fortunately not all, the sexual abuse appeared to have had a devastating effect on the MK's later life. Most of the allegations were not within NTM's knowledge at the time of the event, with some exceptions.

One allegation was of sexual abuse that occurred within the family, as a father's actions against a daughter..

Some staff spoke inappropriately to students, such as using overly sexualized language when interrogating two students who were dating.

There were two or three allegations of a male staff member inappropriately kissing a teenage girl, at least one of which was corroborated. In one case, the girl severely informed the staff member that his action was inappropriate, and marched off, ending the problem.

Two male AOs (at two different points in the school's history) were credibly accused of molesting girls in various different ways, ranging from small girls to high school girls.

Another male AO molested both girls and boys, and was dismissed when a complaint was made.

Four of the male AOs were said to be molesting boys or making statements that would be verbal sexual abuse. Some, but not all, of these accounts could be corroborated. Some of the incidents were discovered at the time, and in those cases the person was dismissed from the mission.

One female MK made multiple allegations of rape against perhaps a dozen staff. However, there were significant contradictions in these allegations, the memories seemed to have been developed later in life, and DNA evidence positively disproved aspects of the story. Thus, IHART was not able to reach a preponderance of the evidence on these allegations. There were also other allegations of serious sexual abuse by another MK that the Team could not substantiate to a preponderance.

In two cases, young female staff members slept with high school boys. This became known and was dealt with at the time.

There were also some allegations of sexual abuse by minors, some established and some not, including some that were recovered memories.

### *Culture of Bullying*

*One of my freshman classmates was reportedly tied to a cactus in just his underwear and left in the desert for some time. He got back with some puncture wounds and I imagine traumatized. MK Student*

*I got bullied all the time. I got pinned down by multiple guys for chesties regularly (Chesties are where you hit someone's chest with the knuckle of your middle finger which after you get to 100 or so leaves a bruised area). MK Student*

A number of students reported a culture of bullying by other students. The custom, unchecked or even encouraged by staff, was that bigger guys beat on smaller guys.

One practice was for bigger boys to sit on another boy and give “chesties,” pounding his chest until he was bruised. Similar practices were: giving “pink bellies;” putting another student’s head in the toilet (a “swirly”); or giving “conchacos,” where an older boy hit a smaller boy on the head with the knuckles.

One student attended Tambo for the first time in high school. Other students bullied him. He injured a knee by dislocating it, and older students would corner him and squeeze the swollen knee, causing excruciating pain. One time, older students found him on the mesa at the air strip and made him walk back to school barefoot (dodging sharp rocks and cacti). On another occasion, his pet died, and students created a mock funeral. He considers these experiences life-altering, affecting his view of God for his whole life. While he has had a good life, he would like for students and staff alike to understand the hurtful effect they had on outsiders.

Another student who was lonely and bullied regularly was suicidal by the time he was in middle school. Fortunately, he had a spiritual experience with Jesus that helped him survive.

Other students testified that bullying went unchecked, though staff knew about it.



### **Summary of Allegations Made and Findings Related to Leadership**

The leadership investigation focused on whether leaders knew or should have known of abuse, and whether leaders took action or ignored allegations. Some allegations of child abuse were reported to leadership or staff, and were dealt with at the time of the alleged event, including a number of the allegations of sexual abuse. Many other allegations were never reported at the time.

The NTM Field Committee of Bolivia had a leadership role over Tambo. The Field Committee designated people to the Tambo Committee, and handled personnel issues between the missionaries and NTM regarding furloughs, financial issues, and conflicts. It also accepted or dismissed missionaries from the field. The school principal and the Tambo Committee were responsible for oversight of the school staff and MKs.

Leaders in Bolivia had considerable autonomy, and sometimes exploited their authority. Questions from students, and even from parents, were often viewed as a “challenge to authority” rather than an opportunity to learn, with negative consequences for the questioners. Complaints were often viewed as disrespectful and rebellious. Student individuality was similarly seen as disrespectful. In addition, child protection training did not yet exist, and children might not have known how to report.

In this environment, parents were frequently hesitant to speak out on issues they were aware of. Even when they did speak out, they might couch their remarks carefully, which may have concealed the real issue to some degree. Some students developed an “us against them” mentality, trusting few, if any, adults.

Thus, due to an environment that was far from candid and open, leaders were often never told of abuse allegations. While the NTM culture may have made reporting less likely, it was determined that individual leaders could only be held responsible for events of which they had knowledge or had been made aware. For culpability, leaders had to know in the historical time frame that the abuse happened.

In order to evaluate culpability, the Team interviewed or attempted to interview former NTM leaders of the Bolivia Field. In many instances, individual responsibility for action or lack of action could not be determined. When actions were taken, such as dismissal, the specific findings or situations were often not well-documented. Minutes and notes for both the Field Committee and Executive Committee were vague. This was customary in the historical time frame, but of course made the investigation more difficult.

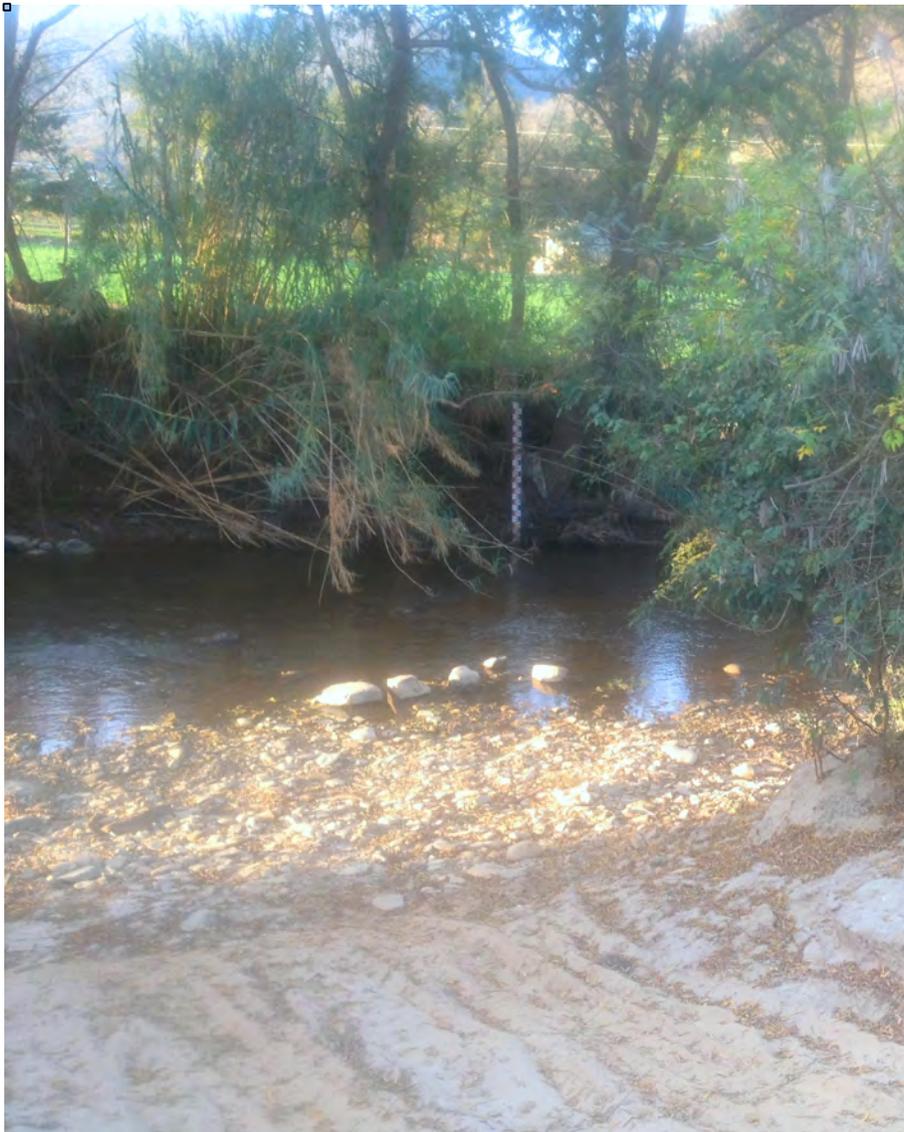
In some instances, it appears that alleged abuse was discussed. When it was apparent that some leaders questioned or tried to take action to protect children, even if they did so unsuccessfully, the Team concluded they were not culpable. However, there were other leaders who appeared to know and still refused to take action as to some allegations of abuse.

Failure to report by leaders was another issue. At the time span covered by this investigation, child abuse reporting was for the most part not a best practice, particularly overseas. It was only beginning to become a best practice in the United States during the last decade of the investigation. Therefore, leaders could only be found culpable for not reporting in egregious instances, such as if information was hidden from the Executive Committee.

In the end, varying degrees of culpability were found for certain leaders, because they failed to protect children. For some other leaders, what they knew could not be substantiated. Though some leaders may well have known more than IHART could discover, it was almost impossible, decades later, to determine whether leaders had culpable knowledge and what they were told. Field Committee communications with the Executive Committee were often unclear. In addition, due to record keeping practices of the day, it was rarely clear who on the Field Committee or the Executive Committee was privy to knowledge or decision-making in any given situation.

While many MKs were convinced that there was broad awareness by leadership of the abuse that was happening, very little solid evidence of this awareness existed. It does not speak highly of leadership that leaders did not know, but it seems that for the most part, the code of silence kept abuse from being revealed to leaders. And since most adults of the day had little understanding of abuse, leaders did not know what to ask.

IHART regrets that it was not possible to establish individual leadership culpability more firmly and in more cases. It certainly remains possible that additional leaders had specific knowledge of abuse. In sum, IHART believes that general leadership failures are shown by the discussion of the cultural problems that NTM had at that time. IHART deplores the failure of leaders at that time to press for more information when there was obviously some kind of problem. Thankfully, the approach today is much more energetic and proactive.



## CURRENT POLICIES AND MOVING FORWARD

### **Current Child Protection Policies**

As NTM entered into the 2000s, it realized that more needed to be done. NTM was one of the founding organizations in the Child Safety and Protection Network, believing that working together with other organizations would allow the standards to be raised for all. While NTM has received more media attention than most missions about its child safety problems, this is partly because the NTM MKs have been very proactive in advocating for change, and partly because of NTM's ongoing commitment to investigating and addressing past wrongs.

Whatever the cause, NTM is currently one of the leading mission organizations in regard to proactive steps for child safety. All NTM USA personnel receive child protection training in numerous steps. While in training, all candidates for membership participate in a live training course. Following training, all newly accepted members must successfully complete an additional online child safety training course and all current members are required to successfully complete the current online NTM training course biennially. Additionally, there is age-appropriate training available for all school age children. This training is aimed at giving children the tools to recognize inappropriate behavior, whether from an adult or peer, and to have an understanding of how to speak up against such actions.

NTM has designated child safety staff at each USA location. These are intended to be caring individuals who would be approachable by a child in any distress. Their names and roles are made known. Each NTM overseas school also has staff members in a similar role. These individuals are aware of reporting procedures and contact information should any situation arise.

Besides members, all interns and volunteers who work with children also receive appropriate screening and training. NTM USA child care facilities follow NTM USA Policy as well as have location specific procedures and requirements for their workers.

### **Current Educational Policies and Statistics for NTM USA**

Currently, educators and other support staff for schools and other ministries with children are chosen by their gifting and training, specifically for those roles.

NTM USA now leaves the type of schooling used for children up to the family. Each family is encouraged to research their options independently and also to use the NTM Educational Resource Committee. Families are also encouraged to dialogue about their choices with churches associated with each family. Options available to families today typically include homeschool, local (traditional) day schools, distance education, host country schools and boarding schools. It is currently never recommended that a student younger than grade seven be enrolled in a boarding school. The statistics below show the huge shift that has come about regarding schooling choices.

Families are also encouraged to have an annual assessment of the educational progress and needs of their children. This can be accomplished with national standards tests or with consultation of educational staff.

Here are statistics for the 2015-2016 school year for children whose parents are with NTM USA and who are living overseas:

- 427 children
  - 282 children homeschooling (66% of total)
  - 145 children attending traditional schools (34% of total)
  - 15 of the 145 are NTM USA children in NTM boarding schools (3.5% of total)

### **Recommendations from Those Involved in the Investigation**

IHART solicited recommendations for change. Some of these recommendations came directly from MKs, and some were observations from IHART investigators. We note that recommendations have been combined from IHART investigations, as they are not field-specific.

- NTM USA personnel, volunteers, and associates should receive an adequate pre-field screening that includes a background check and in-depth check of references, and possibly psychological evaluation.
- Staff working with children should be adequately trained for the tasks assigned. Teachers should be trained and certified, and should also be able to recognize and address learning disabilities.
- Alternative methods of schooling should be permitted, such as homeschool. Parents should be assisted in finding school materials. They should have access to trained, certified teachers. Boarding school should be only for older students.
- Some said that all NTM boarding schools should be closed.
- Schools should undergo quality reviews or inspections.
- School should have access to good medical care.
- Corporal punishment at schools should be eliminated.
- If a child is at boarding school, there should be good communication with teachers, parents, dorm parents, and students.
- Dorm parents should be married couples.
- Quality of food at schools should be monitored, and allergies or restrictions respected.

- Younger students should be mentored by older students.
- Each field should have adequate child protection policies in place.
- Children should have a trained counselor or ombudsman to approach with any problems.
- For missionary families returning home, there should be some kind of debriefing provided.
- For children returning home to school or college, a “transition” curriculum should be offered.
- Counseling should be offered for MKs dealing with emotional issues from alleged or perceived child abuse issues.
- NTM USA should provide comprehensive and continuing training of all members and staff in child protection issues, with regular refresher classes.
- When there has been an allegation of child abuse, a child safety assessment should be performed, both for the alleged victim and to identify other vulnerable children.
- An adequate number of people on each field should be trained in how to respond to allegations and further internal investigations.
- For child abuse or other criminal activity that takes place overseas, reports to local authorities should be made in compliance with legal standards, and when it is in the best interests of the alleged victim.
- For child abuse or other criminal activity that takes place overseas, reports should be made to U.S. authorities or to other authorities in host countries to see if they will take jurisdiction.<sup>6</sup>
- Sending churches should be notified of the reasons for dismissal, of services that the returning missionary V/S or AO family may need, and of potential liability issues or the need for a safety plan. The notifications should be memorialized in the NTM files.
- Missionaries who are dismissed should have no continuing access to mission locations, NTM ministries, or other areas where children may be at risk.
- Children should also be trained in child protection safeguards, as well as sex education.

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<sup>6</sup> While historically, this was not the standard of care, and authorities would not have taken jurisdiction over international allegations, this standard of care has changed considerably in recent years.

- Children should be trained in sex education, and relationships between boys and girls in a way that would lay a foundation for healthy marriages.
- Families should be encouraged to dine together or have some interaction.
- Mission leaders should receive leadership training and an orientation to the expectations for leaders.
- The number of persons who report directly to an individual leader should not be more than an individual leader can handle.
- Administrative leave and conflict-of-interest policies should be in place for response to allegations.
- In the historical Bolivia Field, written correspondence was irregular and vague. Minutes of Field Committee meetings were often not detailed. Field leaders should submit monthly status reports to NTM USA, and should maintain minutes of field meetings that clearly explain the issues discussed.



## RESPONSE FROM NTM LEADERSHIP

### Letter of Apology from NTM USA Executive Board

The following is a public letter of apology to the Bolivia MKs and their parents from the NTM USA Executive Board. MKs who were identified as V/S will also be receiving a more personal letter of apology from NTM.



CHURCH PLANTING IN UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS  
New Tribes Mission, 1000 East First St., Sanford, FL 32771-1487

December 5, 2016

To the Bolivia MKs and their parents,

Our hearts were heavy as we read through the Investigative Report and considered the recommendations from the Panel regarding the historical allegations from Bolivia. The actions that we understand to have happened are very sobering. We are deeply grieved by the accounts of abuse reported in the IHART findings. These acts include sexual, emotional, and physical abuse. The Report also speaks of other behaviors that, while they might not be termed abuse, are inappropriate and unacceptable, such as: shaming children; belittling their young faith; purposefully decreasing their ability to communicate with their parents; and not providing protection from bullying.

On behalf of the Executive Board of NTM USA 2016, we humbly apologize for the actions and inactions that caused harm to MKs. We are very sorry for the things that you suffered. We are deeply grieved and cannot fully imagine how painful this has been nor the impact this had on your life. We acknowledge that in some cases the very people who should have been displaying God's love and the value He has placed on each individual actually played a part in distorting that very image.

To the parents of those who suffered abuse, we are deeply sorry and apologize for the pain you and your children have suffered. An environment should have been provided that daily pointed your children to Christ, and yet in many of these situations it did not.

Through the courage of those who have brought information forward, we have gained further understanding and knowledge. Our commitment is to continue to learn from these painful experiences and to ensure, to the best of our ability, that these things do not happen again.

On behalf of the NTM USA Executive Board and with much respect,

Larry M. Brown  
CEO  
New Tribes Mission USA

## **NTM Response to IHART Recommendations**

NTM USA received the listing of recommendations that were made by MKs and the investigators. These recommendations were directed toward many of our procedures and came to us through the IHART Coordinator.

The list of recommendations reminds us where we have come from, and where we hope to go. Thankfully some of the items listed have already been addressed, and we will mention those below. We continue to evaluate and search for ways in which we can improve as an organization, and the listing of recommendations highlights some areas for us to consider and address. We hope that the information below will be an encouragement to those who have spoken up to effect change.

A number of the recommendations dealt with policy shortcomings. It is true that during the timeframe prior to the mid-1990s there were few, if any, adequate guidelines for child safety issues in dorms, schools, or for mission-wide concerns. We functioned under the belief that members would act in consistent, godly ways toward children and each other. Unfortunately, this was not always the case. Historically, we functioned under the assumption that leaders would consistently apply godly principles to circumstances that arose. It is equally disappointing that this was not always the case either.

As child abuse and areas of mistreatment began to be recognized both in the general culture and at NTM, we implemented training on child safety and formed policy to protect children. As understanding and knowledge increased, so have our training and policies. Though many changes have been made over the years to our training and policies, we continue to conduct research and receive education to improve in these areas.

All of our members (career and associate) receive child safety training. Initial training takes place in a face-to-face program. Additionally, all members must successfully complete an online refresher training and exam every other year. Any volunteer working for more than 13 days OR who is directly working with children also takes the online training course. Anyone working in a child care setting receives additional training with details specific to that location.

During their training in the USA, families are given at least one opportunity, and often multiple opportunities, to have their children participate in an age-appropriate training on child safety. For this, we currently use curriculum provided by Praesidium to equip children with tools to empower them to say “no” and to speak up about situations where they feel uncomfortable.

One area consistently reported in the various investigations has been inappropriate and excessive corporal punishment and as result, many of the recommendations centered on discipline. Today, our policies state that there is to be no corporal punishment by anyone other than a parent in any of our schools or child care settings.

Historically, parents had little choice if any on schooling for their children. Today, parents make the determination as to the best type of schooling situation for their families. We have an Education Resource Center (ERC) that has been established to aid parents in the schooling of their children. The team at this Center is qualified to help with things such as learning styles, learning disabilities, curriculum choices, and standardized testing, to ensure that children are on par with their peers, regardless of the type of education chosen by the parents. Parents on site at the ERC office can view various homeschool curriculums and receive advice on the strengths of each to help determine which would be best for their family.

Besides the ERC, each of our three remaining NTM schools also has various options for screening and assisting students with various learning disabilities, as do most of the international schools NTM children attend. If a student is discovered to have learning needs outside of the areas where we can provide assistance, the family may be advised to return to their home country to get the help necessary for their child.

The change that has taken place in schooling methods is significant and can best be shown by the current (2015-2016) statistics revealing that only 15 children of our USA members overseas are now in dormitory situations in NTM schools. In addition, we recommend that children be in 7th grade or higher to be in a dormitory in one of these schools. Homeschooling has become the norm for most families.

Upon returning to the USA, MKs who are at least Juniors in High School have multiple opportunities to interact with a team specifically focused on their age group and typical transition issues. MKs can take part in regional retreats throughout the year and also take advantage of various online connections, book recommendations, and offers of interaction to meet specific needs. While participation in any of these opportunities is voluntary, much effort is put into making the opportunities accessible and inviting to MKs.

Another change that has taken place is that requirements for serving in a school setting have been established and/or increased. We recruit and accept personnel for specific needs identified by the individual schools. After a screening process that involves multiple references, and also a thorough background check, individuals are accepted based on their qualifications to fill specific needs.

In 2007, NTM internationalized, and is no longer governed by a central leadership team. When this took place, the NTM Executive Committee disbanded and each individual field became autonomous. NTM USA was formed at this time and is now governed by an Executive Board which oversees NTM USA operations only. The Global Ministry Agreement that serves as the structural backbone of the world-wide organization of NTM provides policy requirements and specifically states that each country where we work must have child safety policies. NTM USA further requires that there be a designated “safe person” for each ministry location. This “safe person” must be someone who is equipped to receive an allegation of abuse and must also be someone who would be perceived as approachable. Although we have no NTM primary or

secondary schools located in the USA, there is at least one “safe person” identified for each of our USA-based centers also.

In our Child Safety Manual, procedures are in place requiring an assessment of allegations received and requirements for the make-up of team members for any investigation. Should the local authorities investigate an allegation, our NTM procedures are put on hold until any civil or criminal proceedings are completed. NTM USA reports allegations of abuse to the appropriate authorities, in line with appropriate legal standards and current best practices.

The recommendations we received mentioned handling of dismissals and follow up services offered to those involved in an allegation of abuse. If a current member of NTM USA has an allegation against them, the person is put on administrative leave until the situation is resolved. All actions and outcomes are noted in the permanent record of a member who has violated any part of our child safety policies. If a member is found to have committed sexual abuse through the criminal justice system, or to have violated NTM policy regarding sexual abuse of a child, our policy states that the member will be dismissed, their Sending Church and all donors will receive appropriate notification, and the individual will never be eligible to again become a member of NTM. NTM USA will not accept anyone for membership who has been confirmed to have committed sexual abuse of a child, either through legal action or an internal inquiry.

NTM policy states that immediately following receipt of an allegation, a safety plan for the child is put in place. Support is provided for the child and family throughout the investigative process as appropriate and NTM makes funds for counseling available.

It was recommended that debriefing be made available to all members. This is an area NTM USA has been evaluating and working at implementing for some time. We have a Regional Member Care Team in place, with individuals who have been trained in the area of debriefing readily available. We are continuously looking into ways in which we can be more effective in this, and appreciate the reminder. While we do currently provide opportunities for all members to participate in a debriefing, it is not required at this point.

It was also recommended that NTM have “conflict of interest” policies in place. It is true that historically these were lacking; however today NTM has “conflict of interest” policies in place for varying situations, abuse issues being one of them.

In reviewing the recommendations, there are a few that might create specific complications. It was recommended that we teach sex education and train in relationships between boys and girls to lay a foundation for healthy marriages. As a mission organization, we seek to maintain healthy boundaries for our involvement in the lives of our members and their children. While we are definitely concerned with the well-being of the children of our members, we feel that to require either of these recommendations would stretch that boundary. We do not believe that it is out of bounds for a school, knowing the missionaries it serves, to teach sex education or relationship classes, but for us to require or set guidelines for those subjects is beyond the scope of what we

see as appropriate involvement. We believe that permission to teach these subjects should come from the parents.

It was also mentioned that NTM USA should require that field leaders submit monthly status reports and keep record of field meetings that would clearly explain the issues discussed. Much has changed in the structure of NTM since the days considered in these investigations. In this day of globalization and the international Church, each field is autonomous. However, in the area of child safety, there are safeguards in place. Our USA protocol, which is required of all USA members and which is agreed upon by overseas leadership teams, requires that any child safety issue or allegation that surfaces regarding a member of NTM USA or a child of a USA member must be reported to our USA Child Protection team.

The recommendation was made that a report of an allegation overseas should be made to the local authorities. We appreciate the further mention in the recommendation that these reports should be made when it is in the best interest of the child. Unfortunately, reporting standards and procedures of some of the countries we work in are not on a comparable level to the current practices of the USA. Reports may not be mandatory, and local authorities may not be equipped to handle them. In some countries, current standard practice is that only the child (not a parent or another adult) can make the report, and the child would then be subject to interrogation by the local authorities. These and other situations could be very traumatic to a young child. We agree with the recommendations that reports should be made to local authorities overseas when it is in the best interest of the child. In addition, we always report to U.S. authorities when U.S. citizens are involved. We also believe that the parents (assuming that a parent is not the alleged offender) should have a voice in the reporting process overseas if it differs significantly from the U.S., so that the situation is handled in the best interest of the child. In addition to this reporting protocol, the NTM child safety procedures will be followed.

In closing, we are humbled and grateful for the teams and individuals who made this report possible. Thank you to each person for your honesty in speaking into a difficult situation.

### **Commitment to the Future**

The Executive Board of NTM USA would like to publicly reaffirm their commitment to the IHART process. We believe the thorough investigation of historical abuse allegations is the right thing to do.

Our original goals for this process have not changed. These are: to be certain that there is no current member of New Tribes Mission USA who has abused children; to give victims an avenue to tell their story; to offer a means for counseling for any victims who desire that; and to learn from the past to make our organization as safe as possible for all children.

## **Investigative Information**

For general information about IHART or information about specific investigations, go to [ihart.care](http://ihart.care). For those involved in specific investigations, a log-in to a password-protected page will be provided upon request.

## **Contact for Reports or Information**

If you have a story or information that you believe would be helpful to the IHART process, you are encouraged to contact IHART directly at:

Phone: 1-407-304-8476

Email: [contact@ihart.care](mailto:contact@ihart.care)

You may also contact New Tribes Mission USA directly at:

Phone: 1-407-547-2315

Email: [dcp@ntm.org](mailto:dcp@ntm.org)

If you are an NTM MK who would like information on help that is available to you, please use any of the contact listings above.

If you are someone or know of someone within NTM USA who may be experiencing abuse, please contact the authorities immediately and then the NTM USA Department of Child Protection at the contact listings above.