

Position Paper
MK Safety Net

MK Abuse: A Call for Further Action

*“The advance of the Kingdom of God historically has always involved some suffering and hardship...
Sacrifice will be an element of that.”*

- Robert Fetherlin, VP, International Ministries, C&MA

“I asked my father point-blank, ‘How many African souls were worth my soul?’”

- Mamou Survivor

Executive Summary

MK Safety Net (MKSAN) believes that the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) is faced with the imminent need to adopt a new frame of reference and approach in the area of child abuse committed by its employees. Vile criminal acts were committed in the past against children by agents of the C&MA. And while some steps have been undertaken to correct those misdeeds and inaction, a significant number of known survivors remain unhealed. They have not felt Christ’s unconditional love in the C&MA response. Moreover, there is reason to believe the entire scope of the historical abuse problem in all C&MA boarding facilities remains unplumbed. And available information is unclear on whether measures to prevent future abuse are adequate.

A sobering accompaniment to Christian leadership is the extra level of heavenly accountability attending that responsibility. Today’s leaders have inherited a set of less-than-ideal facts in the area of MK abuse. Fortunately, past history need not immutably shape the future. Loving, flexible thinking on this issue can help successfully and more completely discharge those important responsibilities.

The purpose of this paper is not to re-argue the past; MKSAN does not seek discourse about who did what, or to make accusations about who formerly was right or wrong. The information related in the first three sections of this paper is there only to establish context. The recommendations in Section IV show how we want to try to look forward, and help the C&MA work effectively on the abuse issue.

To do that, C&MA leaders must start by realizing that resolving past abuse is not a one-solution-fits-all situation. Some survivors can (and wish to) go on with their lives with no (or limited) Alliance involvement. Others need much more consideration and assistance in order to be restored.

Moreover, Alliance leaders also must directly confront the likelihood that abuse will continue to be an issue for them – now and in the future. When missions organizations endorse and fund for their employees the use of contract school facilities, they undertake an ongoing derivative responsibility for the welfare of the children involved. And with past events placing leadership on notice of foreseeable problems in this regard, liability issues would seem to present an even more prominent concern.

This paper is largely written to convey the position of survivors themselves, but the solutions recommended herein also apply to similarly wounded missionary parents.

While not the main thrust of this paper, several other elements are in the background for C&MA leaders to consider. Some survivors continue to believe that justice has not been served, and have

concluded that litigation will be required to achieve it. MK Safety Net is not involved in any such litigation, notwithstanding the validity of their point of view, and their right to seek justice on terms that are meaningful to them. As well, a professional documentary about C&MA mission school abuse is nearing final production. And the continued impact of the Internet may also play a future role in survivors identifying each other, organizing, and acting in concert on this issue. C&MA leaders need to realistically ponder what such developments cumulatively may mean to existing dynamics, potential costs, church member perceptions, and the Alliance's mission worldwide.

Three contextual foundations are critical to understanding this presentation:

- *Despite what may have been well-meaning actions by some individuals, past C&MA decision-making regarding the abuse issue has been directed by some administrators who have, or may have had, a serious conflict of interest. At least in part due to this, a flawed abuse response strategy resulted.*
- *To effectively move forward, C&MA leaders must grasp and adopt perceptions of the abuse survivors -- setting aside their own estimation of how the Alliance's past actions should be regarded by others.*
- *Integral survivor representation and participation is an essential element of any future responsive or remedial actions by the C&MA.*

Setting aside any litigation, PR, or ministry impact-related concerns, crafting a more complete response to resolve remaining issues would involve the following steps:

1. *Current leaders must accept and openly acknowledge that the C&MA's past decision-making on the abuse issue has been directed by some individuals who may have had a serious conflict of interest.*
2. *The C&MA must again publicly and specifically acknowledge organizational responsibility for not just past abuse, but also for failure to respond appropriately to early allegations and those who raised them.*
3. *The C&MA's current leaders must grasp and adopt the perceptions of the abuse survivors, setting aside their own estimation of how the denomination's actions should look to others.*
4. *Organizational changes must take place to ensure that survivor representation and participation are meaningful components of any future responsive or remedial actions by the C&MA.*
5. *A comprehensive, fully independent accountability system must be established, covering allegations, investigations, and outcomes.*
6. *The C&MA should agree to submit its policies and procedures in this area to a mutually agreeable, external, independent review body.*
7. *The C&MA must abandon the passive role now employed, whereby only those willing to come forward to make abuse claims are heard. It must act take the initiative to discover the complete scope of its abuse problem.*
8. *The C&MA should establish a fully-funded line item in its budget for MK abuse issues, including staff, travel, training, investigations, and survivor and family counseling.*
9. *To the extent possible, the C&MA should offer reparative financial settlements to those who have suffered additional pain and suffering due to the C&MA's lack of an adequate response to their allegations.*

While Bible-based, this paper does not apply any intricate theological framework. In secular terms, practical management considerations would point current leaders toward significant re-tooling in this area. But Biblically, Christ's own words make it clear that loving resolution within the body of believers of this long-festering injustice is a matter of grave – even eternal – importance.

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MK Abuse: A Call for Further Action

I. Introduction

*I had a dream that I was going down a grassy slope that led to a gas chamber.
I was holding the hands of my two boys, and walking them down to the door.
And I'm saying to them, "I'll go with you this time – I won't send you alone."
– Mother of Mamou Students*

*"The C&MA as a denomination has a responsibility to respond in an ongoing way
to people who have been hurt. Healing for the denomination requires hearing all aspects of the
Mamou reality, accepting the existing stories, and restoring all of these experiences to the
denomination in a way which supports integrity and wholeness."
– ICI Report, 1997*

Consider the pain-filled, fearful dream of a still-grieving mother who – after more than 40 years – continues to grapple with the consequences of crimes committed against her children. And then consider whether the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) has adequately followed through on those noble-sounding words from more than a decade ago.

MK Safety Net (MKSNet) asserts that the C&MA has not done so. Clearly it has not displayed in any ongoing way the unconditional love that Christ taught us to show to others. True, the methods it has adopted (the Independent Commission of Inquiry, a survivor retreat, Ross Group, the Sensitive Issues Consultative Group [SICG], the closure of boarding schools, etc.) may have met the needs of some survivors and somewhat moderated the risk of future problems. But as will be discussed below, those measures were themselves either so limited at the onset to be fundamentally incomplete, or were not fully implemented (the full scope of the ICI recommendations, for instance.) Moreover, other survivors need healing to come in more diverse ways. And the actual effectiveness of current policies remains an issue.¹

Additionally -- and morally inexplicably -- the denomination has never engaged in a comprehensive survey of all alumni from all of its boarding schools, to determine the full extent of the criminal abuse problem it harbored for decades. And of course, current contracting for the schooling of some missionary children does not remove the denomination's responsibility for

¹ This report is based on the best information available to MK Safety Net at the time of its compilation. As described elsewhere, the C&MA has not seen fit to incorporate survivors into its response and communication strategies in any meaningful way. Thus, it is possible that the narrative information in sections I-III is incomplete with respect to detailed C&MA policies and programs. That provides an initial illustration of the way the C&MA has acted without stakeholder (that is, survivor) involvement in such a sensitive management issue.

assuring loving and humane treatment for them as well. For those and other reasons, MKSN believes the Alliance is faced with the imminent need to adopt a new frame of reference regarding its policies and procedures on missionary child abuse cases.

MK Safety Net has as its goal to call evangelical mission agencies and their supporting churches back to the Biblical mandate to establish justice and healing, especially in those cases where the church has wounded its own missionary children (MKs). Established in 1994, the group is composed primarily of former MKs and MK parents. It was formed by survivors of abuse in boarding schools operated in various overseas locations by, or under contract to, the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

This paper is intended to call attention to the need for the C&MA's leaders to further modify the current program of responding to MK abuse allegations and abuse issues generally. MKSN urges the denomination to acknowledge that the methods it has employed to date – without meaningful input from survivors – have been incomplete and only partially effective.

In the interest of simplicity of flow, this paper is largely written to convey the position of survivors themselves. However, a similar tragic pattern attends the lives and psyches of the missionary parents involved. For them, there is a double pain: that of knowing what was done to their children, as well as the sense of betrayal by the organization to which they gave so much. To the extent that the material presented here calls for reparative and restorative justice, it applies to similarly wounded parents.

II. Background

*“We acted like we loved them, but then we sent them away. And you looked at yourself and you said, you know, ‘who was I -- what was I thinking of?’
But again, it was a matter of obedience, and the teaching we grew up with was that you obey those over you in the Lord. And to obey the mission was to obey God, and so you would pray and ask God to take care of them, and they would cry themselves to sleep and you would cry yourself to sleep”
– Parent of Mamou Student*

Worldwide and over many decades, the C&MA has been affiliated with numerous boarding schools for children of its missionary workforce. Children as young as six were separated from their parents – sometimes by as much as 1,000 miles or more – for nine months a year. School policy and programs were highly regimented and had the effect of disrupting, rather than reinforcing, family ties.² Managerial oversight of those schools was provided by C&MA officials on the other side of the world, in Nyack, NY. Teachers, house parents, and other staff were employees of the C&MA. Some schools were attended as well by children of non-C&MA parents.

Over the decades, reports of child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, and spiritual) have been received from former students of many of those facilities. Scattered, largely uninvestigated reports involved facilities in Mamou, Bongolo, Quito, Zamboanga, Dalat, and Ivory Coast Academy. Degrading physical acts, sexual assault, systematized deprivation, and emotional and spiritual manipulation were consistent themes in these reports.³

The first of these students to speak out about the abuse in an organized fashion were from the Mamou Alliance Academy, formerly operated in Guinea, West Africa. They did so in the late 1980’s – more than two decades ago. In 1987, specifics were brought to the personal attention of the C&MA’s President, by Rev. Ralph Shellrude, former Guinea West Africa Field Chairman, former U.S. District Superintendent, Executive Assistant to the C&MA President, and a parent himself of abused Mamou MKs.

² Real-world experience and available literature suggest MKs in general already are subject to unusual adjustment pressures as they mature. These are produced -- in part -- by diversion of parental attention due to separation and dedication to mission duties. Also, cultural adjustment stresses and alienation result, as these children feel they are not part of any one society. While not every missionary child is severely impacted by those and other factors -- indeed many outwardly seem unaffected -- they are baseline stressors to which abuse can be a final crushing blow for others.

³ A striking omission impresses one reviewing two decades of documentation. The abuse issue was only rarely considered in its most concrete form – as criminal activity. It far more often was addressed as an administrative, or personnel, issue. Granted, decades-old crimes committed on foreign soil are effectively beyond the arm of today’s criminal law. But it is amazing that there are so few references in C&MA correspondence to the criminality of its employees – no sign at all that C&MA decision-makers were approaching the issue with that as an underlying premise, or with any sense of outrage or need to pursue justice.

While most reports originated with students whose parents were C&MA missionaries, some non-C&MA-origin children were involved. Abuse occurred in both school and dormitory settings.

It is worthy of note at this point, that a number of current C&MA leaders and their children attended these C&MA boarding facilities in the years in question and thereafter.

Many things impeded reporting of these incidents at the time they occurred. Distance made parental visitation virtually impossible. Correspondence from children to their parents was censored by boarding school staff. Siblings were kept apart to some degree, with the effect of impairing family solidarity. Punishments for protests were severe. Threats and intimidation were used to keep children silent. Staff at the schools who were not directly involved in the abuse – and to some degree, surely almost everyone on the compound heard or saw signs -- stood by and did nothing.

To make the situation all the more pernicious, many of the perpetrators were co-workers and “friends” of the missionaries themselves. This made it hard for some of the children to expect that parents would believe any such accusations. It certainly made it hard for missionary parents to correctly evaluate any subtle hints of problems at the schools.

Perhaps the most dramatic impact in a “Christian” environment was the use of spiritual threats as a control strategy. Children were told that if they portrayed hardships of any kind and upset their parents’ work, they would live under a cloud of judgment. The logic used was that they would be causing lost souls to be damned to an eternity in hell because of the adverse emotional impact on their parents. Children were told they were furthering the Gospel by enduring these abusive conditions.

In any event, parents who heard such stories would have been hard pressed to know how to respond. Abuse of the type involved (about which we know much more today because of a very different media climate) was not common knowledge in that era (beginning in the 1950’s). Even if one accepted the proposition that it might go on, it would be incredibly difficult for missionary parents to believe that their “friends” and Christian co-workers would harm their children. It would not be unreasonable to assume supervisory personnel at headquarters on the other side of the world would be inefficient and ineffective in pursuing any such claims.

Moreover, in the C&MA monoculture,⁴ there would be the fear that raising questions might harm careers. It certainly would create immense tensions in the small world of the mission field.

⁴ The missionary monoculture could be the subject of an entire treatise of its own. The C&MA’s dedication to the Great Commission reflects a Biblical imperative. But its seemingly single-minded focus (see the Fetherlin quote at the beginning of this paper) means risking an important loss – that of a sound balance between evangelism and the other responsibilities our faith outlines for us as parents, spouses, employees, employers, and citizens. Yet by inculcating that single-mindedness at Nyack and other mission schools, reinforcing it stateside in various ways, and sequestering missionaries in small isolated communities, the monoculture takes on powerful features that can be dysfunctional. Export that dynamic to an even more isolated boarding school setting with non-existent supervision from the United States. Couple it with a lack of policy or training for boarding school operations. Then add the historical selection process for mission school staff – often individuals and couples who could not serve adequately in direct mission work. This mixture was the ideal recipe for exactly what happened at Mamou and elsewhere.

In short, many elements would have worked against these acts becoming widely known, or having them fully investigated, even if they had been reported.

The systematic abuse suffered by some MKs in C&MA boarding facilities resulted in life-long trauma. The common threads running through the adult life stories of C&MA boarding school alumni are found in the C&MA's 1997 Independent Commission of Inquiry (ICI) report:

- Pseudo-independence
- Development of distrustful wariness and vigilance which extends into adulthood
- Development of self-defeating caretaking for others
- Anti-social and counter-social behavior
- Difficulty with authority
- Adverse impact on their own parenting
- Sexual addiction and dysfunction
- Adversarial relationships between men and women, and negative stereotyping
- Fear of intimacy
- Tarnishing of faith
- Spiritual insecurity and lingering guilt
- Alienation from God

Independently, survivors report:

- The feeling of having their childhood stolen from them
- Being hampered in their own parenting
- Having a variety of ongoing emotional struggles as adults
- Having issues with trust and emotional attachments
- Experiencing suicidal urges
- Struggling with guilt about not being able to protect siblings
- Equating God with evil and fearing the Divine as a destructive force
- Grappling with the concept of an all-loving God, juxtaposed against the punishing abuse they experienced at the hands of His people

At first, the C&MA flatly ignored survivor claims. Then, some denominational leaders and individual pastors sought to discredit the claimants -- in some instances attacking them spiritually. Then, finally and slowly, the Alliance moved to establish a mechanism for investigating the allegations.

Consequently, re-victimization is a reality to many survivors, particularly those who spoke out early to C&MA leaders. This is due to the C&MA's initial but lengthy rejection of those claims, its refusal to be proactive once it (grudgingly) accepted them, and its subsequent evasive and sometimes duplicitous conduct in dealing with key survivors. Survivors were subjected to both written and verbal abuse. In one case a C&MA pastor phoned and berated the survivor for speaking out. In another, a letter from a prominent C&MA pastor chastised a survivor's parent

for his persistence – attacking him personally rather than examining the reasons why that parent felt the way he did.

A number of the survivors struggled for years trying to generate a meaningful response from the denomination regarding criminal acts committed by its employees under the banner of Christ. The research for this paper involved reviewing box after box of correspondence and other documents, reflecting the survivor search for a just and loving solution.⁵ Here is a representative e-mail to a C&MA official in 2000 from a survivor, which illustrates the frustration engendered by the early Alliance actions involved in responding to this issue:

“Dear [Alliance Official]:

[Name omitted] forwarded an e-mail you sent him September 1st, and I would like to respond to some of the things you said in it. You said, "I have not received what in my view are vast amounts of correspondence over the past many years with allegations of mistreatment of missionary children. I have had a small number of these, and have done my very best to be sure they were handled in a caring, competent manner." I do not know how one would define "vast amounts", however I do know that you have heard from people from a number of institutions, including [names omitted] from Quito, [name omitted] from Zamboanga and Dalat, [name omitted] from ICA re. [name omitted], [name omitted] regarding the Foreign Service Alumni who attended Mamou and [name omitted].

“When you hear one of these reports, you tell these individuals that they need to provide other witnesses and/or you tell them who to report to. The problem of course is that they have just reported to you - and your response is that they need to report to one of the three individuals/groups (and you yourself are one of the four that they can report abuse to). In an organization that has a good system for reporting abuse in place, once you have heard that there are allegations of abuse, you would be responsible for taking the allegation and opening a preliminary investigation to see if a full investigation is warranted. Instead, you have said that the alumni must have "many" (which is an undesignated number) of people with allegations of abuse before they will open an investigation. Determining whether there are other victims and/or supporting evidence is not the responsibility of the victims. That is the purpose of an investigation.

“Those who are aware of the issues involved in reporting abuse will tell you that it takes an enormous amount of courage to report abuse. When they have made their initial report to you and are told that they now need to make further reports before anything is done, you are in effect requiring them to go through more major hurdles. It is a very good technique for silencing victims. [Name omitted] first reported abuse at Quito to [C&MA official] in 1991 and to you in 1999. Now she must again gather the courage in order to carry this further. You also said in your e-mail, "I am not aware of any

⁵ Materials from the files of MKs and their parents present a tragic, depressing (and some would say incriminating) picture. Time and time again, year after year, survivors and their parents implore the C&MA for an honest inquiry, and some form of loving and just treatment. To little avail, as the denomination seemed to be almost totally invested in a minimalist, defensive posture.

determination on the part of the C&MA to foreclose any efforts to move ahead on investigations when we're made aware of allegations of abuse. I view our board, along with the Sensitive Issues Consultative Group, as working with concern and seriousness on these matters." In [name omitted]'s letter from [name omitted], it was very clear that the BOM had decided not to continue investigating matters related to Mamou.

'You said, "I view our board, along with the Sensitive Issues Consultative Group, as working with concern and seriousness on these matters." I would like to comment on the SICG. The SICG has adopted practices which would be unacceptable by almost all professionals dealing with abuse. They broke every rule of confidentiality by requiring that [name omitted] provide the names and details of abuse for the BOM to read. The ICI protected all of us - the Alliance never knew which alumni made allegations of abuse until the disciplinary hearings when alumni had to give testimony (and then there was the option of whether they wanted to or not.) Further, to my knowledge they did not interview the accused individuals or the people [name omitted] provided for supporting evidence. [name omitted] had contacted you regarding abuse at Quito, and she was not contacted by the SICG to determine whether there was a pattern of abuse at Quito. There is no indication in any of this that the Alliance is truly interested in finding out the truth about what happened at Quito.

'Lastly, you indicate your desire to be a learner, "I do want to maintain the posture of a learner in every area of my life. Can I learn more in the years ahead about how to help people who are victims of abuse, and how to help prevent abuse? I believe that's possible and am committed to an ongoing pursuit of new understandings and insights. I long to grow in wisdom in every area, this one included." It has been six years since the MSC [Mamou Steering Committee] first met with you and [two names omitted]. When there is so much information available on how to deal with systemic, institutional abuse it is not a reasonable defense to plead being on a learning curve."

Yet another example in the 1999 words of a high C&MA official -- one that actually indicates his knowledge of the abuse.

"[Name omitted], thank you for these gracious words. I understand and appreciate your heart. About Bongolo, I am thinking carefully through an appropriate course of action in relation to the one person who was there about whom we share concerns. I know that there are people who were hurt by him, and want to do two things. First, he must be called to account for his actions. And second, people who were hurt must be helped. My commitment is to work at seeing both of these things accomplished."

Regrettably, these seemingly sincere words were not followed by meaningful action. Insofar as MKSN is aware, this particular offender remains in the employ of the C&MA. No action has been taken against him because (out of a continuing fear of retaliation even decades later) only one survivor is willing to provide information against him. The referenced C&MA administrator seemingly could provide the necessary corroborating evidence, if he so desired. In addition, information from other boarding schools, or the State Department investigation referenced later

in this section, could potentially enable the denomination to take action against him. Again, the denomination's passive approach has hindered attainment of a more complete and just outcome.

In 1994, because of the initial denial by the C&MA of individual abuse claims, five Mamou alumni formed the Mamou Steering Committee, representing about 200 former students from that school.⁶

The typical early C&MA response (when there was one) was that the survivors should stop their activity, because they were going to hurt the name of Jesus. (One might ask a question at this point: If abuse of this kind is not God's fault, then how can God be hurt by the process of dealing with it in a loving and Christ-like manner?) Some C&MA members actually claimed the Mamou Steering Committee was trying to "destroy the church".⁷

During these years, prolonged periods of delay in the C&MA's official reaction were the norm. Overall, correspondence from survivors and parents was ignored, delayed or produced superficial responses. On one occasion, a high C&MA official responded to survivors' inquiries by essentially saying he was too busy to look into their accusations because he was preparing for an upcoming Council. Another overture was parried with the explanation that the C&MA was too busy planning for its entry into Russia as a mission field. Mamou survivors were shunned at the 1994 Pittsburgh, PA Annual Council. That particularly uncaring response deterred healing in significant ways for those involved.

In 1996, responsibility for dealing with the MK abuse issue was removed from the Division of Overseas Ministries at C&MA headquarters, and assumed by the Alliance Board of Managers (now Directors).

A threshold event during this period was when Rev. Ralph Shellrude wrote to numerous denominational leaders to advise them of the abuse. This seemed to raise general awareness in the denomination to the point where the issue could no longer be ignored.

Subsequently, an Independent Commission of Inquiry (ICI) was formed in 1996, and met in various locations to meet with survivors who came forward. Many alumni were fearful, and did not want to talk about the abuse they had suffered. Others had achieved some equilibrium in their lives and did not wish to disturb it. Despite this, out of about 280 Mamou alumni, 80 survivors reported to the ICI.

⁶ As mentioned, students from non-C&MA families were occasionally sent to C&MA boarding facilities. They, too, were subject to abuse. In some cases they apparently were singled out for additional mistreatment because some school personnel viewed them as coming from a Satanic background. (These presumably were the same church workers who would staff a Vacation Bible School in the States in order to reach out to – not abuse -- unbelieving children.) Descriptions of this even more reprehensible aspect of the Mamou environment were provided to C&MA leaders in the 1990's. Reading those accounts, one wonders at the quality of Godly witness evidenced by such vile treatment of non-C&MA children by so-called "Christians".

⁷ In its report years later, the C&MA's Independent Commission of Inquiry (see below) acknowledged that there was no foundation for such accusations.

In its 1997 report, the ICI related evidence of systematic abuses of children by some C&MA staff dating at least back to the 1950's. To the best knowledge, no in-depth effort was made to include the non-C&MA survivors in this activity.

From the 1997 ICI report:

“The ICI considered in detail the reports concerning twenty individuals. Of those, six individuals (three male house parents and three female house parents) were specifically found not to have committed any acts at Mamou which could be characterized as abusive. Another four individuals (two female house parents, one male houseparent, and one female teacher) were involved in at least one incident which was specifically found not to be abusive, but which did indicate a lack of appropriate adult judgment or sensitivity to the needs of the children involved. These individuals were invited by the ICI, as part of its pastoral (rather than disciplinary) function, to work with the ICI to offer expressions of apology and/or clarification to former students who indicate to the ICI that they wish to participate in this.

Seven former Mamou staff, and two former students were determined by the ICI to have committed acts of one or another form of abuse, according to the standards and criteria discussed above. Of these nine individuals, three are deceased, two are not members of the C&MA, and four are retired official C&MA workers.”

Those few still under church authority were formally disciplined and their Alliance ministry credentials were lifted. No legal action was (or likely could have been) taken. For some survivors, the meager administrative sanctions available seemed inadequate to remediate the lifetime of anguish and spiritual struggle they had endured. Thus, time had put the most of the perpetrators beyond earthly justice.

It is worth noting that this limited outcome could, in part, be due to the fact the Alliance did not adopt a particularly energetic investigative posture in this matter. For instance, the denomination's leaders could have given the ICI the latitude to seek out and incorporate corroborating evidence from other mission schools beyond Mamou. It had in its possession information about abuse at other locales; it could have directly solicited input from all school alumni, rather than confining the inquiry to those from Mamou. It likewise could have sought from the State Department under the Freedom of Information Act, the records of the government investigation of abuse of the civilian children boarded at Mamou. (That information would have potentially supported allegations against one Mamou perpetrator who – as of 2007 -- remained an accredited Alliance worker.) And the ICI certainly could have admitted evidence resulting from recovery of repressed memories – a well-recognized dynamic in child abuse cases (albeit one that requires careful individualized evaluation). An adjusted, additional level of corroboration could have been devised for evidence based in part on recovered memory, and which well might have revealed a very different abuse profile.

And of course, the ICI process itself was secretive beyond any level necessary to protect the identity of participating survivors. The ICI's management-related recommendations to C&MA

leaders were suppressed and only obtained with difficulty. That signaled to survivors that the denomination had not fundamentally changed in its formerly reticent response posture.

In 1999 -- more than a decade after initial allegations were raised -- the C&MA sponsored a retreat in Atlanta involving MKs, missionary parents, and facilitators. There, then C&MA President Peter Nanfelt made a public apology, saying,

“I want to publicly apologize to the Mamou alumni and their families on behalf of all of us who are part of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, for the fact that as a denomination, we failed to provide adequate oversight of the school. We are sincerely grieved that because of our failure, a substantial number of students were subjected to emotional, physical, sexual, and even spiritual abuse. We feel a deep sense of sorrow because of the pain and hurt which many of the Mamou alumni experienced during their time at the school and for many years thereafter.”

Despite asking for forgiveness, this presentation was viewed poorly by some survivors due to Rev. Nanfelt’s perceived past role in obstructing progress on responding to the issue.⁸

Response to this event was also dampened for some by problems in setting it up. A miserly decision to not fund certain spousal expenses telegraphed a less-than-loving tone at the outset. Quite notable was the refusal to fund travel for key non-spousal participants, who could have provided an important level of support to some survivors at such a stressful time. Also, retreat planning included allowing former Mamou employees to attend – placing victims (those whom the retreat supposedly was to benefit) in contact with their perpetrators.

In addition, word reached survivors of what may have been an inartfully written post-ICI C&MA letter to former Mamou staff, which further diluted the impact of the public apology. Many survivors believe that other staff at Mamou also were culpable to some degree by their inaction. Mamou was a small compound in a quiet setting. Surely most personnel heard the screams, saw the soiled clothes, observed the fear-ridden behavior, and knew of the other clear manifestations of abuse by their peers. For some, knowledge of this letter effectively rubbed salt in the wounds that the retreat could have begun to heal.

Following the retreat, C&MA officials stated they would send copies of the apology to alumni who could not attend the reunion and would visit anyone who requested a meeting. The extent to which this actually occurred is unknown. And of course the C&MA continued to treat Mamou as an anomaly – despite survivors from other schools telling similar stories.

Of the other many available anecdotes illustrating the actual disrespect shown individual survivors, one is particularly illuminating. In this instance, two high C&MA officials openly discussed specific survivors in a public area. They derided survivor personal struggles and expressing highly judgmental comments about their spiritual status. Unbeknownst to them, one of the survivors was nearby and heard their comments. An apology of sorts emerged from the

⁸ In contrast, the lengthy, highly emotional response of the representative of the Canadian C&MA was generally received as genuine and loving.

aftermath. However, knowledge of such incidents further fueled survivor skepticism about the sincerity of the C&MA management team and its response to their situation.

In the intervening years, C&MA officials have cooperated sporadically and minimally with survivors, and specifically with MKSN and the Quito Alliance Academy Action Committee (formed as knowledge of abuses at that facility also emerged). While occasional face-to-face meetings were granted, no substantive changes occurred in the denomination's core approach to the issue. At no time were survivors meaningfully engaged in the Alliance response, much less in any forward-looking planning on an issue about which they were manifestly well qualified to assist. The SICG has operated with no contact whatsoever with survivor groups, losing a critical opportunity to establish some level of confidence in the C&MA's ongoing abuse-related programs. Rather than establish a meaningful, ongoing communications relationship with survivors – disseminating important information about what the organization was doing – survivors worked (and continue to work) in an information vacuum.⁹

C&MA leaders point to the fact that there are MKs who “successfully” attended its boarding facilities with no apparent problem. Many of them cite their own children as examples.¹⁰ No doubt in many cases this is quite true. But as is well known, no two children are alike. So it would be in the case of adjustment to the unnatural circumstances of mission boarding schools, and even more so when an abuse-laden environment was added to the mix.

One final observation. In a June 13, 2006 letter to one survivor, VP Fetherlin explained in detail the C&MA's (then) current posture on this issue. Some of the information thus provided was encouraging. However, he also indicated that a number of components of the recommendations now found in Section IV of this paper were not in the Alliance's management plan. This paper will urge reconsideration of the decisions that led to those portions of the Fetherlin letter.

⁹ This calls for a repeat of the caveat contained in footnote #1. Because the C&MA has failed to establish an effective, ongoing information flow with survivors, Sections II and III may be incomplete in some respects. For example, there may have been some leaders who held a more charitable view toward survivors, but whose positions were never acted on, and thus remain unknown to survivors. The C&MA may have held additional internal inquiries of an undisclosed nature. In Section III, the list of key leaders who were themselves (or who boarded their own children) at C&MA schools surely is incomplete. Regardless, the major thrust of these two sections remains valid.

¹⁰ As will be noted below, this may actually signify a core problem in the decision-making on this issue over the years. There would have been immense pressure on these leaders and their children not to report any abuse they suffered. The monoculture is a powerful force, particularly when careers are at stake, and the issues involved are as emotionally charged as this. An impartial party might also note that repressed memory potentially could also apply to the C&MA's leaders and their children. One would have to assume quite a bit to conclude that as students, they had been immune to the same abuse reported by others. Further, it is not implausible that these leaders and their children are under even more pressure to profess ideal or adequate adjustments. Consequently, memories could be even more deeply repressed in those individuals.

III. Current Status

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. -- Matthew 18:10"

"Fear, doubts, self-righteousness, shame."-- Explanation by C&MA VP Robert Fetherlin for the denomination's inadequate response to survivors.

"Time doesn't heal all wounds." -- Mamou Survivor

A sobering accompaniment to Christian leadership is the extra level of heavenly accountability attending that responsibility. Today's leaders are faced with the continuing obligation to right (to the degree possible) long-ago criminal, moral, and spiritual wrongs of its employees. They also are obliged to apply necessary course corrections in today's strategies.

To be sure, the methods the C&MA has adopted to deal with abuse accusations (Independent Commission of Inquiry, a retreat, some financial compensation, Ross Group, etc.) may have met the needs of some survivors. Others, however, need healing to come in additional ways. Importantly, when Quito survivors sought a healing response similar to that afforded the Mamou group, they were denied.

And it is not enough to say that the leaders in the late 80's and through the 90's were unfamiliar with the issue, and were groping for ways to do the right thing. The "learning curve" excuse can only carry so far. Literature on this subject was amply available then. Fundamentals of human nature and humane treatment were operative then. The Biblical imperatives to love, and to accord special consideration to children, were not waiting to be discovered.

(One is struck by a prominent statement in the 1999 "Final Report of the Mamou Investigation" by the C&MA Board of Managers. Page 1 states, "In its September 1995 meeting the Board of Managers received reports of the alleged abuses and accusations of "cover-up" and ..." The reason it is striking is the attempt to portray the problem as having only recently come to the attention of the Alliance. As noted on page 3, C&MA President Rambo was made aware of the Mamou accusations in 1987, and there were numerous other reports late in that decade as well. Dr. Rambo had direct input to the Board of Managers. Whether the breakdown was on the part of the C&MA administration for not reporting fully to the Board of Managers, or because the Board itself did not adequately monitor the administration, that statement is a dramatic mis-portrayal of the factual record. It is the kind of distortion that further fueled survivor skepticism about C&MA sincerity.)

Moreover, despite all it now says it has learned and how it claims to be concerned about the issue -- the Alliance has never engaged in a comprehensive survey of all alumni of all of its boarding schools to determine the actual scope of the problem and the needs of those involved.

To this day, the C&MA does not know the full extent of the historical problem, or – importantly – know with any assurance whether contemporary vestiges remain. And just as vitally, there is no objective indication that it has enacted sufficient safeguards to assure abuse is not occurring in the facilities with which it now contracts schooling for its missionary children.

Three major historical elements shape the current status of this matter -- bias in past decision-making, the failure to adopt a survivor's perspective in viewing the current situation, and the failure to fully include survivors in seeking solutions. We urge the Board to consider these three factors in turn.

Consider the Impact of Managerial Bias

Any responsible governing board is obligated to see that its decisions are made without obvious conflict of interest or bias. Yet it seems quite evident that there was the potential for both on the part of some key C&MA managers and decision-makers. (This is not pointed out in order to indict any person or persons involved in past actions. It is meant to highlight to the Board one of the reasons past decisions may have been flawed.) In fact, such bias may continue to this date. That is because a number of C&MA leaders still involved in the denomination's response either were themselves possibly victims of abuse, or had children in C&MA schools where abuse may have taken place.¹¹

Among numerous others, these key C&MA abuse-related decision-makers either were students at Alliance boarding facilities, or their children were students:

Peter Nanfelt
Paul Bubna

Robert Fetherlin
Phillip Skellie

David Kennedy
Arnold Cook

The C&MA's decision-making regarding MK abuse may have been skewed in this way for one, or both, of the following two reasons:

- *The first potential conflict could exist because these leaders were in denial about (or have repressed memories of) abuse they may have personally experienced (something very common to child abuse victims), or abuse they may have observed.*

This is not a speculative matter. One high C&MA official admitted in the mid-90's to a current MKSN Board member that he had been abused at an Alliance boarding school. This official was at that time in the headquarters office, and remains in an influential management position. Moreover, at the Atlanta retreat, a key continuing figure in the

¹¹ There is a reference on page 7 to one particular perpetrator who has long evaded responsibility in the face of persistent accounts of his activities. To this date, survivors who privately admit abuse at his hands are fearful he would retaliate against them if they came forward. One wonders if some of those involved in past C&MA decisions were not themselves abused by him, and still harbor deeply embedded fears that hinder in some way full pursuit of his crimes.

C&MA response group admitted personal knowledge of abuse by one accused perpetrator, and seemingly confided that he himself had been abused.

- *The second potential conflict could arise due to personal guilt or denial, because they had consigned their own children to facilities where they may have experienced similar abuse.*

The international ministries of the Alliance draws key headquarters personnel from its missionary force; the children of many managerial and administrative personnel were themselves in C&MA boarding schools. An outside observer cannot discount a very real possibility -- the current leadership group does not want deeper inquiries because they fear what they will learn about their own children's treatment. The wife of one high official expressed those very apprehensions to a Mamou survivor at the retreat.

Either case supports survivor misgivings about past C&MA actions and current motives.¹² It argues for a new assessment of where those actions have led the organization today, and a renewed determination to assure future actions are unbiased, effective, and overtly loving.

Justice and sound leadership principles suggest the need for planned management action to correct this situation. Justice (in the case of officials who were involved in concealing or minimizing past criminal actions) should be accompanied by organizational corrective action. But it also should include the same loving response toward them as urged toward MKs in this paper. First, because that is what Christ would want. But also because the officials themselves (or their children) may have suffered similar abuse and be dealing with it via repressed memory. They may truly believe that nothing happened -- even when it did. If that is the case, the road to their recovery and restoration may be far more difficult than of many other survivors.

Adopt Survivors' Perspective

To adequately respond to such a complex and emotionally-charged issue, C&MA leaders must understand and adopt a survivor perspective.

A logical place to start examining this component would be the 1997 ICI report.

“It is important to the children of Mamou that you hear who they are and who they have become - positive and negative - from their own perspectives.”

It is MKSN's view that for the C&MA to lovingly work toward a “justice and healing” outcome for its children, it is critical for denominational leaders to understand the viewpoint of the

¹² To be fair, some C&MA leaders surely must have been appalled when they learned of the Mamou abuse. It even is possible that a number of them wanted to do the right thing. But most seemingly were captured by the monoculture -- unable to conceive that such a thing could have happened, or that allegations of this type could be anything but the work of Satan. (One might more plausibly argue that the perpetrators had done the work of Satan, and that taking up the cause of the victims is the true work of the Lord -- righting those terrible sins of the past.) But those who held the real power to do the right thing fell short.

survivors. This requires setting aside preconceived notions about what the denomination has done in this area to date.

First, this is necessary because many of the survivors continue to carry very real emotional scars from childhood abuse. It doesn't take an in-depth review of the literature on this topic to know that this is likely to be the case. It is widely recognized that denial, recovered memories, adult-onset emotional issues, and other significant mental health symptoms can be correlated with child abuse. Any competent mental health professional will attest to the fact that there is no single solution to situations of this type and that individuals may require very different approaches to resolution of those issues.

Second, today's C&MA leaders must understand the additional trauma inflicted on those who raised this issue initially. The denomination's typical response to accusations for many years was skeptical and less than loving. The examples cited above of delayed responses, shunning, denial, and spiritual attacks constitute re-victimization.

Imagine, if one can, the opposite scenario: Adult survivors come forward with their stories. The C&MA immediately accepts those allegations as representing an important personal, organizational, and spiritual challenge. It spontaneously and immediately forms an investigative body. It sets up a professional support structure. It amply allocates funds to compensate survivors for past mental health services and payment of future counseling. And it offers representatives of the survivor group a meaningful role in future policy and operational decisions in this area.

How affirmed, respected, and loved the survivors would have felt! How much of Christ's own love might they have found lavished on them? How far might that have gone toward not just emotional, but spiritual healing and reconciliation?

Instead, as any qualified mental health professional would attest, denial of these objective realities by the Alliance has vastly compounded the pain and suffering of these individuals -- re-victimizing them. The fact is, despite the ICI, SICG, and employment of the Ross Group, the perception of some survivors is that the C&MA continues to take a minimalist course. After years of being largely ignored, in some cases reviled, often lied to, and at best seen as an irritant, they believe the C&MA continues to deal with them as it would with an aberrant, albeit persistent, child.¹³

In that context, it should not be surprising that some survivors still believe the C&MA to be insincere and others are contemplating legal action. The ICI process (and the SICG and Ross Group alternatives) may be sufficient for some. But a number of the survivors continue to believe that justice (for both perpetrators and for them) has not been, and is not likely to be,

¹³ It is true that some mission school students did not experience the same pervasively traumatic existence as others. It also is true that some survivors felt no apparent need for any C&MA intervention in their lives on this issue. Likewise, some believe that what the C&MA has already done for them is sufficient. But it also is true that some survivors are not yet reconciled to what happened to them, nor do they believe that the Alliance has done all that it can and should to help.

served by C&MA action. They have now concluded that the denomination is not inclined to ever fully and sincerely engage on this issue.

This paper, in small part, points C&MA leaders to the unfortunate realities of such a development. (See Appendix A) Litigating these cases would be costly. As knowledge of the court action spreads, it will likely bring disgrace on the organization. And worst of all, it very well may hamper in as yet undetermined ways, the C&MA's worldwide mission to spread the Gospel. The very evident experience of other denominations (most notably the Catholic Church) has been that denial and prolongation of such situations only leads to even greater internal disruption and external disrepute.¹⁴

And importantly, new developments in the legal arena certainly would not be conducive to productive interaction between MKSN and the C&MA, something MKSN has earnestly sought and continues to seek. (See Appendix A)

However, it is important to close this section by returning to emphasize its core message.

Until now, there has been little evidence displayed to survivors that their viewpoint is important, and has been taken into consideration by C&MA leaders. For the Alliance to move forward and complete the task it has undertaken in this area, that fundamental shift must occur. When it does take place, it will lead naturally to the next, and final, element of needed change.

Engender Meaningful Survivor Participation

The third component of this proposed new context for the Board to adopt is recognition that survivor representation and integral participation are essential elements of any future responsive or remedial actions by the C&MA.

It would seem that this ought to be an unnecessary discussion. Basic human relations principles underline the need to include all major stakeholders in a meaningful way when dealing with a problem and crafting solutions.¹⁵

Regrettably, the C&MA has not done that. There was some interaction attendant to setting up the Atlanta retreat. There was some consultation on the membership of the ICI. A meeting with key survivor representatives was held at the Colorado Springs headquarters. However, there has been

¹⁴ Two other factors are also worth mentioning. A professional documentary about abuse issues in C&MA boarding schools is in final preparation. Its potential public impact is an unknown factor to consider. And of course the Internet provides an ever-more-efficient means for people to network, exchange information, and organize around issues. There is no way of knowing how C&MA and non-C&MA survivors might eventually coalesce around this festering issue through that medium, in ways that the Alliance would find problematic.

¹⁵ One might add in passing that the C&MA's actual management team -- responsible for all key decisions on this issue over the last two decades -- has been totally male. This is not meant as a comment on the Alliance's personnel practices. It simply highlights another gap in the potentially biased decision-making matrix, since a large proportion of those victimized were female.

essentially no consistent opportunity for survivors to participate in important decision-making on the C&MA's response to the abuse issue. The centerpiece (now perhaps supplanted by the Ross Group) of the Alliance's ongoing response strategy – the Sensitive Issues Consultative Group (SICG) – has no C&MA survivor representation. There is no systematic feedback loop to survivors on SICG activities, much less C&MA abuse-related issues as a whole.

In order to take the Alliance seriously as it asserts its desire to achieve remediation and restoration, survivors must be a part of all core processes in the future. This would include offering full membership in decision-making bodies, providing relevant records and documents necessary to assess investigative activities and disciplinary action, and full participation in policy and procedure development and oversight. The choice of the individuals who would assume that role should be mutually agreed upon by survivors (represented in this instance by MKSN) and the C&MA Board.

Part of what the C&MA must overcome in taking this step is found in the ICI report.

“Many of the children at Mamou developed a forlorn sense of isolation, at times feeling deserted, or undefined. For some, this led to distrustful wariness which continues into adulthood. They reported learning to be distrustful, closed-mouthed, protective of their privacy, and introverted.”

As with the lengthy list of personal traits listed on page 5, these are objective factors in the daily lives of survivors – indisputably created by the Alliance and its employees. To remedy them, the C&MA must be willing to step out in a new direction. One of the ways to do that is to trust the survivors to participate in the management of their own future and help the denomination craft an improved management structure to prevent such abuses in the future.

The form that such participation would take poses an administrative challenge (and would be all the more problematic if litigation were to ensue). However, for future C&MA actions to be effective, a method must be found to assure survivors that their views are being fully considered and incorporated into all abuse-related processes within the denomination.

IV. What is Needed

*“Achieving God’s purposes involves taking faith-filled risks. This always involves change.”
– C&MA Core Values*

MKSN does not seek to engage in a debate over the past. The information presented in the above sections is only intended to provide context – to show how those events worked to shape what must now be done. And again, the ICI report is a useful reference point for a discussion of further remedial action.

“A meaningful response would include open and careful listening, demonstrated familiarity with the contents of this Report, and expression of sympathy and grief for the hurt that was suffered. Attempting to 'bring' a wounded person to wholehearted acceptance of the C&MA could cause further hurt.”

With that as a foundation, a number of concrete steps must necessarily flow from the above discussion. The Alliance must consider implementing the following measures:

1. Current leaders must accept and openly acknowledge that the C&MA’s past decision-making regarding the abuse issue has been directed by some individuals who may have had a serious conflict of interest.

This is not to suggest that disciplinary action or censure should result. However, recognition of that fact is an important step toward understanding why some of today’s policies are flawed and inadequate. It also suggests the need to significantly revise the Alliance’s management approach to abuse issues, both past and future.

2. The C&MA must again publicly and specifically acknowledge organizational responsibility for not just past abuse itself, but also for the unloving response to the early allegations and those who raised them (particularly the initial cadre of claimants), and its incomplete response in the intervening years.

Doing so would be an outward expression of the spontaneous Godly love that should characterize and infuse the Alliance’s response to criminal acts committed in its name by its employees.

3. The C&MA’s current leaders must grasp and adopt the perceptions of the abuse survivors, setting aside their own estimation of how the denomination’s actions should look to others.

This would best come in the form of a public acknowledgement of past deficits in this area, and an open (and continuously demonstrated) commitment to working in a more survivor-oriented context.

4. Organizational changes must take place to ensure that survivor representation and participation are meaningful components of any future responsive or remedial actions by the C&MA.

This is critical to the denomination's successful movement toward a comprehensive, permanent solution to this issue. Without integral survivor involvement in all relevant issues and decisions, future C&MA actions will continue to be infirm.

5. A comprehensive, fully independent accountability system must be established, covering allegations, investigations, and outcomes.

This system must include a meaningful reporting system reviewable by an independent outside entity, such as might be found in a standing independent commission of inquiry funded by multiple denominations. (As an agent selected and accountable only to the C&MA, the Ross Group does not fill that role.) Perhaps an existing inter-denominational or inter-organizational mechanism can be expanded to fill this function. A full-fledged accreditation process, such as that conducted by the many professional organizations, would be an ideal to work toward. The C&MA could be a particularly positive agent for change by initiating that kind of outcome, in cooperation with other denominations and mission organizations.

6. The C&MA should agree to submit its policies and procedures in this area to a mutually agreeable, external, independent review body.

Virtually all denominations are facing some type of problem in the area of abuse. Perhaps interlocked with the mechanisms recommended in number 5 above, this is yet another potential venue for the C&MA to take the initiative. Other means for accomplishing this objective are prime candidates for discussion with survivor representatives.

7. The C&MA must abandon the passive role now employed, whereby only those willing to come forward to make abuse claims are heard. If the C&MA is truly committed to loving and effective remedial action, it must act aggressively, taking the initiative to discover the complete scope of its abuse problem. This will show survivors that the denomination is truly interested in their welfare, not in a minimalist approach.

As a start, the Alliance must institute a program to actively inquire of former boarding school students from all locations regarding their experiences. This would entail commissioning a comprehensive survey of all alumni from all of its boarding schools (to include non-C&MA students), in order to determine the full extent of the abuse problem. As a further necessary initiative, the Alliance cannot be content to stint on training in this area for all of its current workers and children. Nor can it just contract out the boarding school function, neglecting an active oversight role at those locations. Without assurance that appropriate policy and programs, and quality staff -- properly trained and supervised -- are in place in contract facilities, conditions there can give rise to contemporary abuse just as they did in the C&MA-managed facilities.

8. *The C&MA should establish a fully-funded line item in its budget for MK abuse issues, including staff, travel, training, investigations, and survivor and family counseling.*

Put quite directly, in the real world there are few more substantive indicators of commitment than money. The Alliance should expect that enacting this entire scenario will be costly. However, it would be extremely short-sighted for cost to be a consideration in righting these wrongs. (The C&MA Board of Directors may wish to consider that this new expense has already been amortized, as generations of using “two-for-one” missionary assignments --permitted by sending children off to boarding schools -- have paid in advance for these legacy obligations.) Taking up the Catholic Church example ever so briefly once again, loving, proper, early action would have been far less costly to that organization. Such a lesson should be instructive to the C&MA.

9. *To the extent necessary and agreeable to key survivors, the C&MA should offer reparative financial settlements to those who have suffered additional pain and suffering due to the C&MA’s lack of an adequate response to their allegations.*

The above argument urging proactivity applies here as well. It would seem wise (and Biblically sound) for the C&MA to seek out the early claimants who are likely to comprise the most aggrieved among the survivors and to actively try to achieve an out-of-court resolution to their grievances.

V. Conclusion

There are two final, over-arching aspects to this presentation. The first is justice and its application. The second is about love.

It has been argued by C&MA staff that justice is not as important as abuse survivors' willingness to "forgive and forget." However, that particular phrase appears nowhere in Scripture. There is no Biblical text that even remotely supports the conjunction of those terms in the context of church leaders responding to criminal acts or to frank spiritual abuse committed by church employees.

Actually, it would seem Christ's own actions on the Cross provide the model for a proper response. When He forgave the dying thief his sins, Jesus could have lifted the convicted criminal down from the cross and saved his life, but He did not. Notwithstanding the heavenly forgiveness Christ provided, the thief still had to pay the earthly penalty for his crimes.

And so it should be with the perpetrators at Mamou and other Alliance facilities. The C&MA should resolve to aggressively pursue anyone – past or present – who abused/s its children. To the extent law and administrative procedures allow after all these years, they should be punished. Those in authority who acted in concert years later to conceal those crimes and abuses, and to reject the children who were so grievously harmed, should be insulated from further decisions in this area. And current leaders should continue to pursue -- in the best ways available to them – the restorative justice that Christ would want.

As to love, there can be no question that Christ would urge a continuing and thoroughly loving response to the issue of child abuse in the C&MA.

Sadly, many survivors have felt rejection, not love, from the Alliance. Some accept their lives and the scars that were flayed into them as children. Others do not. Some now have adjusted and believe they are adequately healed. Others are not. Some have a relationship with God that C&MA leaders would understand. Others continue to grapple with the aftermath of irreconcilable childhood juxtapositions -- teachings about a loving God, who was served by believers whose evil acts betrayed His Word and distorted their innocent lives.

Today's leaders have an additional opportunity to fulfill the Lord's will with regard to showing His love. A 1998 letter from the Mamou Steering Committee still represents today's challenge for the Alliance as it considers the needs of the most grievously wounded survivors.

"There are many other alumni from your schools who have been abused. Some of them have already come forward in one form or another; others have not yet told their stories to anyone. Some from these two groups of people may choose to pursue their allegations of abuse with you. How will they be treated by the C&MA? From our first encounter with the C&MA until the present ... the Mamou Steering Committee has been treated with less than respect. We have been misrepresented. We have been falsely accused of being non-Christian. We have been called losers. We have been marginalized. And we have been demonized for our efforts to enlighten the world with the truth of our MK

experiences. Our heartfelt desire is that no other MKs – past, present, or future – be abused as we were as children victims and now as adult survivors. How will the C&MA treat other former MKs who come forward? Will you minister to them – or will you demonize them? Will you show compassion – or will you discredit them and their reports? May God help us all.”

There is a Scripturally-mandated need for justice for the survivors of abuse at C&MA boarding facilities – something that has not been completely achieved. These were the children of the Alliance -- beloved by their parents. They also were God’s special children – somehow chosen or allowed to involuntarily surrender a normal family life for one of terror and pain.

So beyond justice, there is a powerful mandate to love them unconditionally and in meaningful ways. And there is a pressing current need to assure this kind of criminal behavior never again occurs under the banner of the Alliance. The C&MA Board of Directors has the responsibility of continuing to work to those important ends.

*“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.
- Matthew 18:6”*

Appendix A

MK Safety Net Position Paper

Litigation Issues

While it is not the purpose of this presentation to dwell on it, a brief discussion about litigation seems important. If the C&MA is to avoid large-scale, costly court action -- which will surely have an adverse impact on its image and ministry -- then for that reason alone its leaders should consider adopting a new course of action.

MK Safety Net will not be involved in any litigation against the C&MA for its management of the MK boarding school abuse scandal. But it recognizes the validity of the point of view held by those individuals who may choose to litigate this matter, and their right to seek justice on terms that are meaningful to them. But for the following reasons, MKSN believes the C&MA should re-engage the abuse issue as described in section IV of this paper.

1. Scripture shapes a preferred course of action in such matters -- one that first relies on interaction among believers, and only going to civil authorities as a last resort.
2. As an organization, MKSN believes that, if possible, avoiding litigation would be in the best interests of both those harmed by past Alliance actions and the denomination itself. It would be preferable if the desire by some survivors for specific, personalized action by the Alliance could be satisfied without going to court. The Alliance itself should be wary of where litigation will lead, both in tangible costs and intangible damage to its ministry.
3. MKSN believes there is a possibility (although not an assurance) that additional concrete steps by the Alliance could not only satisfy the interests of some of those most immediately contemplating a lawsuit, but also form a more durable foundation for resolving other similar claims in the future.

(To promote further healing and defuse this situation, MKSN urges the Alliance to approach those most immediately contemplating litigation and to offer some form of arbitrated settlement. By proposing this, MKSN is not representing that it has any knowledge of the type of settlement this would require, or indeed if those parties would be willing to even consider foregoing their right to sue. It would be up to the Alliance and those individuals to establish a framework for accomplishing that. This will likely be costly, but it would involve far less money, and have a far less adverse impact on the world-wide ministry of the Alliance, than protracted litigation would entail.)

4. MKSN believes that in the future, it is essential that there be personal, face-to-face involvement by MKSN representatives in actual decision-making on this issue. For survivors to truly believe they are important to the Alliance, they must have a full seat at the table -- something that has not been the case up to this point.

(The Board's retention of the Ross Group as an alternate avenue for claimants to use is a recent example of the defective approach used up until now. Whatever beneficial contribution this new process may make to the final mix, it was done unilaterally, with survivors having no input. As an agent of the Board, selected without survivor participation and operating without meaningful, ongoing, survivor participation or oversight into its workings, that process can hardly be viewed by survivors as impartial. Moreover, the initial denial in November 2007 of an MKSN request for redacted [that is, purged of identifying complainant information] data on the workings of the Ross Group does not inspire confidence on the part of MKSN in this mechanism. This initial impression has been somewhat reinforced by Mr. Ross' failure to follow up with one member of MKSN on a proposed information exchange regarding that survivor's own experience.)

5. Finally, MKSN urges the C&MA Board to consider new initiatives in this area because it recognizes that the day litigation is actually filed, it could become significantly more difficult for the Alliance to work cooperatively with MKSN and affected individuals. While MKSN does not plan to be a party to the case, there almost inevitably will be bleed-over between the individual actions and the organization's interests. Without doubt, the respective lawyers will tell their clients to stop sharing information and cease communicating with any other party on anything even vaguely relating to the abuse issue. Also, once litigation gains momentum, the Ross Group process might grind to a halt, floundering on confidentiality and conflict of interest issues, as potential claimants weigh whether or not to trust Ross, or reserve their prerogatives for future court action.