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Investigators Submit Report of Bangladesh Missionary

Harrisburg, PA – An independent investigation has documented sex abuse by a medical missionary for the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE). The investigative report also concludes there was a lack of oversight and action by past ABWE leadership in confronting the offender.

Professional Investigators International (Pii) LLC recently delivered the results of the investigation into Donn Ketcham, an ABWE missionary and physician serving in Bangladesh for approximately 25 years. The investigation was commissioned by ABWE as a result of Victim/Survivors speaking out and bringing the situation to the attention of the broader ABWE leadership.

The report finds that during his tenure with ABWE, Ketcham engaged in sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual abuse of minors and adults under the guise of medical care. His employment was terminated in 1989 after he confessed to sexual abuse of the 14-year-old daughter of a fellow missionary.

“There is no amount of remorse, regret or shame that can make up for the suffering and pain this abuse has caused,” said Al Cockrell, Interim President and former Board member of ABWE. “We are offering to meet with the victims in-person to express our deepest apology, to pay for counseling for them, and to ensure them we have implemented measures to prevent such deplorable behavior again.”

The leadership teams at ABWE during the time of Ketcham’s abuse have been replaced and the mission has adopted new “best practices” Child Protection Policy and a top-tier mission-wide training and educational program about child protection and how to report violations. It has also notified law enforcement authorities, providing them a copy of the final investigative report, and health professional organizations of Ketcham’s misconduct.

“What Donn Ketcham did was reprehensible, and ABWE’s lack of oversight and action was simply inexcusable,” Cockrell said. “We are committed to assisting the Victim/Survivors, and to a course of change across the entire organization that will result in ABWE serving and protecting our children, staff and missionaries to the best of our ability.” Cockrell said the new Child Protection Policy more clearly defines abusive actions and it also sets up clear lines of accountability. “It’s clear that Ketcham’s actions were absolutely unacceptable, and children suffered as a result,” Cockrell said. “Our new policies are a significant step toward protecting children. We are committed to a culture that protects children.”

Over the course of the three-year investigation, Pii interviewed 204 current and former ABWE Board members, administration, staff, missionaries, Victim/Survivors, and family members of the Victim/Survivors. Pii collected and reviewed more than 14,000 pages of documents, including correspondence, personnel files, website archives, investigation notes, and Board meeting minutes. Additionally, Pii set up a web-based portal to facilitate communication between the investigators and



other interested parties, including Victim/Survivors and their families, witnesses, missionaries, and other ABWE employees.

The full report already has been made available to the Victim/Survivors, past ABWE leaders whose actions are questioned in the report, supporting churches and others. “We hope our transparency will contribute in some small way to healing for the victims,” Cockrell said. “And that will provide a serious admonition to current and future ABWE administrations and other organizations with children in their care.”

The Association of Baptists for World Evangelism, Inc. (ABWE) is an unaffiliated, independent Baptist mission agency based in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania. ABWE has more than 900 missionaries serving in 60 countries. For more information on ABWE, please visit their website at www.abwe.org. For more information about this investigation, please visit abwe.org/protecting-our-children.