

First Alex Terry wrote to Mars Hill:

I was hoping for a comment from Mars Hill about this post <<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/warrenthrockmorton/2014/10/01/mars-hill-global-fund-help-the-helpless-or-use-the-helpless/>> from Warren Throckmorton. In it, he reveals an alleged memo coming from Mars Hill about intentionally deceiving donors concerning the Global Fund. The existence of this memo is very damning, but before jumping to conclusions I would like to hear what Mars Hill has to say. Is this memo legit?

Thank you...I admit that I am not optimistic that this email will even be read, but I thought it would be best to give it a shot.

On October 8, Justin Dean replied:

Hey Alex,

I got your message below and your voicemail. I'd be happy to provide you some more info. The memo posted on that blog is not an official memo or active working document, and to the best of my knowledge it never was. I'm not sure where it came from. Most likely it was a doc somebody on staff made as a proposal and it never went anywhere from there. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have about Global. Obviously it was never our intention to deceive donors, and to date we have received very few comments from actual donors who have been confused. You probably can find answers to a lot of questions at <http://marshill.com/globalfaq>

Hope that helps.

Thanks,

Justin Dean

Later that same day, Alex replied (the material quoted in his email is from the [Mars Hill Global FAQs](#)):

Thank you Justin, I appreciate you responding to my email. It is discouraging to read a memo (even as a proposal) where the intention is to trick and mislead people to give to a certain fund. I hope your understanding is correct that it was not a working memo and was never treated as such. I went to the link that you provided and there was some interesting stuff on there, particularly this paragraph:

***Where have past gifts been used?***

*During fiscal years 2009-2014, over \$10MM dollars has been given to Mars Hill Church by the Mars Hill Global Family. During that same time period \$22.48MM has been spent on church planting in the US, India and Ethiopia. In 2009-11 over 80% of funds given by the Mars Hill global family went to Acts 29 church planting and funds were consistently spent in India for church planting in each of those years. In 2012- 2014*

*expenditures for church planting efforts in India and Ethiopia were increased with the preponderance of expenses related to church plants and replants in the U.S.*

I couldn't tell from the FAQ on what the church spent on missions from 2012-14 and where it was spent. Is it possible to break down the yearly giving for those years to the Global Fund and what it was spent on?

Thanks again for responding. As a Christian and an auditor, these types of things always interest me and I am always willing to hear both sides.

Alex

Justin Dean replied still on October 8:

Alex,

I agree that's disappointing. It's disappointing to learn people would think that we, as a church, would deliberately plan to mislead or deceive people.

Despite what you may have read on blogs, we never had a separate fund for Global so we don't have separate accounting for Global. We have used some confusing communications in the past, and have done much to correct that, but Global has never been a designated fund. We do spend money on church planters in Ethiopia and India (as indicated in the FAQ), but we don't provide specific accounting of our different expenses. Just like we don't provide how much we specifically spent on pens and tape, we don't break out other expenses. I hope that makes sense.

As an auditor I'm sure you'll appreciate that we submit to outside CPA firms to review our financials, as well as submit to the ECFA who has reviewed our financials and in particular has reviewed in detail our donations from our Global audience and all communications and efforts around Global.

I appreciate you reaching out to look at both sides. And I appreciate your support of Mars Hill.

At that point, Alex wrote to me (Oct. 8):

Warren,

I received this email from Justin Dean (conversation begins from the bottom and goes up). My assumption is that none of this is news to you, but on the off-chance you had not heard from Justin regarding the Global Fund here is some. I am glad he responded, even if I am not necessarily satisfied with the response.

Alex

I wrote back to Alex (Oct. 8):

The part about not having a separate fund is just not true:

Check out this page current on the Mars Hill Website: <https://marshill.com/2011/04/08/where-were-you-on-april-24-2011>

Note the ability to designate an offering for the Global Fund.

Also, until May, one could do that on the Mars Hill website: See this video:  
<http://youtu.be/a4EFX3-RXyg?list=UU6OQODXN5Iw8vvBA11gxFyg>

Rachel Macor who worked in finance said publicly that the Global Fund was a designated fund.  
<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/warrenthrockmorton/2014/08/12/former-staffer-says-that-mars-hill-churchs-global-fund-was-restricted/> Macor said the fund had it's own acct number.

Initially the fund was restricted to Acts 29 and church planting, but it morphed into the mission outreach of the church in early 2012.

If you don't mind, could you ask him about the webpage now on the site and the video? I would like to know how he explains that away.

Thanks, Warren

The next day (Oct. 9), Alex wrote back:

I heard from him late last night. Here is my email and then his response:

- begin communication (email is dated Oct. 9)-

Justin,

This is probably where my confusion lies - my interest in this first began when I read a blog post on Patheos where Warren Throckmorton quoted Rachel Macor, a former staffer with the Mars Hill Finance Department, saying that the Mars Hill Global Fund was restricted and had its own account number. Throckmorton also provided a link to this Mars Hill post titled "Where Were You on April 24, 2011". There is a drop-down menu that lists the Global Fund as a fund separate from the General Fund, Campus Fund, Easter Fund, etc. Additionally, this video shows the Giving page on the Mars Hill website (pre-May 2014) that also lists the Global Fund as separate from the General Fund. If Global was never considered separate from the General Fund, then why list it on the website as a separate fund in a drop-down menu? Does this mean that the Easter Celebration, Campus Fund, Military, and Legacy Project all tie into the General Fund as well (since they appear to also be listed as separate funds in the drop down menu).

Again, thank you for graciously responding to my questions.

His response (Oct. 9):

We used the term "global fund" to distinguish between donors online who attended our churches and those who don't. We realized it was confusing and changed it. 6000 people donated using that designation. We contacted all of them and offered to designate their funds towards Ethiopia and India if that is what they intended for their donation and they were confused by our terminology. Only about 20 people asked us to designate their donations, and we gladly did that.

I understand how reading posts on Patheos can lead you to lose trust in us and I'm happy to be able to clear things up or provide more context where I can. However, I know I don't know you but I'd encourage you to find some new blogs to follow.

-end communication -

*Alex to Throckmorton:* I do not consider that a satisfactory response. With that logic, is the Military Fund distinguished between donors who are in the military and those who are not? I audit local governments and not non-profits, but if I was to see a grant (the closest comparison I can think of to straight up donations in this case) that was treated like this it would certainly cause me to investigate more. I would be interested in hearing more from Rachel Macor and then hearing a response from Mars Hill. When Rachel give her statement that the Global Fund was restricted, what was Mars Hills' response? In your post you mentioned that she was a former employee in the Mars Hill Finance department...what kind of an employee was she (was she deep in the weeds with financial aspects or was she a secretary who had no day-to-day interaction with finances)? Lastly, based on your sources, do you have any speculation as to how long the Mark Driscoll investigation will be?

On Oct. 9, I wrote Justin Dean to confirm the conversation:

Justin:

I want to give you a chance to reply to an email I received today from Alex Terry. Mr. Terry asked you about the memo I posted several days ago regarding Mars Hill Global. He asked you about the Global Fund and the way the money donated to that fund was spent. Here is your reply, according to Mr. Terry:

*From:* [justind](#)  
*Date:* Wed, Oct 8, 2014 at 4:03 PM  
*Subject:* Re: Global Memo  
*To:* Alex Terry <

*Alex,*

*I agree that's disappointing. It's disappointing to learn people would think that we, as a church, would deliberately plan to mislead or deceive people.*

*Despite what you may have read on blogs, we never had a separate fund for Global so we don't have separate accounting for Global. We have used some confusing communications in the past, and have done much to correct that, but Global has never*

*been a designated fund. We do spend money on church planters in Ethiopia and India (as indicated in the FAQ), but we don't provide specific accounting of our different expenses. Just like we don't provide how much we specifically spent on pens and tape, we don't break out other expenses. I hope that makes sense.*

*As an auditor I'm sure you'll appreciate that we submit to outside CPA firms to review our financials, as well as submit to the ECFA who has reviewed our financials and in particular has reviewed in detail our donations from our Global audience and all communications and efforts around Global.*

*I appreciate you reaching out to look at both sides. And I appreciate your support of Mars Hill.*

I want to make sure that this email indeed came from you.

I also want to ask why, if this is from you, you would say there was never a separate fund for Mars Hill Global Fund when in fact, donors from your church received receipts from you for their Global Fund contributions and when the website used to offer member donors an opportunity to contribute to the Global Fund. On one of the videos you removed from You Tube, Sutton Turner asks Mars Hill members to give to the Global Fund above and beyond their tithe. Also, Rachel Macor who used to work for you testifies that the Global Fund had its own accounting code. On your website, a page remains that shows several ways that members could donate, and one of those was to the Global Fund. Can you kindly provide an explanation how your statement lines up with the evidence I have just presented?

Thank you, Warren

Dean wrote to both Alex and me later in the day (Oct. 9):

Alex and Warren,

I was incorrect to say we never had a separate fund setup for Global. The details of this issue can be confusing, I was confused as well and I gave you a wrong answer, and I apologize. I have done some checking and prior to 2012 we did have a separate fund. However, since 2012 we have not had a designated fund for missions work or international church planting. Beginning in 2012 the term "Global Fund" was used on our website to distinguish between global donors and local church donors. We realized the terminology used was confusing so we changed it to "General Fund (Local & Global)". This is explained on our [Global F.A.Q.](#) page.

For those that may have been confused by our terminology we contacted them earlier this year in an effort to make it right. We mailed 6,000 letters and sent 3,765 emails to anyone who had given as a global donor since 2012. We received 33 total responses; 7 people let us know that there was no need to change their gifts, and 26 indicated that they would like their previous gifts applied to ministry work in Ethiopia and India. We were happy to make these changes, totaling \$39,399.

Hope that helps. Thanks.

I then answered (Oct. 9):

Justin - I have evidence that members gave money to the Global Fund up until May 2014. I have the page saved that gave members that ability up to May 2014 and I have receipts from members who gave to Global Fund with their gifts clearly designated as having gone to the Global Fund. I also have video of Sutton Turner soliciting donations from members for the Global Fund.

Is this really the answer you all want to go with?

Warren

Sticking to his story, Dean replied (Oct. 9):

Warren,

Beginning in 2012 the term "Global Fund" was used on our website to distinguish between global donors and local church donors. Receipts for donations from people who selected that designation would indicate "Global Fund" but it was not a fund and hasn't been since before 2012. As stated below, we understood that was confusing so we changed the wording and then contacted every donor. We also pulled that video because it too was confusing.