

An Open Letter from Kanakuk Abuse Survivors

Mr. Joe T. White
CEO and Chairman of the Board
Kanakuk Ministries
1353 Lake Shore Drive
Branson, MO 65616

We are survivors of Kanakuk abuse and their allies. We have endured child sexual abuse, extortion, silencing, physical abuse, harassment, aggressive legal tactics, public denial of said abuses, and much more, all at the hands of Kanakuk Ministries and its affiliated entities, and all while under your family's leadership. We are only a small fraction of the Kanakuk survivors, yet our collective abuse experiences span from the 1950s to 2022. We have been abused and silenced for far too long and are now joining hands to stand up for accountability and justice—and to stop ongoing and future abuse.

Together, we are petitioning Joe White, Kanakuk Ministries, and all affiliated entities to:

1. **Admit to known failures.** Publicly address known institutional misconduct, including dismissing clear signs of predatory behavior and child sexual abuse, as well as covering up said abuses once known. Repent of hostile and aggressive behavior and manipulation tactics carried out by Kanakuk officers and on Kanakuk's behalf that have intimidated and retraumatized victims. Own these actions rather than excusing them as the responsibilities of your legal counsel, insurance companies, or as being at the request of survivors themselves.
2. **Release victims from their NDAs.** Stop the silencing. Victims must be released from NDAs and all similar clauses. Cease the use of all legal intimidation tactics and tools that inhibit healing and limit victims' voices and truth from reaching the public sphere (see [NDAFree.org](https://www.ndafree.org)). We are supported by 25,000+ signatures in this plea: <https://www.change.org/p/release-kanakuk-victims-from-their-ndas>.
3. **Invite an independent investigation.** Seek and publish the truth. Commission an external investigation into Kanakuk Ministries and all affiliates. A diverse panel of survivors must be involved in this process, including in the selection of a mutually agreed-upon law firm to execute the investigation. Make the process transparent, publish investigation results, and adopt any remedial measures recommended per the investigation.

The scope of the investigation must include (but shall not be limited to):

- a. The extent to which staff, senior leadership, and the board of directors played a role in:
 - i. Reacting to clear signs and reports of predatory behavior and child sexual abuse;
 - ii. Formally reporting incidents of child sexual abuse (per mandatory reporting laws); and
 - iii. Disclosing knowledge of the above in legal proceedings and public statements to date;
- b. The use of NDAs and similar clauses, as well as an examination of existing settlement agreements to determine validity, scope, and whether such agreements involved fraud in the inducement;
- c. The sufficiency of Kanakuk's existing policies and procedures in preventing and responding to abuse, which shall include an audit of the internally created "Kanakuk Child Protection Plan;" and
- d. Recommendations for:
 - i. Holding staff, senior leadership, and board members accountable for any negligence and/or recklessness;
 - ii. Restitution for victims using trauma-informed methods, such as a victims' compensation fund; and
 - iii. Preventing future abuse, including clear guidance for fiduciary practices and governance structures that will provide the objective oversight necessary to uncover risks and failures to disclose, while protecting whistleblowers at all Kanakuk entities and facilities.