

20th December 2020

Dear RZIM Senior Leadership and Board of Directors,

As this year winds down and we look ahead to 2021 — and with that, anticipate the results of the investigation surrounding Ravi Zacharias — I wanted to write to you all following up from my letter on 9<sup>th</sup> December. In the first part of that letter, I articulated a number of issues around the internal communication by RZIM's senior leadership to the wider team that I believe have led to a serious loss of trust in the leadership. Due to the leak and its subsequent circulation in the media, that letter is perhaps being read now as though it constitutes a comprehensive overview of everything I take to have gone wrong with the organisation. However, in reality I previously focussed only on a certain subset of issues by virtue of the fact that it was an internal document intended in part to explain why junior team members find it difficult to express their concerns to the leadership. The particular examples I used were chosen because I made the decision only to use examples for which I was an eyewitness, hence the focus on certain members of the senior leadership team and not others.

I still fully stand by the contents of the first letter, and the many pieces of feedback that I have subsequently received indicate that the perspective I shared was by no means unique to me; however, as mentioned above, that letter was not intended to be a comprehensive overview of my views and concerns related to RZIM. There are, on further reflection, a number of issues that I did not cover in the first letter but which I believe are equally — perhaps even more — significant than those that I raised in the first letter.

The issues I have in mind centre on the governance of the organisation, and on what I and many others take to be a litany of missteps by the Global Board of Directors. I offer the following list:

- The failure to properly investigate the sexting allegations in 2017 has come back to haunt the ministry. Very serious red flags were raised by Ravi's secretive use of BlackBerry Messenger to maintain a relationship with a woman not his wife for over two years, and by the infamous "bid this world goodbye" email exchange on 29th October 2016. The proper response to this by the board would have been to immediately launch a full independent investigation by an organisation with recognised expertise in such matters, and not to have relied upon the C&MA's internal disciplinary inquiry which was only conducted much later and did not even yield a publicly accessible report.
- The leadership's task force that reviewed the sexting allegations in 2017-18 — convened and led by Ravi's daughter — lacked sufficient accountability and structure. Task force members were apparently inexperienced in the relevant matters, unduly loyal to Ravi, and from my vantage point appeared to ignore or attempt to explain away material that pointed in the direction of Ravi's guilt, thereby becoming a means for Ravi to effectively mislead the rest of the team. That team's ongoing loyalty to and admiration for Ravi has served — to the present day — to perpetuate a false understanding of his character and actions, and to marginalize or even chastise those who raise concerns to the contrary.
- The board's support for the Non-Disclosure Agreement between Ravi/the Zacharias Estate and the Thompsons has, as I noted in the first letter, placed the speaking team in a deeply compromised position, given that NDAs in these sorts of cases are rightly viewed by the watching world with profound suspicion. Rather than support it, the board ought to have publicly called for its lifting.
- The board's public reaffirmation on 25th September 2020 of Ravi's highly implausible narrative regarding the sexting scandal has further eroded the public credibility of this ministry, particularly in view of the release earlier in September 2020 of further material on the sexting scandal that heavily favours Lori Anne's narrative over Ravi's — namely, phone logs, a shipping receipt for a gift from Ravi to Lori Anne, written testimonies by Lori Anne and Brad, and the corroboration by the coun-

sellors Jerry and Denise Basel of Lori Anne's sincere and distraught state of mind when she wrote to Ravi on the 29th October 2016.

- The board's first public statement on the spa allegations was catastrophic in the way it appeared to flatly reject the possibility of the allegations being true, and hence, to imply that the female eyewitnesses were lying. The second statement was better, but the damage was already done. It may well turn out that the female eyewitnesses have been unwilling to speak with the Miller & Martin investigation in part because of the tone of the first public statement.
- The decision to keep Sarah Davis in place as Chair of the Board and Global CEO whilst her late father is being investigated for sex crimes has placed both Sarah and the team reporting to her in a deeply compromised position. It is not fair either to Sarah or to team members for it to be the case that very difficult questions that team members have about Ravi's behaviour must ultimately be posed to his daughter. Nevertheless, neither the board nor senior leaders appear to have seriously asked for her recusal.
- The decision to use a law firm to investigate the spa allegations was highly questionable, particularly given that Miller & Martin is not recognised as having expertise in the investigation of sexual abuse in the context of Christian ministry. Moreover, victims of sexual abuse are understandably deeply wary of engaging with an investigation that stands in an attorney-client relationship to their abuser. There are a number of firms that specialise in conducting investigations into the very sort of situation the ministry finds itself in, but apparently the board opted not to engage with any such firms. If it should turn out that the female eyewitnesses have not engaged with the Miller & Martin investigation, that will have been an entirely predictable consequence of the decision to set up the investigation in the way the board has done. Even if Ravi were innocent, no one would believe the board's investigation, no matter how thorough, when the Chair of the Board and Global CEO is his daughter and when his wife is on the board.
- The reluctance to pledge that Miller & Martin's full report would be accessible to the global staff team and public, only confirmed as of this week, has been suggestive of a posture that seeks to control the narrative and engage in damage control. This, of course, is the opposite of the stated commitment to know and share the truth. The same reluctance to confirm that the investigation's mandate specifically included the sexting scandal is just as problematic. Similarly, the board has still not publicly invited other victims to come forward with a process that is confidential and supportive — a step that is not only standard, but should be among the first actions when commencing an investigation.
- The decision to appoint Judy Dabler as the ombudsman in this case and continue utilizing her conciliation services has been further demoralizing to staff internally, and would be further damaging to our reputation externally if her involvement becomes more widely known. Dabler's training and conciliation methods are at best questionable and at worst dangerous, and have caused considerable confusion and pain amongst our team. Furthermore, Dabler's particular approach is largely repudiated by sexual abuse victims and many in the advocate community as improper and harmful, and there is ample documentation exposing the risks and weaknesses of her approach — including in the Sankey orphanage scandal which sadly hits close to home. In the near future, the board and senior management must pursue input and counsel from respected organizations and individuals experienced with sexual abuse situations and related trauma, and retain proper resources to help the team process what may very well be devastating news following the Miller & Martin report.
- The failure to file Form 990s for the past few years has allowed suspicions — whether justified or not — to grow around various aspects of the financial practices of the ministry. Most particularly, the board's continued secrecy, not only to the employees they oversee, but also to the public who rightly want full accountability, has irreparably damaged the board's credibility and legitimacy.

- Finally, staff have been kept in the dark about the board's contingency plans for a potential guilty verdict. Staff's futures are at stake. Such lack of clarity over such grave matters inevitably leads to desperate behaviour, such as leaking.

More examples could be given, but I believe that these are illustrative of some profound problems with the governance of this organisation. As I stated in the first letter, I take the spa allegations as investigated by *Christianity Today* and *World* magazine to have significant credibility. There is already reason to take drastic action, and this will only be further underscored if the report from Miller & Martin's investigation should uphold the credibility of the allegations.

It pains me to say that the only way I can see the public credibility of this organisation being restored is for there to be a brand new Global Board of Directors and Global CEO, none of whom are Zacharias family members, and to file Form 990s retrospectively for the years they haven't been filed and from henceforth. Please understand that any number of the problems outlined would provide the basis for such a drastic decision, yet there are multiple areas of weighty concern. Moreover, there will need to be a full independent investigation into the conduct of the board and executive leadership through these crises. If such an investigation is not conducted at the initiative of this ministry, I fear that the press will have no hesitation in conducting such an investigation themselves, leaving our team and ministry partners even more vulnerable.

It is clear that Ravi's reputation cannot be salvaged at this point. However, I firmly believe that this wonderful global team of apologist-evangelists can thrive and flourish once again — but only if radically humbling steps are taken very soon.

In Christ,  
Max Baker-Hytch