

Women Report Sexual Abuse at the Hands of New Tribes Mission Leaders

Several women have come forward, alleging significant abuse at the hands of New Tribes Mission leaders, according to NBC News.

More than a half-dozen women tell NBC they were abused while attending mission schools in the 1980s-90s, particularly in the Philippines and Senegal.

According to NBC, the women say New Tribes covered up the abuse for years and scared the victims into silence by telling stories of Africans going to hell or missionaries ending up in foreign prisons if the allegations ever got out.

“The scariest thing is thinking that they’re still out there,” says Jaasiel Mashek. Mashek says she was abused by a “dorm dad” at school in the Philippines. “Who knows what has happened since they’ve been back?”

Abuse allegations haunted New Tribes for years. In 1997, New Tribes conducted a study on its own to investigate.

By 2009, further abuse reports forced New Tribes hired the GRACE organization to investigate. GRACE, an acronym for Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment, is run by Billy Graham’s grandson, Basyle “Boz” Tchividjian.

GRACE published its report in 2010.

According to the report:

In the 1980s and the 1990s, New Tribes Mission (NTM) operated a boarding school in the village of Fanda, in the country of Senegal. The children of missionaries were housed at this

school, sometimes over the strong objections of their parents. The workers NTM placed in charge of these children were often cruel and many of the boys and girls placed there endured sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse. Much of this behavior was criminal. ...

The authoritarian and pious leadership, coupled with an ultimate disregard for the true value and significance of children, created an atmosphere open to spiritual, sexual, physical and emotional abuse at Fanda.

Child abuse at Fanda was widespread and routine and involved numerous perpetrators. In reviewing the documents provided by NTM and in conducting dozens of interviews, GRACE found credible evidence of countless criminal acts committed at Fanda. Although abuse occurred at least from the middle 1980s, the first formal inquiry of child abuse at Fanda was done by NTM in 1997 and identified just 2 perpetrators: dorm parent David Brooks (who was determined to have committed child sexual abuse) and dorm parent Phil Gates (who was determined to have committed both physical and emotional abuse of children).

Altogether, children were put at risk by being placed under the care and supervision of David Brooks, while 39 children were put at risk by being placed under the care and supervision of Phil Gates. Many of these children had been under the care of both David Brooks and Phil Gates during their years at Fanda.

For the full report, [click here](#).

“You have individuals who physically and sexually abused children who have gone on to live ‘normal lives.’ You have an organization that had to deal with some press and people talking about it but in large part has moved on and continues to do their work around the world,” Tchividjian tells NBC.

“And then, you’ve got the scores and scores of missionary kids. So many of them are struggling to get by in life, struggling to comprehend, ‘Why is this man who sexually abused me not in jail, not in prison? Why is this man serving in church, living what appears to be a normal life?’” Tchividjian says.

Several victims shared the details with the *Today* show for NBC.

“Deeply religious organizations are great places for pedophiles to hide,” victim Kari Mkitson says. “The culture of silence was built into the training. ‘Do not gossip, do not speak about anything that doesn’t edify.’ It’s just a recipe for abuse.”

New Tribes Mission, now known as Ethnos 360, released a statement following the NBC story:

As we watched the interviews of the victims of horrific abuse, we are heartsick. The actions of the perpetrators go against everything we believe about the value of children and our responsibility to protect them.

While we grieve these actions and know we cannot change the past, we continue to work to see perpetrators brought to justice and remain committed to the safety of children.

Since those early days, our organization has incorporated significant child safety training, updated policies and extensive screening. These are mandatory for all members. Education of children is also handled very differently today. Most of our overseas members choose homeschooling for their families or have access to a daytime-only schooling option. During this 2018-2019 school year, only seven children of our members (worldwide) are boarding at our schools.

We have also established a process, called IHART, which is tasked with reviewing any historical allegations.

Again, we are heartbroken for the women who shared their painful stories on the recent Today show. We remain committed to cooperating with any new or ongoing pursuit of prosecution of those who have harmed children.

Watch the video for the victims' testimonies.