

Investigation Finds Ravi Zacharias Guilty of Sexual Misconduct; RZIM Board Apologizes

Editor's Note: Because of its graphic content, Charisma News has chosen not to link to the investigation report mentioned below. However, a link to this statement is available as a part of the statement from RZIM referenced in this story.

Renowned apologist and Bible teacher Ravi Zacharias was guilty of multiple instances of sexual misconduct and abuse, an independent report commissioned by Ravi Zacharias International Ministries has concluded. RZIM is now apologizing to victims of its founder, who died of cancer last May, and asking forgiveness as it seeks a way forward.

Released on Thursday by the Atlanta-based law firm of Miller & Martin, the investigation report said Zacharias lied in his 2017 statement that "I have never engaged in inappropriate behavior of any kind." Through multiple interviews conducted with massage therapists and others who interacted with Zacharias over a period of years, the report reveals a pattern of gross sexual misconduct as well as inappropriate texts and emails and one accusation of rape.

RZIM released a statement about the allegations Thursday via its website. It includes the public release of Miller & Martin's unedited investigation report as well as an acknowledgment of its veracity, statements of belief in the victimized women's testimonies, repentance for RZIM's actions in the wake of the allegations and a plan for restitution and organizational reform.

"To be victimized by unwanted sexual contact, advances and

behavior is horrendous," the statement reads in part. "It is diametrically opposed to everything we believe about the value and dignity of every single person. We believe not only the women who made their allegations public but also additional women who had not previously made public allegations against Ravi but whose identities and stories were uncovered during the investigation. ... We are devastated by what the investigation has shown and are filled with sorrow for the women who were hurt by this terrible abuse."

RZIM's statement also refers to allegations from Lori Anne Thompson who, with her husband, brought forth accusations against Zacharias of inappropriate conduct in 2017. "We were wrong," the statement reads. "Our trust in Ravi's denial of moral wrongdoing and in his deceptive explanations of emails and other records that became public was severely misplaced, and our failures in 2017, including our failure to commission an independent investigation at that time, allowed tremendous pain to continue to be caused in the Thompsons' lives."

As a part of its repentance, the organization acknowledges its part in unknowingly perpetrating the "series of extensive measures" Zacharias engaged in to conceal his behavior. RZIM says it recognizes that "in situations of prolonged abuse, there often exist significant structural, policy and cultural problems. It is imperative that where these things exist in our organization, we take focused steps to ensure they are properly diagnosed and addressed."

RZIM also asks forgiveness for its statement of Sept. 15, 2020, which it says "lacked compassion and concern and did not communicate that we would take the allegations seriously," which it says was "wrong in tone and wrong in the impression that it represented the entire staff."

RZIM also set forth a plan for the future that includes assisting the victims of Zacharias' abuse, engaging victim advocate Rachael Denhollander as consultant, adviser and

confidential liaison who will “help guide the process of care, justice and restitution for those who have been victimized.”

The ministry says it has also engaged management compliance consulting firm Guidepost Solutions to evaluate RZIM’s “structures, culture, policies, processes, finances and practices” including survivor care for any survivors and witnesses, including any who may not have come forward.

“The findings of this investigation have convinced us more than ever of the necessity and sufficiency of the gospel,” the statement concludes. “No one is without the need for a savior. Sin resides in the heart of every human being. Jesus is the only person who is exactly who he says he is and the only savior worthy of our ultimate trust and worship. Jesus is fully committed to truth and to justice, and he unqualifiedly stands with victims.”

Please join the Charisma News staff in prayer over this situation including for Zacharias’ family, the RZIM staff and all victims of his actions through the years. {eo}

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