

# PAPUA NEW GUINEA HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

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NCA Campus: Road facing gym on right, school building on left

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IHART wants to thank all who testified in this long and difficult investigation. For some allegations, the Investigative Team is confident that it found the truth. For others, the truth is hidden in the fog of history and memory so that investigators could not be sure exactly what happened—the final truth will come out when God reveals the hidden things. The anonymous histories and accounts of abuse were shared with Ethnos360 (formerly NTM) and are being used to improve Ethnos360's child safety practices, leadership, and accountability.

# I. INTRODUCTION

This is a Summary Report of an investigation done by the Independent Historical Allegation Review Team (IHART), requested by Ethnos360.<sup>1</sup> This investigation examined historical allegations of child abuse at the New Tribes Mission field of Papua New Guinea (PNG). New Tribes Mission (NTM) is now Ethnos360. The allegations of child abuse investigated consisted of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as child-on-child abuse, inappropriate non-sexual behavior of adults toward children, and overall leadership culpability from Ethnos360's Papua New Guinea field from the 1960's until January 2004.

This public report summarizes the findings of the IHART Investigative Team for Papua New Guinea (PNG). Due to best practices and

the evidentiary standards for a private historical investigation, names of victim/survivors (V/S) and those culpable are not shared in this document.

Those who participated in this investigation showed great courage. For many, allegations of abuse also involved loved family or friends, and the truth was painful to discuss. For some, it was just *too* painful to discuss, and we understand this. Ethnos360 and IHART hope that the truths that IHART found will provide healing, and that the hurts that still remain hidden will be healed in their own way.



Numonohi Christian Academy founded 1966 (at this location 1970)

## II. 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 ASK FOR HIS GRACE AND WISDOM IN DEALING WITH IT.”

LARRY BROWN, CEO  
OF ETHNOS360

### A. BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS OF THIS INVESTIGATION

In 1997, victims of sexual abuse from the New Tribes Mission field in Fanda, Senegal made public their experiences of the sexual abuse they endured as Missionary Kids (MK) at the hands of their dorm parents. After the Senegal scandal, Ethnos360 began a large-scale change in policies and developed child protection protocols to provide consistency in handling abuse situations. One especially important policy change was to implement a zero tolerance policy on any form of child abuse. Any suspected abuse must be reported. In addition, Ethnos360 will not allow adults committing sexual abuse to ever return to the mission.

In 2009, Ethnos360 began the process of investigating the allegations of child abuse that occurred over the course of its history. Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (GRACE) conducted a full investigation of the allegations originating from Senegal. In 2010, GRACE concluded that abuse occurred and that

much of the behavior was criminal. In February 2011, the Independent Historical Allegations Review Team (IHART) commenced its investigation of allegations of historical child abuse on the mission fields of other countries, eventually including Papua New Guinea.

### B. PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INVESTIGATION

The IHART investigation is designed to be carried out independently; in an unbiased, comprehensive, and uninfluenced method; and in accordance with best practices. The task of the IHART Investigative Team was to pursue the truth on behalf of those making the allegations and those accused.



Rice Field in Casamance  
Region of Senegal

## **ETHNOS360 COMMISSIONED THE PNG INVESTIGATION FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**

- **To identify V/Ss of abuse and understand the truth about what happened to children on the PNG field;**
- **To value missionary kids and the suffering they endured by giving V/Ss a means to tell their story;**
- **To provide a means for counseling or other support services for any V/S who desires it;**
- **To identify the perpetrators of abuse, hold them accountable, and remove them from service if they are still members of Ethnos360;**
- **To report the outcome of this investigation to the appropriate authorities, to Ethnos360, and where appropriate to other organizations with which offenders may be associated;**
- **To identify ways for Ethnos360 to improve organizationally; and**
- **To provide information to improve child safety in the mission.**

Some may wonder why Ethnos360 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. Ethnos360's response is that it hopes to accomplish as many of the above goals as possible, but more importantly, wants to allow these efforts to give every possible opportunity for the redemption of the past. Ethnos360 leaders want to express to MKs that they value their lives and deeply regret the suffering they have endured.

As many readers know, several investigations for IHART were commissioned for other mission fields throughout the world. Because of the striking similarities in child protection issues in the early years of the mission fields and boarding schools, IHART has repeated relevant information in more than one report. In addition, there are obvious similarities in the IHART process. Finally, some of the stories and comments from MKs are strikingly similar from one field to another. Other portions will be different, as the Papua New Guinea field has characteristics unlike other fields.

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 purpose of this process is to widen knowledge and understanding of what happened and to seek truth, justice, and reconciliation, not to achieve absolute answers. To carry out this purpose and reach these goals, the Investigative Team attempted to do the following:

- Identify possible V/Ss of abuse;
- Seek their cooperation and accounts of the abuse they endured;
- Identify those responsible for the abuse;
- Evaluate whether responses from NTM/Ethnos360 leadership were adequate and appropriate;
- Report offenses to the appropriate authorities; and
- Generate findings for appropriate action to be taken by Ethnos360.

In order to accomplish these purposes for abuse allegations spanning almost half a century, the investigation was necessarily long and complex. Due to the complications of the global pandemic Covid19 happening in the middle of it, it was even longer.



### **C. OPEN STATEMENT FROM ETHNOS360**

As we approach 2023, Ethnos360 is thankful for the progress of the IHART Team in investigating the historical allegations of abuse in our past, though we regret that the process has been more complex, more cumbersome, and much lengthier than was originally envisioned. To the many MKs and individuals who have participated in this process, we are deeply indebted.

In 2011, our CEO, Larry Brown, wrote, "It has been heart-wrenching to process all of this but we are determined to continue to walk with integrity and to trust the Lord for wisdom to do the right thing." In 2012 he added, "We started this journey by stating that we were committed to humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God." These commitments have not changed.

Many changes have taken place over the past 20 years regarding child safety. These changes have largely occurred because of the honesty and bravery of the MKs who have spoken up. The world and our organization are not the same as they were at the turn of the century. We have policies, training, and a wide base of knowledgeable members. While no one can guarantee safety, with the training of parents and staff in our organization today, we believe that children are valued and well protected.

We understand that none of these improvements can alleviate the pain of those who were hurt by the adults and situations of their past. We sincerely apologize to those who were hurt, realizing that their process of working through this is difficult and ongoing.

We also appreciate the many hours that the investigators and Ms. Sidebotham have poured into this work. Without their efforts,

this process would not be where it is today. We are trusting the Lord to continue to show us any areas of failure, whether in our actions or practices.

Respectfully,  
Brian Coombs  
Director of Personnel, Executive Leadership Team  
Ethnos360

#### **D. OPEN LETTER FROM IHART INVESTIGATORS**

As IHART investigators, we are deeply committed to the truth, to bringing light to wrongs of the past, to bringing healing to those who have been harmed, and to providing justice for those who are accused. We get some common questions about our investigations, which is the reason for this letter.

When it comes to investigations, there are two standards of proof. The standard used in criminal prosecutions is “guilt beyond reasonable doubt.” For law enforcement investigations, the case will not go forward unless the prosecutor thinks that standard can be reached.

The standard used in civil cases is “preponderance of the evidence.” The “preponderance of evidence” standard is met if the allegations are more likely to be true than not true. Or put another way, there is a greater than fifty percent chance that the allegations are true. In the investigation of abuse allegations investigated by IHART, the standard used is that of “preponderance of evidence.”

Sometimes, those who are bringing allegations have asked investigators if this was a criminal case. IHART is not a criminal investigation process. A criminal prosecution is unlikely for two reasons. First, there are statutes of limitations, and most alleged abuse happened too long ago to fall within those time limits. Also, there is the issue of jurisdiction. For most allegations that IHART is investigating, law enforcement here in the United States does not have jurisdiction because the alleged incidents happened overseas. Nevertheless, part of IHART’s task is to report allegations, especially those of sexual abuse, with law enforcement agencies, as required by law. This is being done by IHART.

Investigators in law enforcement normally investigate a known crime or event that has occurred. However, IHART investigators are charged with investigating possible events and activity from the past, almost all from decades ago. Because of the passage of time, details of events may be lacking, exact accuracy of time and place may be impossible to determine, perceptions of observations may be in error, witnesses may be deceased or hard to find, and documents may be lost. Sometimes information comes to IHART randomly from many sources. That information must be analyzed in context with all the other information gathered.



IHART investigators explore records; ask others for their observations; receive accounts of alleged victims/survivors, witnesses, and alleged offenders; and make determinations. For us to reach a preponderance of the evidence, we look for corroboration and evidence that will take the assertions to "more likely to have occurred than not."

ALL possible evidence and facts in any matter are rarely ever discovered. Because of the realities of a historical investigation, we investigators, as well as those responsible for taking action, are limited by the information and facts that are disclosed, in order to support a conclusion and necessary action.

No matter what the outcome of the investigation, we recognize that it is hard for those making allegations and for witnesses to come forward and make their voices heard. It takes courage to do so. Investigators recognize and acknowledge that not all individuals are ready to open up for an interview with IHART. We respect your wishes and desire your healing and peace. We thank those witnesses who testified for others, pointing out that they may have been abused, and recognizing their pain. We also would like to share with you that even in cases where we did not reach a preponderance of the evidence, your stories will be included in the Master Report and shared anonymously with Ethnos360, to support positive changes in how missions interact with MKs.

Respectfully,  
The IHART Investigators for PNG

# III. TIME FRAME AND VOCABULARY

"WE MADE THE CALL AS WE SAW IT FROM HERE WITH THE INFORMATION THAT WE HAVE . . . I REALIZE I CAN BE LABELED AS ONE OF THOSE WHO DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THESE SITUATIONS, BUT I HAD TO TAKE THE INFORMATION I HAD AND AFTER LISTENING TO AS MUCH COUNSEL AS WE COULD BEFORE THE LORD, DO WHAT WE FELT WAS RIGHT."

NTM LEADER IN 2000 REGARDING INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS OF HISTORICAL ABUSE

## A. TIME FRAME AND MISSION NAME

The time frame investigated in this investigation was from 1965 to about 2002.<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, New Tribes Mission divided and became NTM USA and a number of other organizations. Then in 2017, NTM USA was changed to Ethnos360.

Throughout this document, IHART uses the name New Tribes Mission or NTM in the context of before April 2007 and Ethnos360 in the context of after April 2017.

## B. VOCABULARY

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. Here are some used by IHART, with an apology for any terms that unintentionally make people uncomfortable, as this is not the desire of IHART.

### 1. Victim/Survivor

Some persons who have suffered abusive behavior refer to themselves as a "victim." Others prefer the term "survivor." Here, IHART uses "V/S" to encompass both terms.<sup>3</sup>

### 2. Alleged Offender

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 determination that someone is an offender is not legally established—and only indicates that investigators have reached the point of "more likely than not" for an organizational investigation.

### 3. MKs

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.

### 4. Alleged

Perhaps the most controversial term used in the context of child abuse investigations is the modifier "alleged" placed before "victim" or "offender." Some persons object to the terms "alleged victim" (AV) and "alleged offender" (AO), arguing that such terms imply doubt of accusations of abuse. On the other hand, those accused of abuse (and their friends and family) are concerned about due process and not being labeled as offenders without corroboration. Once investigative findings have been made, the term "alleged" is dropped.

## **IV. STANDARDS AND DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

“WE ALL SAY GOD WILL HELP US, BUT THERE IS A TRAINING ASPECT . . . I THINK YEARS AGO THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME BRIEF ORIENTATION . . . BUT IT’S NOT LIKE THAT TODAY. . . THERE’S A LOT OF ONGOING TRAINING OUT THERE.”

NTM LEADER IN 2000 REGARDING INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS OF HISTORICAL ABUSE

NTM did not have any known published child abuse definitions for PNG field operations until the 2000s.

The Ethnos360/NTM Child Protection Manual, as revised in February 2011 and reaffirmed in Ethnos360/NTM Child Protection Handbook July 2014, has acknowledged the World Health Organization’s definitions of child abuse, and has patterned its own definitions after these internationally accepted guidelines.

Now, Ethnos360’s current definitions of abuse, which are discussed in more detail below, create a higher standard for the treatment of children. Therefore, Ethnos360 may consider certain behavior as child abuse even though it does not rise to the level of abuse required by the U.S. judicial system to seek prosecution. In a historical investigation, the standards of the past are also important.

### **A. EVALUATING CHILD ABUSE STANDARDS FOR THE PAST**

While Ethnos360 has current standards for abuse, one cannot uncritically apply contemporary standards to the past. Cultural perspectives and laws evolve. Someone should not be condemned for acting in a manner that was socially acceptable at the time, but today is unacceptable. On the other hand, the painful experiences of V/S cannot be discounted because the actions were socially acceptable at the time.

For an institutional inquiry into abuse as far back as the 1960s, IHART must consider the culture and the historical circumstances underlying the perceptions and responses toward abuse in the past, as well as present day standards.

In addition, NTM/Ethnos360 is and always has been a faith-based organization. The investigation evaluates individual behaviors and leadership responses in light of what was known at the time and what training personnel had. However,

NTM/Ethnos360 was and is a Christian institution operating on Biblical and moral principles. NTM/Ethnos360’s Christian ethos would have informed its understanding of the sinfulness and destruction of abuse and the need to protect children. This is particularly true of sexual abuse, as all behaviors considered sexual abuse today would have been Scripturally unacceptable at any time in the past.

### **B. HISTORICAL DEFINITIONS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Defining physical abuse in a historical investigation involves diverse and still evolving views and perceptions of corporal punishment for children to correct misbehavior. Even today, a spectrum of opinions exists as to what forms of corporal punishment constitute abuse and even whether any form of corporal punishment is ever acceptable.

## **1. Twentieth Century attitudes toward corporal punishment**

Corporal punishment is a form of physical punishment that is intended to cause mild pain to the body, with the idea that children will avoid similar misbehavior in the future for fear of bodily pain. It is an ancient form of punishment. When New Tribes Mission was founded in the early 1940s, corporal punishment of a child was broadly accepted in the United States and Papua New Guinea and was a socially acceptable means of disciplining children. Because of the normalcy of corporal punishment in that era, the scope of corporal punishment was consequently larger than it is today. Thus, actions such as paddling were a socially acceptable means of disciplining children, even in schools, whereas today corporal punishment in schools is almost unheard of.

Starting in the 1960s, attitudes toward corporal punishment began to change. Schools and institutions that had previously been unsparing in their administration of corporal punishment began to reconsider the use of implements such as belts, paddles, and rulers to administer discipline. Gradually, these institutions began to limit the severity and duration of corporal punishment, such as limiting the maximum numbers of strikes that could be inflicted, and required another adult to supervise the discipline.

### **THE CONSENSUS THAT BEGAN TO EVOLVE LATE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WAS THAT THE APPROPRIATENESS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT DEPENDED ON FACTORS SUCH AS:**

- The age of the child;
- Whether the child was of sufficient mental maturity or possessed the abilities to comprehend and conform his or her behavior to the expectations and demands made;
- The egregiousness and frequency of the behavior that prompted the punishment;
- The instruments used for discipline (belt, paddle, switch, hand, etc.);
- The number of strikes;
- The location on the child's body where contact was made and whether the place of contact was bare or covered with clothing;
- The demeanor of the adult administering discipline (whether the adult was angry or calm);
- The physical manifestations of the discipline on the child (bruising, welting, scarring, etc.); and
- Whether the person inflicting corporal punishment knew or should have known whether it would have an effect on the child's behavior and also the child's psyche or emotional balance.

While these factors were not necessarily listed specifically, they gradually became a cultural balancing test in the broader culture of the day. Under this test, many forms of mild corporal punishment were regarded as benign, while administrations of discipline that would have been considered a "beating" were condemned and regarded as abusive. Investigators did not automatically consider corporal punishment with an instrument causing some physical pain to be child abuse.

While the use of corporal punishment in schools gradually started to diminish throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the practice of spanking children in classrooms and dorms continued to be regarded as acceptable by many institutions. It was regarded as not only acceptable but necessary in the evangelical missionary context in which many MKs grew up during this time.

## 2. NTM's historical position on corporal punishment

Prior to the 1980s in NTM, there was little formal oversight of corporal punishment, if there

was any at all. In fact, there was strong teaching that corporal punishment was encouraged to "break the will of the child." Some interviewed said that adults/teachers were encouraged to spank until the child cried out for repentance, and to start spanking children young. Early in the 1960s and 1970s, adults had very little training on learning disabilities. Spanking would often be done for mistakes made in the classroom, and not always for bad behavior.

In early 1982, a young girl was paddled severely for "rebellious" behavior, which turned out to be involuntary and caused by a medical condition. Afterwards, new leadership was brought in at the school. In approximately 1983 to 1985, it was reported that the school board set several new policies in place, including requiring that two people be present during spankings and that the parents of the child be contacted before or after the discipline. Additionally, it was reported that around this time windows were installed on the doors in the school.

Over time, field policies gradually evolved but there were no broad official NTM policies until the 2000s.

## 3. Physical abuse and physical injury

This investigation operated on a definition of physical abuse, currently accepted, that involves some form of tangible injury such as welts, lacerations, bruising, or scars. While behavior may still be inappropriate or unacceptable, it is generally not considered physical abuse without physical injury.



NCA Campus: Door to office off library, has window into office.

TO BE CLEAR, THIS IS NOT A VALUE JUDGMENT ON THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE DISCIPLINE, AND ALSO DOES NOT MINIMIZE ACTUAL EMOTIONAL HARM DONE TO A CHILD.

## C. HISTORICAL DEFINITIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

As mentioned above, the moral standard for sexual abuse would not have changed much for religious organizations over time. Sexual abuse of children would readily have been identified as morally culpable in the Christian community. Sexual contact with children was absolutely a violation of Biblical standards about purity accepted by the Christian community and taught to the children. Even if the community did not have a clear understanding of child abuse, it had a clear understanding of immoral conduct in general.

THIS UNDERSTANDING COULD HAVE INFORMED A VIGOROUS RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ABUSE, BUT IN MANY CASES, THIS VIGOROUS RESPONSE DID NOT HAPPEN. ALSO, IN MANY CASES, ADULTS WERE NOT AWARE OF THE ABUSE.

In cases where they were not defended by an adequate adult response, a sense of moral culpability would have added to the shame of the child victims, because they also understood the conduct as immoral. In addition, the false construct of their moral culpability might have added to the silence of the victims. This sense of culpability arose because missionary children in PNG were raised in a purity culture. They heard throughout their childhoods in church, school, and at home to keep their bodies pure for marriage, and not to engage in any kind of sexual activity because their bodies were a temple. To then have people in authority, teachers and spiritual leaders, using their bodies sexually, to be touched with a sexual intent that they did not consent to, caused V/Ss to experience a spiritual and psychological dissonance of such magnitude that many have never recovered.

A partial reason for the inadequate response to abuse, including lack of awareness that it could or did happen, is that understanding and

perceptions around sexual abuse have also evolved over time within United States culture. Before the mid-1970s, the clinical and professional understanding of what constituted "sexual abuse" was generally limited to sexual violence perpetrated by strangers. There was very little recognition, let alone understanding, of non-violent sexual abuse perpetrated by family or friends. In such instances, child victims were often regarded as being complicit in the conduct. While such conduct was regarded as taboo and inappropriate, it was not considered to be harmful to child victims, especially for victims who were boys.

IN THE UNITED STATES, ABUSE REPORTING LAWS STARTED BEING ENACTED IN THE LATE 1960S, THOUGH THEY WERE NOT UNIVERSAL UNTIL MANY YEARS LATER. HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE LATE 1970S THAT THE PSYCHIATRIC COMMUNITY BEGAN TO RECOGNIZE THE LONG-TERM NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ON V/SS. EVEN THEN, ABUSE PREVENTION WAS STILL FOCUSED ON "STRANGER DANGER." NOT UNTIL THE MID-1980S DID PROFESSIONALS BEGIN TO ACKNOWLEDGE HOW COMMON AND HOW DESTRUCTIVE SEXUAL ABUSE WAS.

The clinical and professional understanding of sexual abuse was mirrored in the culture, and likely negatively impacted the understanding of those such as parents and administrators in NTM, who often badly misunderstood what they were hearing. In sum, leaders would have understood the actions as wrong in that day, but the standards of what would be considered an adequate response to the wrongdoing have changed greatly, as the cultural understanding of the deep harm of child sexual abuse has evolved with research and study.

## **D. UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE IN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Thus, 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. Likewise, NTM missionaries would have a limited understanding of what to watch for or how to protect their children.

Missions began to develop child protection policies in the mid to late 1990s and began to develop procedures of organizational abuse investigations in the early 2000s. While this was not inconsistent with the major organizations in the U.S. that worked with children, there was likely also some delay for mission organizations to catch up with contemporary research in the field.

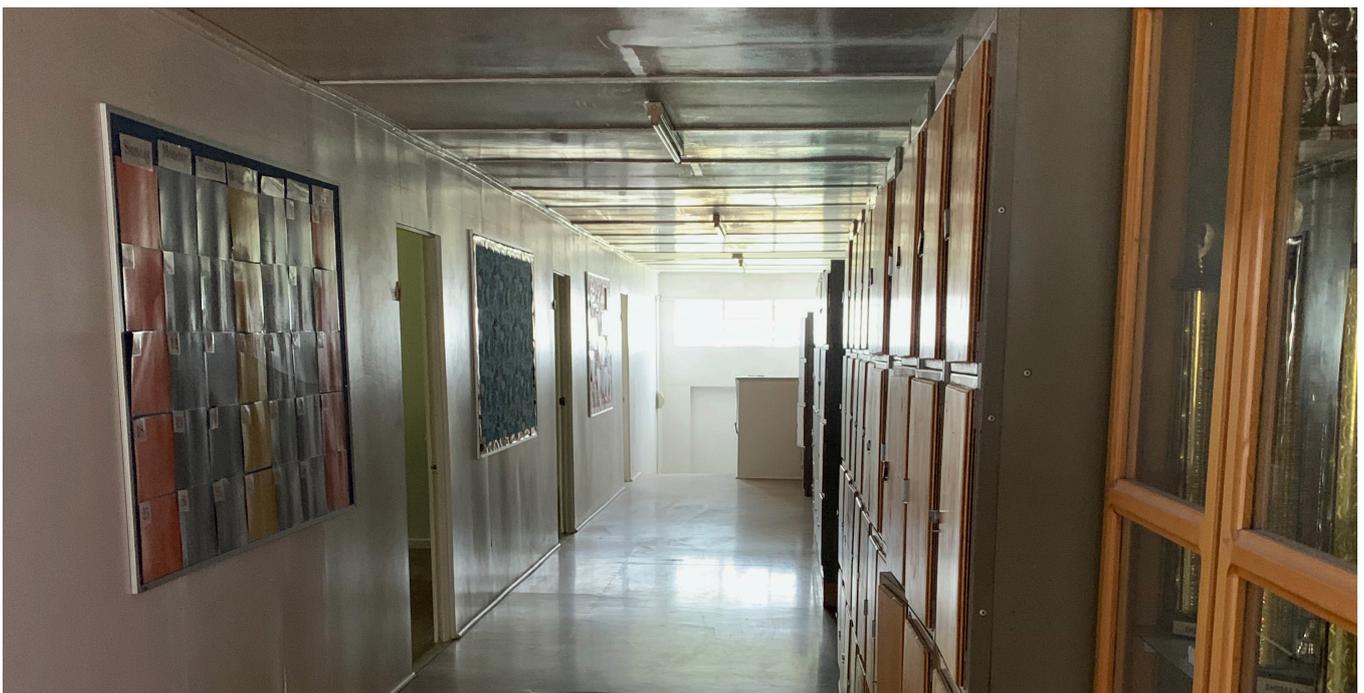
With greater research and understanding, child protection standards have changed

greatly and become much more stringent. Organizations are doing better at understanding organizational responsibility for keeping children safe and putting plans into place both for prevention and for reporting and dealing with issues.

## **E. HISTORICAL ABUSE REPORTS**

An investigation of historical abuse involves a look into the past. Many of the reports for this investigation were significantly delayed for decades until the last few years (and we believe some have never reported). It is important to understand that this delay is normal, particularly where the V/Ss 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.

At the time that much of the abuse happened, neither parents nor mission authorities were aware of what was going on. When incidents did come to light, parents and mission authorities made attempts to deal with the situation. Sometimes situations were effectively dealt with, and sometimes not.



## F. 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>4</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 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.

## G. ETHNOS360'S CURRENT DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

While Ethnos360's current definitions of abuse cannot be used uncritically to evaluate the past, it is helpful for V/SS to know the current standards and protection that are being afforded to children today.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST EXPRESSED REASONS FOR V/SS TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INVESTIGATION IS TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN TODAY ARE PROTECTED.

### 1. Physical Abuse

Ethnos360's current Child Safety Handbook<sup>5</sup> defines "physical abuse" as follows:

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in the threat of non-accidental physical harm or in actual non-accidental physical harm from an interaction within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. Inflicted physical injury most often represents unreasonably severe corporal punishment or unjustified punishment. Physical abuse may involve single or repeated incidents.

Appendix A of Ethnos360's Child Safety Handbook further explains:

Unjustified punishment could be defined as "including, but not limited to, punishing a child for accidents (i.e. a child who wets his bed) or punishing a child who is too young to understand the punishment or punishing a child who did not violate any family, school or organization rule."

Additionally, the Handbook continues that severe corporal punishment<sup>6</sup> could include punching a child with a closed or partially closed fist, kicking, burning, shaking, biting, throwing, cutting, or choking a child. It also may include slapping a child on the face.

## **2. Sexual Abuse**

Ethnos360 has patterned its overall definitions of abuse after those set forth by the World Health Organization. There were several allegations of sexual abuse in the PNG field. During the timeframe of most of the abuse, NTM did not have specific definitions of abuse. However, as discussed, the understanding of sexual abuse has not changed greatly in the evangelical community, in terms of what type of activity is considered wrong. What has changed is the understanding of how it can occur and how organizations should respond to allegations.

Ethnos360 has taken the position that not all forms of sexual abuse are physical. Therefore, Ethnos360's sexual abuse definition is more complex than physical abuse because of the subtleties of some forms of sexual abuse.

### **ETHNOS360'S CHILD SAFETY HANDBOOK DEFINES "SEXUAL ABUSE" AS FOLLOWS:**

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.

Sexual activity as defined above may sometimes take place between minors. Ethnos360's Child Safety Handbook defines when normal sexual curiosity becomes sexual abuse. The Handbook states that "sexually harmful behavior between minors needs to be differentiated from normal sexual curiosity. By definition, child sexual abuse between minors occurs without consent, without equality or as a result of coercion."<sup>7</sup>

## **3. Emotional Abuse**

### **ETHNOS360'S CHILD SAFETY HANDBOOK DEFINES "EMOTIONAL ABUSE" AS FOLLOWS:**

Emotional abuse is defined as acts toward a child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. Acts could be patterns of constant belittling, denigrating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, unrealistic expectations and demands, or other non-physical forms of hostility.

While other forms of abuse, like sexual or physical, also cause emotional harm they are not typically defined as emotional abuse.

## 4. Other Prohibited Conduct

In some cases, activity, particularly if it did not involve touch, may not have been intended or perceived as sexual abuse, but was still inappropriate behavior. IHART also made findings and conclusions about this type of behavior.

Ethnos360 has published additional definitions in its document entitled *Ethnos360 and Child Safety*, written by Brian Coombs, Director of Personnel and Child Safety. These definitions help to clarify what is and what is not sexual abuse and what constitute dismissible offenses.

### Boundary<sup>8</sup> Violation

An incident of socially inappropriate behavior without sexual intent; a violation of someone's personal space that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe; usually consisting of unwanted feelings, words, images, and/or physical contact. Dismissal is not necessary if boundary violations can be corrected.

### Sexual Misconduct

The involving of a child in behavior that is greater than a boundary violation, but not at the level of sexual abuse. This behavior results in the adult being dismissed.

### Grooming<sup>9</sup>

Building an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. This behavior results in the adult being dismissed.

### Pedophilia

A sexual perversion in which an adult has sexual fantasies about or engages in sexual acts with a prepubescent child. Ethnos360's definition of sexual abuse is much broader than this. Thus, Ethnos360 dismisses anyone for violation of its sexual abuse policies, not just acts of pedophilia. Dismissal for violating sexual abuse policies does not mean the sexual abuse was pedophilic.

## H. CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE

In addition to child abuse perpetrated by adults in PNG, this investigation also inquired into allegations of child-on-child conduct. While child-on-child or peer-on-peer acts are not generally considered to constitute child abuse, but rather inappropriate behavior, there are exceptions under certain circumstances. For example, if there is an age difference between the two children of three years or more, or some other power disparity exists, or if the conduct was forcible, such as rape, peer-on-peer activity will be analyzed under the rubric of abuse.

**EVEN IF IT IS CATEGORIZED AS INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR, PEER-ON-PEER BULLYING OR OTHER INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITY CAN BE HIGHLY TRAUMATIZING TO THE VICTIMS OF SUCH CONDUCT.**

# V. EVIDENTIARY STANDARDS AND REPORTING

This section discusses some of the standards applied in the investigation, from receiving evidence to evaluating it, to the distinctions from a criminal investigation.

## A. INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH

Best practices in an investigation require that the Investigative Team approach the evidence with no presuppositions as to whether the allegations are true or false, or as to whether an individual accused is guilty or not guilty. An investigation should avoid either an “innocent until proven guilty” or a “guilty until proven innocent” standard, but take an entirely neutral position. Therefore, persons alleged to have committed abuse are referred to as “alleged offenders.” Once the allegations are corroborated, persons are referred to as “offenders.” Someone bringing an allegation may be referred to as an “alleged victim” until the allegations are corroborated.

As noted, the standard of evidence used in this investigation is not that of a criminal judicial proceeding. Additionally, the definitions of the various forms of abuse do not mirror any particular criminal statute.

THEREFORE, FINDING THAT A PERSON IS AN “OFFENDER” DOES NOT ESTABLISH THAT HE OR SHE IS ALSO CRIMINAL AND DOES NOT HAVE LEGAL SIGNIFICANCE. CONVERSELY, THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO CORROBORATE SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A PERSON DOES NOT MEAN THE PERSON HAS BEEN EXONERATED, AND IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE ACTIONS DID NOT OCCUR—JUST THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN CORROBORATED BY THIS INVESTIGATION.



**NCA Campus: Tennis and basketball courts**

## **B. STANDARDS OF EVIDENCE**

When investigating, an Investigative 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 STANDARD IS EASIER TO MEET. IF THE EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT THERE IS MORE THAN 50% CHANCE THAT THE ACTIONS TOOK PLACE, THEN THE STANDARD IS MET AND 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. THIS IS THE STANDARD THAT IHART USES.

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%.

## **C. EVALUATING CREDIBILITY**

In terms of how the Investigative Team determined whether allegations were supported by a preponderance of the evidence, investigators placed the highest credibility on evidence documented close to the time when the alleged abuse occurred. Information from historical documents was also assigned a high level of credibility.

While the Investigative Team also relied substantially on individual testimony as evidence, they took into consideration that these events occurred many years ago, sometimes several decades in the past. Personal memories may not be reliable, and memories shared with others or shared publicly can often contaminate others' memories. When this happens, it is not intentional on the part of the witness. But it is true that very old memories can sometimes be flawed. At times, there was evidence of individual testimony close to the time of the event, and that testimony received

greater weight. Nevertheless, individual testimony was very important, whether given contemporaneously or much later.

In many cases, the Investigative Team was able to substantiate allegations with credible and independent information from other witnesses or from documentary evidence.

Even when allegations could not be corroborated, witnesses' recollections were not discounted but were important in forming an overall picture of life and culture at the NTM fields in Papua New Guinea and were thus helpful for background and context to help understand the historical situation.

#### **D. CRIMINAL STANDARDS AND REPORTING**

Some of the witnesses in this investigation asked whether allegations were or could become a criminal case. This is not a criminal investigation. Only a governmental entity has prosecutorial powers to indict or charge criminals or to impose criminal sanctions.

While many of the instances of abuse constitute criminal conduct, the statutes of limitations applicable in the respective jurisdictions in which V/Ss and offenders now live make criminal prosecution unlikely. Much of the abuse occurred several decades ago and would be too old to prosecute in many jurisdictions.

Nevertheless, part of the responsibility for the investigation is to make appropriate reports to law enforcement authorities or other entities.



NCA Campus: High school staircase where original library was located

# VI. INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS AND COMPONENTS

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This section discusses the IHART process in particular, going into detail on how the investigation was set up and executed.

## A. OVERVIEW OF IHART'S COMMISSION

In 2017, IHART began its independent investigative review of child abuse allegations on the PNG field.

IHART has the duties to receive and investigate allegations of child sexual abuse, moderate to severe physical abuse, and severe emotional abuse, find out the truth where possible, and preserve confidentiality within defined parameters (for example, law enforcement action may make full confidentiality impossible). Some have asked why IHART does not seek out and investigate less severe emotional or physical abuse. While in no way denying the important impact that these forms of abuse can have on the V/S, in IHART's experience, it has proven almost impossible to reliably investigate such allegations, because of changing cultural standards and evidentiary issues over decades. However, when V/Ss bring their stories forward, IHART listens and captures the stories that V/Ss wish to tell, regardless of the type of misconduct alleged. Even if they cannot be substantiated, they are included anonymously in the Master Report.

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 Ethnos360 personnel;
- Recommend outcomes for individuals who violated either the law or the policies of Ethnos360, as offenders or as leaders;
- Connect individuals who have been hurt with helping resources; and
- Make reports to law enforcement as appropriate.

## **B. ROLE OF COORDINATOR**

The IHART Coordinator is responsible to appoint Investigative Teams, provide any training needed, keep the investigation on track, communicate with Ethnos360 in requesting documents, give generalized reports to Ethnos360 about how the investigation is progressing, post public updates, handle budgetary matters, bring together a Recommendations Panel, and coordinate the writing of all Summary Reports and Statements of Findings.

The IHART Coordinator does not perform interviews or make factual findings, though the Coordinator may provide supplemental information on legal standards and best practices. Interviewing and making factual findings are the responsibility of the Investigative Teams, as is writing the Master Report. Because the IHART Coordinator out of necessity works with some Ethnos360 personnel over a long period of time, she avoids interviewing and fact-finding, which helps to keep that process independent.

The Coordinator of this investigation is Theresa Sidebotham, managing attorney of Telios Law, PLLC. In her role as Coordinator of this investigation, Ms. Sidebotham received assistance from other Telios Law staff, who helped to process and organize documents, maintain the IHART.care website, draft communications, and other equally important tasks. Ms. Sidebotham retained independent investigators to serve on the Investigative Team.

## **C. ROLE OF INVESTIGATIVE TEAMS**

IHART WORKS WITH INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATORS WHO ARE EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS, TRAINED IN LAW ENFORCEMENT OR OTHER GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS. THE INVESTIGATIVE TEAMS HAVE NO DIRECT CONTACT WITH ETHNOS360 OTHER THAN INTERVIEWING ETHNOS360 PERSONNEL, MEMBERS, OR FORMER MEMBERS AS NEEDED. THIS IS STRUCTURED TO PRESERVE THEIR INDEPENDENCE.

The Investigative Team consisted of six independent professional investigators. The members of the Investigative Team are trained as state and federal law enforcement officers, private industry investigators, or psychologists.

Collectively, the investigators have decades of experience in child abuse and historical child abuse investigations. Some members of the Investigative Team have significant experience in mission school abuse cases from around the world.

The Investigative Team reviewed thousands of pages of documents, including relevant materials from Ethnos360 files identifying reports or incidents of abuse.

Investigators reached out to potential witnesses, including V/Ss, AOs, and leaders. Many who were contacted chose to be interviewed, and others declined. For those who agreed to be interviewed, the investigators gathered information and conducted in-person interviews. (For those who are members of Ethnos360 and who are not V/Ss, Ethnos360 requires them to participate.)

For the Papua New Guinea investigation, IHART expresses gratitude to those who chose to be interviewed and respects the privacy of those V/Ss who chose to decline.

FOR THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA INVESTIGATION, IHART EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO THOSE WHO CHOSE TO BE INTERVIEWED AND RESPECTS THE PRIVACY OF THOSE V/SS WHO CHOSE TO DECLINE.



The Investigative Team analyzed information, made factual findings, and combined all of those findings into a comprehensive Master Report. Once they had finished the Master Report, they submitted it to the Coordinator.

Investigators work independently, with some guidance and feedback from the IHART Coordinator. However, making factual findings is their responsibility and not the Coordinator's, and the Master Report is their work.

This Master Report makes factual findings as best as can be determined. Then all names of those alleging abuse and other witnesses are redacted in the Master Report. The redacted report is provided to the Recommendations Panel and to the Ethnos360 Executive Leadership Team. (Interview notes or other supporting material or identifying material are not provided to Ethnos360, per IHART policy and Ethnos360 instruction.)

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. This is necessary for the process to be as fair and impartial as possible.

#### **D. ROLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS PANELS FOR AO AND LEADER CULPABILITY**

Once the IHART Investigative Team has generated a Master Report with detailed factual findings, a Recommendations Panel meets. The Panel is comprised both of persons who have mission field experience and have professional credentials. The following types of experience are represented: cross-cultural experience; pastoral experience; counseling experience;

leadership experience; missionary parent experience; and being an MK. A Panel is comprised of people who are impartial. They should have no bias toward either V/S or AO, and should have no direct connection with the fields or the individual investigations. Also, they can have no current employment with Ethnos360. The Coordinator and Lead Investigator attend the meetings to serve as resources, but are not decision-makers or official Panel members.

The Panel reviews the Master Report generated by the Investigative Team. The Panel makes recommendations to the Ethnos360 Executive Leadership Team (ELT), which then uses these recommendations in making final administrative determinations.

In the PNG investigation, a Recommendations Panel made recommendations to the Ethnos360 ELT on the Panel's evaluation of the findings contained in the Master Report.

#### **E. ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM**

The ELT reviews the findings of the Master Report to learn the stories of the V/Ss and evaluate where the mission can move forward. The ELT also reviews the Recommendations of the Panel and, accepts or rejects the Panel's Recommendations. In the case of abuse in PNG, the ELT accepted all of the Panel's Recommendations but imposed more severe discipline against several individuals.

It is also important to note that, for this inquiry, Larry Brown and Brian Shortmeier, who had served on the PNG field, were recused from anything to do with the inquiry and from participating in the ELT's consideration of and acceptance of the Panel's recommendations.

## F. REQUIRED PARTICIPATION IN THE INVESTIGATION

Ethnos360 expects members to participate in the investigative process, as needed. Refusal to participate may lead to administrative action up to dismissal. This applies to AOs and to leadership, but does not apply to those who may be V/Ss, since V/Ss always have the choice whether or not to share their history. If a V/S declines to be interviewed, that person's perspective and knowledge cannot be included in the Master Reports.

In the case of the PNG investigation, since this field is so large, the MK group is also very large. Friends inevitably drop out of any group trying to stay connected, but the size of the original group in this case made the group of those interested in staying connected significant. The closeness of this group of MKs was very apparent. While some chose to participate in the investigation, some did not. Reasons for not participating appeared to include distrust for Ethnos360 leadership, fear that a report would implicate a sibling or friend, and fear that nothing would be accomplished. Many of the MK V/Ss had already made their peace and some had reconciled with other MKs who abused them.

IHART knows that because some MKs did not participate, there may be more information that could be obtained about abuse in PNG. Yet those who did participate gave a fairly detailed picture of the field.

If an AO was not a member, refusal to interview carried no consequences like it does for those who are still members. However, when AOs decline to be interviewed, they lose the opportunity to rebut allegations that have been made against them, which may make it more likely that the allegations will be substantiated.



## G. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PUBLICITY STANDARDS

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

Most V/Ss and many witnesses prefer not to reveal their identities to Ethnos360. IHART takes care to keep confidential the names of those alleging abuse, as that is part of its commission from Ethnos360. 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 Ethnos360 and is accessible only to the IHART Coordinator.

Some V/Ss want their history personally acknowledged as part of the healing process. This is the individual's choice, not the choice of Ethnos360 or IHART. This choice may also change at different points in the individual's personal journey and should be respected.

ETHNOS360 STANDS READY TO RECEIVE THESE PERSONAL HISTORIES AND TO HAVE PERSONAL MEETINGS, IF THAT IS DESIRED. ETHNOS360 OFFERS THIS IN ITS INDIVIDUAL APOLOGY LETTERS TO EACH V/S.

While confidentiality plays a vital role for some V/Ss in helping them feel safe to come forward, keeping V/S and witness names confidential also weakens the investigation. Because these names are not revealed without permission to AOs 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 organizational investigation and a criminal investigation. In an organizational investigation, the confidentiality of V/Ss 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, Ethnos360 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 usually not be shared broadly.<sup>10</sup> 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 IHART 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.

## **H. STATEMENT OF FINDINGS AND SUMMARY REPORT**

Packets are prepared for those who participated in the investigation, both those alleging that they were abused and also those who were accused of abuse or leadership culpability. A letter from IHART, Statement of Findings, and a Summary Report are included in the packet for each of those individuals. All V/Ss are also provided apology letters from Ethnos360. An administrative outcome letter is prepared and included for each identified offender or culpable leader. Also, in the case of the Papua New Guinea investigation, this Summary Report will be sent to witnesses.



BECAUSE OF THE SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION, AND BECAUSE ALLEGATIONS MAY BE AMBIGUOUS AT TIMES, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A V/S OR WITNESS COULD BE INADVERTENTLY MISSED IN THIS FINAL PROCESS. IF ANYONE FEELS THAT IS THE CASE, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY LET THE IHART COORDINATOR KNOW AT CONTACT@IHART.CARE.

The material gathered for the investigation will be collected by the IHART Coordinator and archived appropriately.

## **I. REPORTS TO AUTHORITIES**

IHART MAKES CHILD ABUSE REPORTS TO THE AUTHORITIES. ANY ALLEGATION THAT SEEMS CREDIBLE ON ITS FACE, INVOLVES A LIVING AO, HAS NOT BEEN REPORTED, AND IS OF A TYPE OF ALLEGATION THAT COULD POTENTIALLY CONCERN LAW ENFORCEMENT,<sup>11</sup> RESULTS IN A REPORT. IT IS 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 does a final review of reports to authorities already accomplished and additional reports are made as necessary.

# VII. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR INVESTIGATION

“WHEN YOU HEAR WHAT WENT ON YOU HAVE TO WONDER WHAT LEADERSHIP WAS THINKING. I KNOW THAT WE PROBABLY CAN’T RECONSTRUCT WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAKING RESPONSIBILITY, BUT IS THERE A WAY TO SAY THAT WE HAVE LOOKED AT THE ISSUE AND WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT IT WOULDN’T HAPPEN AGAIN?”

NTM LEADER IN 2000 REGARDING AN INVESTIGATION INTO HISTORICAL ABUSE

This section explains the historical context of the investigation, both NTM’s founding and also the history of schooling and child safety.



First NTM Bolivia Missionaries

## A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF NTM’S FOUNDING

Ethnos360, formerly known as New Tribes Mission (NTM), was founded in 1942 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The first country where it sent missionaries was Bolivia. Today, Ethnos360 has missionaries and their families serving in 20 countries all around the world.

### Ethnos360's website states:

Ethnos360 is steadfast in its goal of reaching people who have no access to the Gospel. That was the vision for our ministry when we were founded in 1942 as New Tribes Mission, and it is our vision today. Paul Fleming and five others had no funds or organization behind them when they dared to trust God and establish NTM. “It seemed that the Lord had pushed us into something, and we were confident that no man started New Tribes Mission; the Lord brought it into existence in spite of us,” Paul wrote.<sup>12</sup>

# 2

COUNTRIES SHARING  
ONE ISLAND

# 1975

LAST YEAR PNG WAS  
UNDER AUSTRALIAN  
RULE

# 1950

FIRST YEAR NTM  
STARTED SERVING  
IN PNG

## B. OVERVIEW OF FIELD OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG)

New Guinea is an island north of Australia. It is divided into two countries, Indonesia on the western half, and Papua New Guinea on the eastern half. Until 1975, PNG was under Australian rule. In those years, the government would send out "patrol officers" to the various tribal locations, to maintain governmental control. The trade language of PNG is *Tok Pisin* or "Pidgin," and many tribes made sure they had at least one elder who spoke it, so they could deal with the outside world.

New Tribes Mission published a magazine titled *Brown Gold* from 1943 to 1999. According to an article, "The Challenge of Papua New Guinea," in a 1990 issue about the 40th anniversary of NTM's work in PNG, NTM started serving in PNG in 1950. One of the first families to arrive was the Driver family, and they served in the area known as Morobe with the Hamtai Tribe. Now NTM PNG is working with 34 different tribal groups.

In the 1950s, when NTM came into PNG, missionaries worked with the government and patrol officers to obtain permission to reach tribes of the interior jungle. At the time, there were other religious organizations in PNG; however, NTM was unique because it wanted to live and work with the tribal people directly in order to better reach them. In the 1960s, the government asked NTM to open and operate bilingual schools; first elementary schools and then "high school" for 7th to 10th grades.

Under the government's direction, NTM was able to reach isolated tribes to learn their languages and cultures, teach them to read and write, and to introduce them to Jesus Christ. Over time, the government opened up access to more tribal groups, allowing NTM to advance further into the jungles and have more of an impact on the tribal people.

In the 1960s, with more and more lands and tribes being opened up, there was an increased demand for support staff. Thus, there was a large influx of NTM missionaries into the Highlands, and eventually the Sepik and Island regions.



Google, Imagery ©2022 TerraMetrics, Map data ©2022

## C. SCHOOLING FOR CHILDREN IN PNG

By 1965, the need for boarding schools for the children of missionaries (MKs) became more apparent. This was before the era of homeschooling, and tribal missionaries needed to educate their children. In 1966, the NTM Field Committee opened the first school at the Oliguti base. After a number of years, it was decided to move the school to the base where the headquarters and the majority of support work was being done, at Numonohi, later called Lapilo.

In the beginning, lack of adequate transportation was a major issue, and so great sacrifices were made by missionary families to send their children to school. Finally, in 1975 when NTM Aviation arrived in PNG, it became a little easier, but was still difficult. For a number of years, NTM set up schools in the Sepik region and also at Hoskins, WNBP, in order to address the lack of adequate transportation and need to send MKs to school. However, both facilities closed, and Numonohi Christian Academy (NCA) became New Tribes Mission's only school in PNG.

The Numonohi Christian Academy was initiated in 1966, near Goroka in the Eastern Highlands Province of the island of New Guinea. The school opened in about 1971 and is still open today.

### From the NCA website:

In the beginning, school was held at the original Oliguti property in the heart of the Yagaria tribe. Its purpose was to meet the educational needs of the ever-increasing numbers of children of NTM in PNG. Grades 1–3 met in an old bush house and grades 5–9 met in the Field Representative's office. There were 21 students.

In September 1966, a lease was granted for the present property at Lapilo. The move was made so a proper school facility could be built with room for expansion as the student population increased. There was also a need for sports fields, better access to medical facilities and easier opportunities for supplies from Goroka. Depending on the road conditions, the supply run from Oliguti could take two days, but the new Numonohi property was located just 15 km from town.

By early 1967, work had begun to develop the property. February 1, 1971 was the start of the first term at Numonohi. Sixty-one students in K–12 met in the four classrooms in the first building. In 1973 a separate building was built and designated just for the elementary grades.

In 1988, the high school built a major addition which housed five classrooms (including a science lab) and a library. In 1992 a music and industrial arts building was constructed.

The newest elementary building was also completed during 1992. This building has individual rooms for Grades 1–6 as well as an elementary library which was renovated and expanded in 1997. The old elementary building continues to house the Grade 4 and 5 classrooms, as well as provide space for middle and high school classes and an elementary office.

Through the years a gymnasium (1980) and an outdoor sports complex (1998) were added, along with several dormitories. The high school library was expanded (1998), and the gymnasium was expanded to include bleachers and an improved stage (2005). The sports field continues to be leveled and improved. A sports locker room with showers and changing facilities was completed in 2017. Renovation of the school-wide computer lab is the next project.<sup>13</sup>

There was a second high school located in Hoskins called the Malango School. It opened August 31, 1988 and closed May 2011. Additionally, there was a multi-mission school located in Wewak, PNG, named the Seaside Academy. It also later closed.

## D. BOARDING SCHOOL CULTURE

While a number of abuse allegations from PNG related to dorm parents and other school settings, the practice of sending children to boarding school, even without abuse, affected many children very negatively. Because of that, it can be helpful to understand the history of boarding schools. This discussion relates to boarding schools (generally) and NTM boarding schools (also generally), but not to a particular field such as PNG.

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, missions 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 included 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 believed that MKs who 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 in that era 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. (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 field to send their children to live at a missionary boarding school.

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. 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 their parents. What made it much worse was that children went to boarding school at age six (or occasionally younger).

MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THESE CHILDREN WERE NOT MATURE ENOUGH TO BE SEPARATED FROM THEIR PARENTS.

Many MKs explained that leaving 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 research that categorizes it as neglect or abuse, particularly in that era. 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 children never were able to establish close family relationships, and essentially suffered from attachment disorders.

WORSE, THE SCHOOLS SOMETIMES HAD A HARSH OR EVEN ABUSIVE ENVIRONMENT. IN ADDITION TO THE SEPARATION ISSUES, IHART INVESTIGATORS HAVE HEARD STUDENTS COMPLAIN 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. Some 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 to their parents 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 childcare principles.

**ADEQUATE REPORTING STRUCTURES DID NOT EXIST IN BOARDING SCHOOLS IN THE DAYS BEFORE CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES, 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. Ethnos360 no longer requires it, and very few children with the mission worldwide go to boarding school.

## **E. CURRENT FIELD STATUS**

### **NTM PNG CURRENTLY RUNS ONE SCHOOL, NUMONOHI CHRISTIAN ACADEMY AT LAPILO.**

## **F. 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 situations. 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>14</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 a foreign field like PNG lagged behind the general culture by perhaps two decades.

NTM child safety policies were neither significantly ahead of the general understanding in the culture, nor were they significantly behind. Our culture's understanding of child safety issues has changed considerably since that time and continues to grow and change. Ethnos360 makes significant efforts to stay current.

## **G. VARIED EXPERIENCES**

Certainly not all children were abused. Many never experienced any form of abuse. Some may have experienced excessive corporal punishment or emotional abuse, but they did not consider what happened to them abuse and so did not participate in the investigation or feel the need to revisit old memories. Some were not abused but have grief and damage from the separation from their parents through boarding school—and this separation added to the pain of abuse for others. Of those who were abused, some are not doing well. Others have gotten counseling, sought healing, grown spiritually, and reconciled to others and themselves.

## VIII. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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“IF ISSUES WOULD HAVE COME OUT OF COURSE WE WOULD HAVE DEALT WITH THEM THE BEST WE KNEW HOW . . . IT’S A SIN THING, AND SO WE WOULD’VE DEALT WITH IT. NOW THERE’S A GOOD CHANCE THAT WE WOULDN’T HAVE DEALT WITH IT ACCORDING TO ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM WE HAVE TODAY, BUT WE WOULDN’T HAVE TURNED A BLIND EYE TO IT.”

NTM LEADER REGARDING CHILD ABUSE IN THE  
20TH CENTURY

This section summarizes where the information for the investigation came from. Investigators reviewed a multitude of documents and conducted in-depth and lengthy interviews of witnesses. Investigators also used documentation of interviews or information gathered previously.

### A. HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

The Investigative Team reviewed a great number of documents over decades that were concurrent in time with either alleged incidents of abuse or with the tenures of relevant staff, victims, and witnesses in NTM. This corpus of historical documents, consisting of thousands of pages, included the following categories of records:

- NTM Board Minutes, and Executive Action Minutes, and other Board records;
- Minutes and records of NTM Executive and Field Committees;
- Faculty meeting reports and records;
- Enrollment data, records, NTM applications, and related staff evaluations;
- Historic written correspondence discussing matters relevant to allegations, offenders, and V/Ss;
- School yearbooks;
- Personnel files for staff who were alleged offenders or otherwise persons of interest;
- Field Reports; and
- Historic photographs of students, staff, and grounds in PNG.

## **B. GATHERING ALLEGATIONS**

ALLEGATIONS WERE GATHERED IN SEVERAL WAYS. IN MANY CASES, WITNESSES OR V/SS REACHED OUT EITHER TO ETHNOS360 DIRECTLY OR TO THE IHART COORDINATOR, WHO CONNECTED THEM WITH THE INVESTIGATIVE TEAM.

In other cases, allegations were received from other NTM MKs, and the Investigative Team followed up with the alleged V/Ss. There were also witnesses or V/Ss who published online posts.

For some allegations, investigators were either not able to obtain sufficient information to support the allegations, 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. Others were accused of actions that would have been considered abuse, but evidence supporting the allegations did not allow the Investigative Team to reach a finding by a preponderance of the evidence.

## **C. WITNESS INTERVIEW TESTIMONY**

The Investigative Team formally interviewed many witnesses, including alleged V/Ss, alleged offenders, former employees, former administrators, and other persons with relevant information. The Investigative Team contacted and received information from many others who did not sit for a formal, full-length interview.

In some instances, a full-length interview was not necessary because the witnesses were not bringing allegations, and in other instances, witnesses chose not to interview. While there were a number of people whom the Investigative Team would prefer to have interviewed, the

Team understood that people process trauma differently and at different rates. Some individuals were not ready to share their stories, and the Investigative Team respected that. While this meant that sometimes abuse could not be corroborated, this is unavoidable due to the nature of traumatic events. At a number of points, the Master Report indicates that abuse may have happened that could not be corroborated.

In addition, due to the very lengthy time span since the alleged actions, some potential witnesses had died, were too ill to interview, or otherwise had become unavailable.

MEMBERS OF THE INVESTIGATIVE TEAM TRAVELED ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS INTERNATIONALLY TO CONDUCT IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS. BECAUSE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAPPENED DURING THE COURSE OF THIS INVESTIGATION, SOME OF THE INTERVIEWS HAD TO BE CONDUCTED VIRTUALLY THROUGH VIDEOCONFERENCE. HOWEVER, THE INVESTIGATIVE TEAM MADE GREAT EFFORT TO INTERVIEW THOSE WITH IMPORTANT ALLEGATIONS AND THOSE ACCUSED IN-PERSON WHEN AT ALL POSSIBLE.

In addition to providing verbal testimony, many of the witnesses provided written documents such as timelines, sketches, explanatory drawings, and other helpful documents to clarify their testimony.

## **IX. PHYSICAL ABUSE IN THE PNG FIELD AND POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

“[S]OME OF THE ACTIONS . . . WERE HARSH AND OPPRESSIVE AND THE HARSHNESS RESULTED IN PART FROM THE NTM CULTURAL MIND-SET AT THAT TIME. THERE WAS STRONG TEACHING THAT CORPORAL PUNISHMENT WAS OFTEN THE FIRST MODE OF DISCIPLINE AND THAT ONE NEEDED TO ‘BREAK THE WILL OF THE CHILD.’ THIS TEACHING LED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IDEAS THAT CHILDREN SHOULD BE SPANKED UNTIL THEIR WILL WAS BROKEN.”

NTM LEADER’S REPORT FROM 2003

Corporal punishment was common at the NTM schools in PNG, as it was in other schools of the day. The typical means of corporal punishment was using a paddle to spank an unruly child. This was done away from the class, usually at the principal’s office. Paddling in this way was systemic insofar as it was sanctioned by the school and its principal and teachers. Some interviewed said it was encouraged in order to break the will of the child, and this was consistent with much evangelical theological teaching. The evidence suggests that in the 1960s and 1970s, staff members would frequently swat children anywhere from five to over twenty times. There were few restrictions to paddling in the early years of PNG. Over time, due both to instances in which paddling caused injuries and to evolving perceptions about corporal punishment, rules and restrictions were put in place.

ALTHOUGH MODERATE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT—EVEN SWATTING/ SPANKING WITH A PADDLE—WAS AN ACCEPTABLE MEANS OF DISCIPLINE, THE PNG FIELD HAD NUMEROUS INSTANCES OF ACTUAL PHYSICAL ABUSE. THESE INSTANCES WERE GENERALLY SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE PADDLING WAS EXCESSIVE, DONE FOR THE WRONG REASONS, AND/OR LED TO INJURIES. AND IN SOME CASES, THEY WERE PERPETRATED BY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD A PATTERN OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR.

## **A. SOME INSTANCES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE**

IHART investigated 18 separate allegations of physical abuse occurring in PNG from the 1960s to the 1990s.<sup>15</sup> Of those allegations, the facts of 11 were confirmed. This included six confirmed victims and eight confirmed offenders. There are fewer total victims than total number of confirmed cases because some victims were physically abused by multiple offenders—which would be multiple “cases” of abuse but a single victim. Likewise, there are more cases than confirmed offenders for the same reason, some offenders abused multiple victims—each instance being a single case of abuse. The following are examples of physical abuse, not an exhaustive survey.

One teacher had a reputation for long harsh beatings in the 1960s and 1970s for trivial reasons, such as not lining up properly or misspelling words. One witness said this teacher spanked with a paddle almost daily, sometimes up to twenty swats. She was also known to smack students in the head with a book or other object for minor infractions. Often, children would be left with bruising and soreness and sometimes bleeding. Some children lived in an environment of constant threats, fear, and intimidation.

Students in the classrooms could hear hard spankings and children crying through the walls. At one point, the then principal along with the assistant principal and a dorm parent spanked a child approximately 120 times between the three of them, leaving the child bloodied and bruised. His sister had to help him get his underwear unstuck from his raw skin.

One MK reported a “vicious spanking” at the age of twelve by her dorm parent for failing to have a report completed before it was even due. Her skirt was lifted, and the spanking lasted about 15 minutes and other MKs could hear her cries from far away. She stated that her back was “unrecognizable” due to the injuries she received.

In another case, a very young child earned a reputation among teachers and school staff for being “rebellious” and not following instructions. The child was spanked excessively for this by her teacher and the principal. One witness reported 200 swats. Those who were accused said it was only a few swats. But what is uncontroverted is that the child was spanked until bloody and that it hurt her to walk for several days. Later

on, the parents discovered that her unresponsiveness had a medical cause.

In another case, a dorm parent told a teenage MK to deliver freshly baked bread on a motorcycle. The MK crashed the motorcycle and ruined the bread. In response, the dorm parent punched the MK in the head, knocking the teenager to the floor.

# 18

**ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE INVESTIGATED BY IHART**

# 11

**ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE WERE CONFIRMED**

# 6

**CONFIRMED VICTIMS**

# 8

**CONFIRMED OFFENDERS**

## **B. SOME CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO PHYSICAL ABUSE**

IHART INVESTIGATORS ANALYZED ANY POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO CHILD PHYSICAL ABUSE ON THE PNG FIELD. THE FOLLOWING WERE BROUGHT FORWARD AS POSSIBLE FACTORS BY DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS:

- NTM culture and structure at that time was very legalistic and authoritarian with a lot of rules and very little grace;
- Staff and members were taught at that time to focus on people's shortcomings;
- NTM at that time had a cultural reluctance to question leadership (especially the principal);
- In that era, women had little influence, were pressured to support the work of their husbands, and were expected to trust, respect and be obedient to male leadership;
- Some believed that NTM was cultlike insofar as misconduct was handled "in-house" with little thinking "outside the box";
- The field had a mentality of, "If he is not for us, he is against us";
- Many shared a belief that NTM knew how to best raise their kids and that they would be cared for and nurtured;
- If parents chose to homeschool, they received little help from the mission;
- Dorm parents were militant with schedules, meals, and rules, probably to help cope with the strain of raising other people's children with very limited resources;
- Service to the mission trumped everything: for example, it was acceptable at least to some to censor and screen MKs' letters and calls to parents to mask negative things because it would harm their parents' ministry;
- In some instances kids were told/taught to lie to their parents;
- Children were to be seen, not heard, and children were not believed;
- Leaders taught that spanking was the preferred method of discipline; and taught teachers and dorm parents how to spank without leaving a mark;
- Dorm parents lacked training and were not expected to act like actual parents; they were not expected to nurture or care for the children; and
- Teachers were not adequately trained; especially regarding how to help children with learning disabilities.

# X. EMOTIONAL ABUSE IN THE PNG FIELD AND POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

"[D]ORM PARENTS WERE OFTEN NOT TRAINED OR MONITORED IN THE MANNER IN WHICH WE SEEK TO DO SO BY PRESENT DAY STANDARDS."

NTM LEADER'S REPORT FROM 2003.

Many children suffered emotional harm due to physical and sexual abuse they experienced in PNG. But emotional abuse involves separate acts, such as demeaning and belittling, which slowly erode a child's self-worth and can have lasting psychological impacts. The PNG Field had several substantiated cases of emotional abuse, as distinct from physical or sexual abuse.

## A. SOME INSTANCES OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

IHART investigated five separate allegations of emotional abuse occurring in PNG from the 1960s to the 1990s.<sup>16</sup> The facts alleged by all five were confirmed. This included four confirmed victims and three confirmed offenders. While there was undoubtedly much more emotional abuse that occurred, these examples help to portray the situation.

As was noted previously in the physical abuse section, one teacher who frequently spanked children for practically anything including answering a question wrong, created an environment in which children lived in constant fear, threats, and intimidation. Investigators determined that at least one V/S, who was actually never spanked, was emotionally abused by the environment of fear and threats. Often children whose performance was poor, and who were given corporal punishment because of

5

ALLEGATIONS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE INVESTIGATED BY IHART

5

ALLEGATIONS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE CONFIRMED

4

CONFIRMED VICTIMS

3

CONFIRMED OFFENDERS

it, suffered from learning disabilities. These children were thus punished for something outside their control.

Another example was of a dorm parent whose expectations and rules were harsh and unreasonable. He belittled and threatened the children, harshly punishing them and making them do unreasonable things like detailed cleaning projects, eat food they spit out (or possibly threw up), and start chores again from the beginning if they did not do it perfectly the first time.

## **B. SOME CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

### **IHART INVESTIGATORS ANALYZED ANY POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO EMOTIONAL ABUSE ON THE PNG FIELD. INVESTIGATORS NOTED THE FOLLOWING:**

- NTM culture and structure at that time was very legalistic and authoritarian with a lot of rules and very little grace;
- Staff and members were taught at that time to focus on shortcomings of people;
- The field had a mentality of, "If he is not for us, he is against us";
- Many shared a belief that NTM knew how to best raise their kids and that they would be cared for and nurtured;
- Dorm parents were militant with schedules, meals, and rules, probably to help cope with the strain of raising other people's children with very limited resources;
- Service to the mission trumped everything: for example, it was acceptable at least to some to censor and screen MKs' letters and calls to parents to mask negative things because it would harm their parents' ministry;
- In some instances kids were told/taught to lie to their parents;
- Children were to be seen, not heard, and children were not believed; and
- Dorm parents lacked training and were not expected to act like actual parents; they were not expected to nurture or care for the children.

# XI. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR IN THE PNG FIELD AND POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

"MY SECOND CONCERN INVOLVES THE 'SEEMING' LACK OF ACTION TAKEN AT THE TIME THIS INCIDENT WAS REPORTED.

I THINK THIS IS ALSO A GOOD QUESTION TO FORCE OURSELVES TO ANSWER . . . WHY DID IT APPEAR TO THE [MK] THAT IT WAS HUSHED UP? . . . I BELIEVE IT IS CRUCIAL WE INVESTIGATE THIS, AND MAKE SURE THAT IN THE FUTURE OUR CHILDREN ARE CLEARLY MADE AWARE THAT WE WILL DEFINITELY COME TO THEIR SUPPORT AND WILL PROTECT THEM."

NTM LEADER IN 2003.

The PNG Field had numerous instances of child sexual abuse. This included varying degrees of behavior and severity. Investigators were able to make factual determinations on a number of allegations.

## A. SOME INSTANCES OF SEXUAL ABUSE

IHART investigated thirteen separate allegations of sexual abuse occurring in PNG from the 1960s to the 1990s.<sup>17</sup> Of those allegations, seven were confirmed. This included seven confirmed victims and three confirmed offenders.

In one case, a teacher confessed to molesting/fondling teenage boys in the early 1970s.

13

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE INVESTIGATED BY IHART

7

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE WERE CONFIRMED

3

CONFIRMED OFFENDERS

7

CONFIRMED VICTIMS

When leadership learned of the incidents, they dismissed the offender and his family from NTM immediately. Other victims came forward during the IHART investigation.

A dorm parent molested or acted inappropriately with multiple young girls in the late 1970s and early 1980s, typically at night before bedtime. The offender only served one term in PNG. NTM did not learn of allegations until 1994.

In another case, a female teacher cultivated an intimate friendship which she allowed to become physical at some point. When it became known to PNG leadership that this relationship had gone beyond the normal boundaries of friendship, action was taken to separate her from the MK. Eventually, her position was

terminated, but she was permitted by NTM to return to PNG a few years later.

In one case, a male employee dated a teenage girl who was nearly 15 years younger. The dating relationship broke up after some physical contact. A report was made nearly 10 years later, and was not well handled then.

In one case, a married staff member kissed the hand of a teenage girl and complimented her beauty. Leadership learned immediately of the episode and removed the staff member from the field. The staff member was permitted to return to PNG a year and a half later, after counseling. Investigators determined this staff member committed inappropriate behavior, but not sexual abuse.

## **B. SOME CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SEXUAL ABUSE**

**IHART INVESTIGATORS ANALYZED ANY POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SEXUAL ABUSE ON THE PNG FIELD. THE FOLLOWING WERE BROUGHT FORWARD AS POSSIBLE FACTORS BY DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS:**

- Leaders had a tendency to not deal severely with offenders or to not believe the victim;
- Missionaries lacked training and awareness regarding sexual abuse perpetrated by indigenous people;
- There was generally a lack of awareness of and communication about sexual abuse;
- There was no child protection training during these decades;
- Parents, children, and staff had no training regarding how and when to report abuse; and
- Children were not questioned about abuse.

## **C. LEADERSHIP RESPONSE**

There were multiple instances in which the Field Committee and leadership were aware of allegations of abuse. In some of these instances, offenders were disciplined, counseled, and/or dismissed. It does not appear that sexual abuse was "tolerated" by NTM or leadership in PNG. Any sexual abuse that was clear and obvious seemed to have been dealt with immediately

and severely. However, there were instances of alleged sexual abuse in which the alleged offender denied allegations or partially affirmed allegations. In these situations, NTM did not have a plan or policy to follow, leading to confusion and inconsistencies in handling alleged sexual abuse.

## **XII. SUMMARY OF ETHNOS360 ACTIONS TAKEN BASED ON PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Of those found with confirmed allegations, two individuals are current members. Both had confirmed allegations of physical abuse and one also of emotional abuse. However, their findings did not rise to the level of dismissal. Both are retired. They are being notified of the findings and will have restrictions on them for the duration of their membership. They are also being notified that they are expected to contribute to the MK Counseling Fund as a symbol of repayment for the harm caused by their actions.

All other individuals with confirmed allegations are either deceased or were removed from membership in the past.

- One individual served a prison sentence for his actions and was not investigated by IHART.
- One individual had a finding of sexual abuse that was reported two decades ago, but has been gone from the mission for four decades. While IHART believes that the abuse was reported when it came out, IHART has repeated the report to law enforcement.
- Five individuals are deceased as best could be determined, and some of these had been previously dismissed.
- One individual had been previously investigated by IHART and was forced to resign and is ineligible for rehire.
- Three other individuals were not investigated by IHART because their allegations had been previously confirmed and no new allegations came forward.
- One individual had a finding of emotional abuse and would have had a restriction and been required to donate to the MK Counseling Fund, but he resigned and is no longer a member.
- Two individuals had findings of physical abuse and would have had restrictions and been required to donate to the MK Counseling Fund, but they are no longer members.
- One individual who had committed a boundary violation is no longer a member.
- Four individuals were investigated but did not have confirmed allegations.

# XIII. LEADERSHIP CULPABILITY

"[A]S WE BEGIN TO IMPLEMENT THINGS I WASN'T PICKING UP THAT THE OLD LEADERS WERE LIKE WE DON'T WANT TO DO THAT . . . I THINK THEY WERE GLAD THAT SOMEBODY WAS MOVING IT BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ON THEIR RADAR BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY GREW UP WITH AND THE BUSYNESS OF THEIR OWN MINISTRIES. I FIND BACK THEN WHAT I WOULD CALL GUYS WHO WERE RELUCTANT LEADERS BUT WANTED TO BE FAITHFUL."

NTM LEADER

IHART was also tasked with evaluating leadership culpability, to the extent that was possible so long after the events. This was a difficult task, due to changing standards.

## A. OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP CULPABILITY

In addition to cases of abuse and inappropriate behavior, the Investigative Team also investigated leadership culpability.

### FOR LEADERSHIP CULPABILITY ONE ASKS:

WHAT DID THE LEADERS KNOW ABOUT THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN,

WHEN DID THEY KNOW IT,

AND DID THEY FAIL TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION IN RESPONDING TO ABUSE?

One component is the appropriate response based on cultural considerations of the day and the standards or training (if any) in place at the time.

In order to be culpable, leadership needed to have knowledge of the abuse or reasonably

suspected abuse at the time. At all times, Christian leadership should have recognized that grossly abusive behavior (particularly sexual abuse) is inherently wrong and should have responded. Some allegations of child abuse were reported to leadership or staff and were dealt with at the time of the alleged event, including some allegations of sexual abuse. Many other allegations were never reported to leaders at the time.

Some previous investigations and disciplinary actions succeeded in that they removed adult offenders from the field when abuse was known. However, compared to modern standards for an investigation, earlier investigations of adult offender allegations fell short. Inadequacies included an incomplete investigation, incomplete follow-up, having people involved with a conflict of interest, or having wholly inadequate training. However, given that these were the standards of the day, this does not automatically mean leaders were culpable.

Leadership's inadequate responses in some instances failed to safeguard children. In other instances, leadership apparently never knew that abuse was taking place (or there was much more than they were ever aware of). In some cases, action was taken by the leader personally, but all the appropriate stakeholders were not informed, such as the NTM Executive Committee, and most importantly, the missionary parents of the child in their care.

IHART found no evidence of active attempts to cover up abuse of children. Much of the MK

abuse by other MKs was not known until much later, as far as leadership went. And once known by leadership, most of the abuse was dealt with quickly—especially for sexual abuse allegations.

However, in some cases, leadership did experience difficulties in deciding whether some acts qualified as abuse.

## **THIS IS BECAUSE OF A LACK OF CLEAR DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES, AS OPPOSED TO TODAY'S CLEAR DEFINITIONS AND ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES.**

For example, corporal punishment was allowed and even preferred by some in leadership, who did not do well at determining when it was excessive. Some of the sexual abuse involved an adult kissing and hugging a teenager in a dating relationship, and leaders had trouble determining if this was actually abuse, resulting in less severe outcomes for the offender.

### **B. EVIDENCE OF LEADERSHIP CULPABILITY IN PNG**

IHART Investigators made factual findings that raised concerns about leadership culpability for three leaders on the PNG field. The Recommendations Panel reviewed the investigators' findings as well as analyzed the knowledge and tools these leaders had to properly evaluate facts and make conclusions. In two cases, due to the lack of clear policies and definitions available to leadership, the Panel determined that the leaders could not be held culpable using current standards. In other words, it was not proper to judge these leaders using definitions and policies that did not exist at the time.

Two are no longer in leadership. The remaining one will be required to undergo appropriate training. The one who failed to follow up on an allegation of serious sexual abuse is now prohibited from ever again leading ministry in any capacity. All three have been notified that they are expected to contribute to the MK Counseling fund as a symbol of repayment for the harm caused by their actions.

In the case of the culpable leader, an NTM staff member had been accused by his daughter's boyfriend of sexually abusing her. The principal of her school was informed of the abuse

and merely confronted the alleged offender and questioned him. The principal, admitting that he would have believed an adult over children back then, took the offender's denial as the truth and did not investigate the allegations further. Nothing was done for several more years (fortunately, the abuse had stopped).

### **C. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP CULPABILITY**

Investigators also made factual findings raising culpability concerns over four members of the USA Executive Committee for the alleged mishandling of multiple abuse cases. Two of these leaders were deceased. The Panel reviewed the information as to the other two and determined there was no culpability in light of the knowledge of the day. Despite the Panel's recommendations, Ethnos360 nevertheless requested the other two leaders to pay reparations to the MK Counseling Fund.

### **D. LESS THAN ADEQUATE LEADERSHIP**

While it is true that the responses of leaders were fairly typical within the culture of many decades ago, as previously discussed, and were not intentionally inadequate at the time, the fact remains that children were at times not adequately protected by leader responses. Knowledge about child abuse was inadequate from a current-day perspective, training for staff and leaders was inadequate, and child protection policies and reporting were not in place through much of the history of the investigation. Even if this reflects the era, it resulted in extensive harm to children.

During these years, field leaders did not have mandatory policies that required them to report abusive behavior to the Executive Committee or law enforcement. This resulted in many abusive situations being handled only by the Field Committee which, in turn, led to different outcomes depending on the facts of each case or who was evaluating it.

Leaders from that time in some cases expressed great regret that they had not been more aware or handled the situations better. These errors decreased drastically once standards were put in place in the early to mid-2000s. While the errors noted are tragic, the change after policies were put in place is also encouraging.

## **XIV. CURRENT POLICIES AND MOVING FORWARD**

“[A] LOT OF THE TIME THE GUYS THAT START THE ORGANIZATION THEY’RE VISIONARY, THEY’RE REALLY FOCUSED ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE ORGANIZATION, THE ORGANIZATION BEGINS TO GROW AND I THINK THAT’S WHAT HAPPENED. WE WENT THROUGH A HUGE GROWTH SPIRT AND WE KEEP THE SAME GUYS LEADING AND I THINK WE DIDN’T KEEP UP WITH . . . NEW THINGS THAT HAVE TO BE IMPLEMENTED . . .”

NTM LEADER

### **A. 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 Ethnos360 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 Ethnos360’s ongoing commitment to investigating and addressing past wrongs.

Ethnos360 is currently one of the leading mission organizations in regard to proactive steps for child safety. All Ethnos360 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 Ethnos360 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.

Ethnos360 has designated child safety staff at each USA location. These are chosen 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. Ethnos360 childcare facilities follow Ethnos360 Policy. They also have location-specific procedures and requirements for their workers.

### **B. CURRENT EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND STATISTICS FOR ETHNOS360**

Ethnos360 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 Ethnos360 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.

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

## **ETHNOS360 USA EDUCATION STATS (K – 12TH GRADE, OVERSEAS ONLY) 2021 – 2022**

Lacking response from Paraguay, Mexico Homeschool and South Asia

- ▶ Number of Ethnos360 USA Children: 354
- ▶ Ethnos360 USA Children Homeschooling: 211 (60% of all children overseas)
  - ▶ K–6th: 148
  - ▶ 7–8th: 34
  - ▶ 9–12th: 29
- ▶ Number of Ethnos360 USA families with a Home School Helper/Tutor/Nanny: 2
- ▶ Ethnos360 USA Children Attending Traditional Schools: 143 (40% of all children overseas)
  - ▶ Those in Global Partner Schools: 93
    - ▽ Global Partner Schools in operation:
    - ▽ PNG with 104 students (65 Ethnos360 USA students) with 2\* boarding
    - ▽ Mexico with 39 students (22 Ethnos360 USA students) with 0 boarding
    - ▽ West Brazil with 40 students (6 Ethnos360 USA students) with 2\* boarding
  - ▶ Those in Multi-Mission Schools: 37 Ethnos360 USA students with 5 boarding
  - ▶ Those in National Schools: 9 Ethnos360 USA students
  - ▶ Those involved in online schooling: 4 Ethnos360 USA students
- ▶ Boarding:
  - ▶ Ethnos360 USA children boarding: 9 (3% of all children overseas)
  - ▶ At Global Partner Schools: (4 in Traditional Dorms, 0 in Private Home Placement)
  - ▶ At Multi-Mission Schools: (5 in Traditional Dorms, 0 in Private Home Placement)

\* PNG had only 2 boarders from Ethnos360 USA, they had 3 total boarders including one student from a Global Partner Family. West Brazil had 2 boarders from Ethnos360 USA, but their total was 32 including all the others in their boarding program.

## **XV. CONCLUSION**

**The IHART Coordinator thanks the survivors and witnesses for participating in the investigation, sharing their own stories and also representing those who were unable to come forward for various reasons. She thanks the investigators for their efforts to find the truth, Ethnos360 and related organizations for their diligence in providing documents and other information requested, and her own team for their work on the Summary Report and Statements of Findings. If there are questions about the investigation, or anyone was missed, we invite you to reach out to us through the [ihart.care](http://ihart.care) website. An investigation can be one step in the the healing process in that it seeks to find truth. We pray that it will help people to take further steps to process the trauma of the past.**



# FOOTNOTES

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1. This was done in compliance with the recommendations of the GRACE Final Report for the Investigatory Review of Child Abuse at New Tribes Fanda Missionary School, Senegal, that took place in the 1980's and 1990's. **(page 2)**
2. While an incident of serious abuse within a family was identified as happening later than this time frame, it had been separately addressed, and did not fall within the scope of the IHART investigation. **(page 8)**
3. No reflection is intended on any way that people choose to refer to their experience, but IHART chose this for simplicity. **(page 8)**
4. 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 **(page 14)**
5. Ethnos360's current Child Safety Handbook is approximately 21 pages and includes risk factors, definitions of abuse, and screening, training, response, and follow-up care policies and protocol. The Handbook also lists a multitude of "possible indicators of abuse" in order to educate employees on what to look for and be cautious of. **(page 14)**
6. Ethnos360's Child Safety Handbook further states: "Corporal punishment of children is not a disciplinary option for Ethnos360 members in schools, boarding programs, or childcare programs except when such punishment is exercised directly by the parents of the child." **(page 14)**
7. Appendix C of the Child Safety Handbook offers the following quote to describe Ethnos360's approach to understanding child–on–child sexual abuse: "Understanding healthy childhood sexual development plays a key role in child sexual abuse prevention. Unless we understand what to expect as children develop sexually, it is hard to tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviors. When we understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviors, we are better able to support healthy attitudes and behaviors and react to teachable moments. Rather than interpret a child's actions with an adult perspective of sex and sexuality, we can promote healthy development when we understand what behaviors are developmentally expected at different stages of childhood. We are also better equipped to intervene when there are concerns related to behavior or abuse." (National Sexual Violence Resource Center; [http://nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/saam\\_2013\\_an-overview-of-healthy-childhood-sexual-development.pdf](http://nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/saam_2013_an-overview-of-healthy-childhood-sexual-development.pdf)). **(page 15)**
8. Ethnos360's Child Safety Handbook elaborates on "boundaries" as "'personal space is the private area of control inside an imaginary line or boundary that defines each person as separate. Ideally, that boundary helps us stay charge of our own personal space . . . Behaviors that routinely disrespect or ignore boundaries make children vulnerable to abuse.'" (quoting: <http://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/behaviors-to-watch-out-for-when-adults-are-with-children>). **(page 16)**
9. Appendix D of the Child Safety Handbook specifically addresses "grooming" and provides employees with information regarding behaviors to watch and possible signs of grooming. **(page 16)**
10. While IHART makes no public announcement, Ethnos360 has chosen to share the names of some offenders related to sexual abuse, particularly when a higher standard of evidence, such as "clear and convincing" has been met. **(page 24)**
11. Reports are not made when the AO is dead, or the alleged abuse would not be of interest to

law enforcement. **(page 25)**

12. From Ethnos360's website: <https://ethnos360.org/about>. **(page 26)**
13. <https://www.ncapng.org/about-ncapng/history/>. **(page 28)**
14. 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. **(page 32)**
15. Other instances are known that were outside the scope of this investigation and were handled separately. Based on accounts, excessive corporal punishment likely happened many times. **(page 36)**
16. Again, this in no way sets a limit on emotional abuse, but is an example of what happened. **(page 38)**
17. IHART knew of alleged victims who chose not to interview, and some allegations were outside the scope of IHART's investigation because they had been thoroughly reviewed in the past. There were also instances of child-on-child sexual abuse or inappropriate behavior discussed, but generally witnesses did not come forward. **(page 40)**
18. The Recommendations Panel only evaluated and made recommendations for offenders who were still alive. **(page 42)**

# **IMAGE CREDITS**

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## **IMAGES FROM *NUMONOH* REFLECTIONS YEARBOOKS:**

**1979:** NCA Campus, Page 1.

**1991:** Campus Photo, Cover Image.

**2003:** Classroom, Page 4.  
Sports Field, Page 13.  
Classroom, Page 24.

## **IMAGES COURTESY OF ETHNOS360:**

NCA Campus: Road facing gym on right, school building on left, Inside Cover.

NCA Campus: "Numonohi Christian Academy founded 1966 (at this location 1970)," Page 2.

NCA Campus: Door to office off library, has window into office, Page 11.

NCA Campus: Original school hall from 1969(70), Page 13.

NCA Campus: Tennis and basketball courts, Page 17.

NCA Campus: High school staircase where original library was located, Page 19.

NCA Campus: Classroom Interior, Page 22.

NCA Campus: 6th Grade Classroom, Page 23.

NCA Campus: Classroom where the darkroom was located, Page 30.

## **OTHER IMAGE SOURCES:**

"Rice Field in Casamance Senegal," Laurent Gerrer Simon, stock.adobe.com, Page 3.

Ethnos360 Logo, <https://ethnos360.org>, Page 5.

IHART Logo, [ihart.care](http://ihart.care), Page 6.

"The first group ready to sail to Bolivia," The Heritage of Ethnos360, Page 26.

Map of Papua New Guinea, Google, Imagery ©2022 TerraMetrics, Map data ©2022, Page 27.

"Few vintage letters from an old box," BearFotos, Shutterstock.com, Page 31.