

Calendar of Events

January 2006 (Tentative)
Roseville, MI—*Trust & Truth* and *Hope & Healing* Conferences (Dates and times to be determined. Watch for more details online soon.)

April 21-22, 2006 (Possible Exhibit)
Battle Creek, MI—ASI Chapter Meeting

August 2-5, 2006 (Exhibit)
Dallas, TX—ASI International Convention

We are continually scheduling church, victim/survivor and pastoral conferences throughout the U.S. and abroad. If you'd like to schedule or sponsor a conference in your area, please call (618) 983-6434.

Please check our web site for the most up-to-date conference information and schedule. www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com

This project was supported by Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Our Current Needs...

The following items would make a real difference in the efficiency and operations of the ministry.

1. Xerox Phaser Color Laser Printer 7750/DN Tabloid size (\$6,299). This would enable us to print all newsletters in-house and in color, thus saving time, hassle and expense.
2. PowerBook G4 Laptop Computer (\$2,000). For the new Latino Division.
3. Commercial-grade four-drawer locking file cabinet (\$130).
4. Travel Trailer/Motorhome (\$15,000-\$30,000). This would enable us to save money on lodging and food expenses while traveling to conduct conferences and exhibit at conventions.

Donations are the primary source of funds that make it possible for The Hope of Survivors to maintain its ministry. Since The Hope of Survivors receives no denominational subsidies, your gifts are vitally important. Thank you for considering a tax-deductible donation to further the work of this ministry and bring hope and healing to wounded hearts.

HopeSPEAK

Dear Readers:

Do you realize forgiveness is a gift? I often address the topic of forgiveness and how it applies to each of our lives. I sometimes receive emails with comments such as, "I have forgiven my abuser, but I just can't forgive myself," or "I know God forgives me, but I just can't forgive myself." When I read statements like those, my heart yearns to help others see the truth about forgiveness. You see, "I need to forgive myself" is a popular myth that has crept into many a Christian's heart and mind and has blocked them from being able to live abundant lives in Christ. If you feel unforgiven, how can you be joyful and exude the character of Christ? How can you have the peace that comes from God alone?

I wish to make it clear to all...forgiveness is a gift from God. You must simply choose to accept the gift. By not accepting God's forgiveness, you reveal a lack of trust in His Word. By thinking you must first "forgive yourself," you're actually usurping God's role and authority. No one has the ability to forgive self, yet all have the ability to exercise faith and believe God will do what He says.

Only God has the power to forgive. He forgives us and then He grants us forgiveness in our hearts for those who have wronged us. In both cases, forgiveness is still a gift and it still comes from God alone. To muster up "forgiveness" on our own will lead to failure, as we do not, and cannot, truly forgive unless we have accepted God's forgiveness for ourselves and He has given us forgiveness in our hearts for others.

Forgiveness is made possible by the shed blood of Jesus Christ who died to take away our sins. We read in Matthew 26:28, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." We do not have the right to forgive ourselves, for we have not paid the penalty for our transgressions, Jesus has. Therefore, He alone has the right to extend forgiveness. From Genesis to Revelation, I have not found any reference to forgiving myself, only overwhelming evidence that forgiveness comes from the Lord. Let's look at just a few of the many verses on this topic:

Isaiah 43:25, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

Micah 7:18, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."

Matthew 9:6, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins..."

1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Luke 5:21, "And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

In all of the above passages, who is it that forgives our sin? It is the Lord. We serve an awesome God. One who is far more willing to forgive than we are. Won't you join me in drawing nearer to Him?

May God be with you,
Samantha Nelson

Volume 3, Edition 1, January 2006

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The Hope of Survivors is an inter-denominational nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization funded by individuals who support the mission and goals of the organization; survivors of pastoral sexual abuse who desire to use their means to help others; and by grants from private foundations whose values are similar to those of The Hope of Survivors. All contributions are tax-deductible. Your support is greatly appreciated.

THE Hope of Survivors

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News and Announcements

What joy it is to serve the Lord! Certainly there are trying and difficult times when the enemy would have us consider giving up and “throwing in the towel,” but it’s at those times the Holy Spirit strengthens and encourages us to keep going. We praise the Lord for what He is doing in each of the lives touched by this ministry. Before we share with you how God is leading, let us praise Him through the words found in Psalm 40:5, “*Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*”

The year 2006 is going to be an incredible year! The first item we’d like to share with you is the launch of The Hope of Survivors’ new Latino Division led by Irma Murray. We’ve been praying for over 18 months for a Spanish-speaking counterpart, and the Lord has graciously answered our prayers. Irma is currently editing the Spanish translation of our web site and materials. As soon as funding is available, we will have the brochures printed in Spanish. The web site can be accessed by going to www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com/Espanol. We praise God for opening this door, as we know that many of our Latino friends will now be able to receive the help, hope and healing they need by contacting Irma through The Hope of Survivors. Irma’s direct line is (618) 513-9721. We invite you to pray for Irma and for this branch of the ministry. We’d also like to thank Isabel Fritzler of the Hispanic Yellow Pages in Arizona for translating our original brochures and for her generous offer of a full-color, full-page ad in the next directory (an \$11,000+ value!). Thank you, Isabel, and may God richly bless you!

Secondly, we are developing another quarterly newsletter, *FaithSpeak*, designed specifically for pastors and church leaders. This newsletter (anticipated mailing January 2006), along with an expanded pastoral mentoring/counseling program, will serve to give church leaders the tools they need to remain faithful in their calling, to educate them on the issues of pastoral sexual abuse, to hold them accountable for their actions, to give them advice and encouragement for the struggles all ministry couples face, and more. This program will be kept separate from the victim outreach programs of the ministry. It

is our prayer this expanded program will enable The Hope of Survivors to better reach the very people who have the power to put an end to pastoral abuse—pastors and church leaders—and to effect change so that all congregations can be healthy and safe places to worship. “That’s asking too much,” some may say. Maybe so. However, we believe what is written in Mark 10:27, “*And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*” We have seen God do incredible things in this ministry so far with few funds and a lack of assistance. Just imagine what He will do with more funds and more assistance! That is what we are longing to see—to God be the glory!

Thirdly, we are praying about the development of a youth division. While we currently work primarily with adults, we do serve some youth, as well as some adults who are just now facing the abuse they suffered as a child or teen. While the principles are the same, materials need to be developed specifically for young minds. The challenges, worries and fears they face are different than that of adults. They’re not concerned about telling their spouses; they’re concerned about telling their parents and what their friends will think of them. We have spoken to a few individuals thus far who may be able and willing to assist in the development of this program and materials, but we are waiting for the Lord’s will to be made known. If you, or someone you know, might be a good candidate for assisting with the youth program, please let us know. We saw how the Lord confirmed for all of us that Irma was His chosen one to take on the management of the Latino Division, and we believe He will also reveal to us His will regarding the person(s) to lead the youth program.

And last, but certainly not least, after much prayer and many trips to look at various homes and locations, we believe the Lord has shown us the place that is to be the retreat center for The Hope of Survivors. It is located in Thompsonville, Illinois, and appears to have been built with the ministry’s needs in mind. We could easily have four bedrooms, plus a resident manager’s quarters, and offices to start, and could transform other rooms into bedrooms rather easily and inexpensively when the need arises. The home is on the market for \$309,750, which is somewhat steep in this area, and has had very little interest in it for several months. We believe the Lord has had His hand upon it for this very purpose. This home is new and has some acreage. Comparing it

to the older homes we’ve looked at which would require repair/renovation, the price is in the same ballpark. We’ve looked at all price ranges, from \$35,000 to several million. It has not been a matter of what *we* want, as this home is not intended for us, but has been a matter of what will provide a nurturing atmosphere to make abuse victims feel safe, comfortable and welcome. It needs to be a place conducive to healing and drawing nearer to the Lord.

To be fully honest with you, lack of funds is the **only** obstacle preventing us from having a fully operational center right now. I am reminded of Ecclesiastes 10:19, “*...money answereth all things.*” We have made contacts with people who can assist in the day-to-day operations and counseling, as well as others who can assist with building/grounds maintenance, bookkeeping, food preparation, and all that is necessary to operate such a teaching and healing center. We need funds for salaries for these individuals. Not everyone can volunteer all their time, nor should it be required, as the Bible tells us in Luke 10:7, “*...the laborer is worthy of his hire.*” We need to raise \$500,000 for the purchase of this home, furnishings, landscaping and operating expenses. We cannot impress upon your minds enough the importance and significance of having this type of retreat and shelter for those who have suffered pastoral abuse. Perhaps it is best to let some of those who have benefited from The Hope of Survivors express their thoughts on the matter...

“I want to hear more about the retreat center. Wow, to have had a place to go for healing! Wouldn’t that have been something. To sit and be surrounded by love and support and care... Samantha, keep dreaming those God-spinning dreams!”—WA

“A place to go where the phones don’t ring and [without] the daily reminders of the abuse would be a sanctuary for victims to heal and seek God...a sanctuary of ‘Hope and Healing’ and peace to heal the wounds inflicted...our two days in Cincinnati in a hotel at your conference was a major step forward for us...the beginning of hope and healing...the early days of abuse are crucial to get away, and we also come together with you in prayer for the completion of this call to your ministry.”—OH

“It’s bittersweet when I read that you are expanding. Unfortunately people really do need you and I know we all thank God for you and your dedication.”—RI

We invite you to pray for each of us, the Board of Directors, our volunteers, and the new programs being developed. We’ll confess we absolutely abhor having to make appeals, yet time and again we have been urged to make the ministry’s needs known. How can you help if you don’t know the needs? Perhaps you think we only need a few hundred dollars per month to operate when, in actuality, we could utilize many thousands each month to continue what we’ve been doing and even more to expand operations to reach our ultimate goals. (Our annual report and prospectus are both online for all to review.) We encourage you to ask yourself, “*What shall I render unto to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?*” (Psalm 116:12) After all, you can never out-give God!

If the Holy Spirit impresses upon you to share your talents, time or finances to aid this ministry, please be assured you will be blessed by doing so and your generosity will be a blessing to many others who so desperately need help and hope.

Yours in Christ,
The Staff of The Hope of Survivors



Steve and Samantha Nelson are co-founders of The Hope of Survivors. Together, they share how God brought them through the devastation of pastoral sexual abuse. By God’s grace, they seek to bring hope and healing to those who have been affected by this trauma.

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*“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 4:19*