

CAJ Alumni call for Resolution of Past Abuses Leads to Investigations

CHRISTIAN ACADEMY IN JAPAN ALUMNI CALL FOR RESOLUTION OF ALLEGED PAST ABUSES LEADS TO INVESTIGATIONS

On February 6, 2019, a steering committee representing concerned alumni sent a letter to the Christian Academy in Japan (CAJ) and its six founding missions* calling for resolution of an alleged history of sexual, physical and psychological abuse that occurred at the school as well as in its dorms and hostels. They asked for an investigation into the alleged abuse via a reputable, independent and mutually agreed-upon agency. The letter was signed by more than 80 alumni, both abuse survivors and supporting peers. The letter followed more than a year of communication with the school itself.

As a result, two separate third-party investigations are now underway; one contracted by SEND (formerly Far Eastern Gospel Crusade) and a second authorized by CAJ, and four of the five other missions - Resonate Global Mission, Serve Globally, TEAM, and World Venture.

A recent survey among survivors and other concerned alumni, determined the following desired outcomes (ranked by priority):

1. Acknowledgement of past failures to protect students by CAJ and the founding missions.
2. Survivor accounts treated in such a way that all survivors feel heard.
3. Surviving abusers reported to law enforcement, churches and affiliated missions.
4. Results of the investigation available to all participants with abusers named.
5. Identification of administrators and staff who failed to protect children under their care.

Background:

CAJ was founded in 1950 to educate children of missionaries in Japan. Reports and rumors of such abuses had been shared occasionally. But in late 2017, as world-wide focus targeted the issue of sexual abuse, CAJ alumni began sharing heartbreaking personal accounts on several private social media sites. Reported abuses start from the late 1950's with the majority of first-hand accounts occurring in the 1960's and 1970's. Equally disturbing first and second-hand accounts have come in from the 1980's as well as the 1990's. (Concerned alumni believe it probable that survivors from later years have yet to come forward with their accounts.)

The alleged abuse ranges from sexual grooming, harassment, molestation and assault by faculty members to harsh punishments of students including severe beatings, stalking and threatening in order to coerce silence; failure of responsible adults to listen to complaints and protect vulnerable students, especially but not limited to the dorm/hostel students in their care; sexual molestation, assault and extreme bullying by students on other students.

In late 2017 and in 2018, CAJ was approached by alumni and asked to address this issue, but CAJ administration said it could only respond to first-person accounts. In January 2019, after being sent six first-person accounts of sexual harassment and abuse by faculty and a tally of

more than 60 other abuse reports, the CAJ Board issued a “Letter of Apology for Past Child Safety Issues” and offered a willingness for further dialogue.

For many alumni, the apology was lacking in both specificity and true recognition of the deep underlying roots of the problem of abuse at CAJ. As noted earlier, alumni believe that any surviving abusers as well as surviving administrators who were/are responsible for hiring and supervising the CAJ faculty must be held accountable. In addition, they believe the six founding missions, all headquartered in the United States and still with controlling representation on the CAJ board must, along with the current CAJ Board of Directors, assume responsibility for all past abuses.

On April 26,2019, CAJ Head of School Anda Foxwell, announced plans for an independent investigation to be conducted by the Telios law firm (Monument, Colorado.) SEND began its own separate investigation into alleged misconduct by its personnel.

While the alumni group was disappointed not to be involved in the selection of investigation teams, they have appreciated the willingness of the school and missions to cooperatively move ahead in establishment of the process. Participation with the respective investigation teams by a number of CAJ alumni survivors has begun.

Because the alumni group wishes to protect survivor privacy and not subject them to additional trauma, we will release no names or make further comment at this time. It is also our hope to continue to work in a cooperative and meaningful way with CAJ and the mission boards which also leads us to limit our public comments.

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*The six missions founding missions of CAJ:

SEND International (formerly Far Eastern Gospel Crusade)

Resonate Global Missions (formerly Christian Reformed)

The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM)

WorldVenture (Conservative Baptist)

Serve Globally (Evangelical Covenant) Church Board of World Missions One Mission Society (formerly Oriental Mission Society)

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