

# Hope SPEAK

## Dear Hope of Survivors Family,

What an eventful quarter it has been! Thank you for all your support as we launched the inaugural Clergy Sexual Abuse Awareness & Prevention campaign. Thanks to many generous donors and eager volunteers, The Hope of Survivors had events taking place in WA, SC, NM, CA, IL, TX, IN and even the United Kingdom (Wales)! We praise God for the greater awareness being raised through these programs, and we look forward to many more next year. In fact, plans are already underway for several events next August. It's never too early to start planning and fundraising!

We were very blessed to be able to speak with several victims while at the ASI Convention in Sacramento, CA. The Lord has a way of leading people to The Hope of Survivors just when they need it most. ASI was bigger than ever this year, with over 3,300 people attending and 221 ministries from around the world represented.

The Hope of Survivors' Board had a few high-profile cases of clergy sexual abuse to discuss during its board meeting and I am quite pleased with how matters are proceeding in those cases. I am even more pleased with how the Board really pulled together as a team, uniting and facing challenges together. Speaking of the Board, we want to welcome Ted Vanderlaan as the newest member of the Board. Ted is an attorney who has already been a tremendous blessing to The Hope of Survivors. Welcome, Ted!

As you read the rest of the newsletter, I pray you will be encouraged at the hope and healing God is providing to victims through The Hope of Survivors. The need is greater than ever for us to stand firm for what is right and to live out our calling as stated in Jesus' own words



in Isaiah 61:1-4, *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."*

God bless you,

*Samantha Nelson*

Samantha Nelson  
Vice President & CEO

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The Hope of Survivors is a 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 fully tax-deductible as allowable by law. Your support is greatly appreciated.

## Why Do They Do It?

—Ardis Stenbakken

Almost every time you open a newspaper or see a local news report, you are likely to read or see a story involving sexual abuse by a teacher, pastor, lawyer, coach, caregiver, doctor, therapist, political leader, or church leader. In our small city one of the biggest stories of the spring was about a teacher caught naked in a car with one of her 16-year-old male students. And of course we

**“The misuse of power is often subtle. It can be seen in manipulation... in the form of “poor me,” or by causing one to doubt...and sometimes...by saying, “After all I’ve done for you!” All these are dishonest, abusive, and manipulative.”**

have all known about the clergy sexual abuse stories from Ireland. Here in the United States there has been one story after another about a political leader involved in some sort of sexual scandal. Other countries are not exempt either.

Reading and thinking about these stories, I have to ask myself, *Why do they do it?*

I am not an expert, just someone who cares a great deal about the victims. As I think about this issue, I think the answer is: *They do it because they can.* You see, these cases are not simply about abuse; they are about power.

Because the abuser has some type of power, some authority, some prestige that puts the abused in a position of inferiority, it makes it extremely difficult to stand up to the abuser, especially if the abused is a child or someone who is seeking help for some issue; they go into the relationship with a need. The person in power may have some economic control, have some sort of influence over the victim, may have physical power, informational power, psychological or emotional power, and even spiritual control—someone who is “closer to God, and knows the Bible better,” than the abused.

Unfortunately, when boundaries are crossed, someone always gets hurt, and often it is the person who has the power as well as the “victim.” And when it is a church leader, not only do

the individuals get hurt, but so does the church and the mission of the church. In other words, abuse of power is not a victimless crime, nor does the perpetrator skate free.

The Bible is full of stories about power, the good use of power, and the abuse of power: The first and most obvious is that of Lucifer who became known as Satan. He had power, but he wanted more power. He used his position to poison the minds of a third of the angels. Not satisfied with causing them to fall, he went to work on Adam and Eve and all those who came after. Once again, the abuser and the abused are hurt—Satan will get his final punishment at the end of the thousand years.

The misuse of power is often subtle. It can be seen in manipulation. This certainly happened in the Garden of Eden. Sometimes the abuse of power comes in the form of “poor me,” or by causing one to doubt; this again was used in the Garden of Eden. And sometimes the abuser tries to force by saying, “After all I’ve done for you!” All these are dishonest, abusive, and manipulative.

The opposite of Satan and his abuse of power is Jesus, the one who is the all powerful, the Almighty, the one Who never used His power for his own benefit. In fact He laid His power aside and took the position of a servant. *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45). He is our example. He knew and respected boundaries. He never forced anyone—and He still doesn’t. He gives us choice and freedom.

Pharaoh was another who abused his power. *“Pharaoh said to Moses: ‘Get out of my sight! And watch your step. I don’t want to ever see you again. If I lay eyes on you again, you’re dead’”* (Exodus 10:28). Misuse of power boomerangs—it was his son who died, not Moses.

Another biblical example of abuse of power was the story of Eli’s sons. (I Samuel 2:22-25) They practiced many forms of abuse until Eli’s ministry was destroyed and the sons of Eli all died. An author I respect, Ellen White, had something instructive to say about this case: “Many who profess to be the ministers of Christ are like the sons of Eli who ministered in the sacred office and took advantage of their office to engage in crime and commit adultery, causing the people to transgress the law of God. A fearful account will such have to render when the cases of all shall pass in review before God, and they be judged according to the deeds done in the body.... Adultery is one of the terrible sins of this age. This sin exists among professed Christians of every class....” —*The Sin of Licentiousness, TSB 99.2*



One of the stories in the Bible that can really help us understand

**“[It is] not simply about abuse; it is about power.”**

this whole issue of abuse of power is the story of David and Bathsheba. Historically we have looked at this story simply as a story of adultery. It is still adultery, but we need to take a new look at the story.

More than once, David had exercised great restraint in use of power. He had understood boundaries. He had listened to Abigail and didn't kill her husband and all those around him. David said to Abigail, *“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me”* (1 Samuel 25:32). When David had the opportunity to kill Saul, he instead cut off a corner of his robe. David even felt guilty about that. The Bible says, *“Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, ‘The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord’”* (1 Samuel 24:5, 6). A similar experience came later when David took the spear and water jug from beside Saul's head (1 Samuel 26).

But when David saw and desired Bathsheba, he ignored boundaries and used his considerable power to get what

**“When we are clear as to what abuse of power is, we are better able to withstand it and to deal with it.”**

he wanted. Some have suggested that Bathsheba had tempted him, and could have refused his advances. Those who suggest this do not understand the power of an ancient king. And even if she could have refused David, he was the one who should have been responsible. Larry W. Spielman, who has written about leadership and prevention of church professional misconduct writes, “Some have pointed the finger at Bathsheba, suggesting that she seduced David by bathing where the king was sure to notice her. This makes Bathsheba, not David, responsible for the king's inability to control his erotic urges. Such a suggestion is ludicrous. Even if Bathsheba behaved in a way to arouse the king's passions, King David is fully responsible for what he does. Despite her beauty and allure, Bathsheba does not have the ability to cause the king to lose all sense of control and responsibility any more than Goliath had the ability to cause David to be afraid. Indeed, in the latter crisis David remained calm and in control (1 Samuel 17:36-37).”<sup>1</sup>

David was seen as a religious and political leader. He was expected to hold a higher level

of accountability. But he let down his God, himself, Bathsheba, his country, his friend Uriah, and his family—because of his sin he was never able to discipline his sons.

Sometimes a person in power will excuse abuse by saying this action was a “private matter.” Sometimes the legal term is used of “consenting adults.” But what David thought was private was not private and it affected the entire nation. He found *“your sins will find you out”* (Numbers 33:23).<sup>2</sup>

We need to challenge our churches, our power structures, to adapt policies that will help maintain boundaries and support those who are abused. Scripture calls us to reform/change the way our power institutions work. Jeremiah 7:1-7 reminds us that we are to change our actions, deal justly, not oppress the powerless, not shed innocent blood (the ultimate abuse), not follow other gods (including the drunken god of power and abuse).

We also need to support each other, helping all to understand boundaries and the danger of submitting to one in power. We need to help those in power understand their boundaries and hold them to them. When we are clear as to what abuse of power is, we are better able to withstand it and to deal with it.

THEN, wonderful things will happen for the people of God.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/19-3\\_Spielman.pdf](http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/19-3_Spielman.pdf). Accessed 2/24/2008.

<sup>2</sup> The biblical portion is taken from the 2008 Women's Ministries Abuse Prevention Emphasis Sabbath sermon written by my husband Dr. Richard Stenbakken and myself.



*Ardis Stenbakken retired the end of 2004 from being director of the Women's Ministries Department at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. She and her husband live in Loveland, Colorado, where she continues to edit the Women's Ministries devotional book series, take speaking appointments, write, and other Women's Ministries and church assignments.*

## Nowhere to Run

—T.A. de Bie



From my earliest memories I recall wanting to be at church, to sing, to seek God and a walk with Him. I grew up in a pristine part of the country on 400 acres of paradise. All of life was before me and my three sisters. My sisters and I attended a little one-room schoolhouse and the biggest excitement in the community was the occasional get-together at the Grange Hall. I was very shy but trusting. What was there in the world not to trust? Life was perfect... but that would all change.

When I was about nine years old my parents split. My mother took us with her as she pursued a career in music and, just like that, paradise was lost. We did buy a small farm so that we could have our horses and, for a time, a southern type of paradise returned but it was not the same. For some reason, “Southern Hospitality” was not taught to the children that I associated with. I was unhappy. I was the skinny kid that always had trouble at school. In my young mind I thought if I could only attend a Christian school then my life would be better. So that is what I set my mind to do. By the time I was blowing out 13 candles on my cake, I thought I knew quite a bit. Of course, in reality, I was naïve and inexperienced. How could I have been anything else? One thing that I did know was that I was drawn to Christ and I wanted to go to a Christian school where I would be surrounded by people that believed like I did and where I could learn about and read the Bible freely... and where I would feel safe.

Through a series of events, which led to the hospitalization of my mother, my dream of attending a Christian school would come to life! My mother was treated by a Christian doctor. During her care he learned that she had a son that wanted to attend a Christian school. The hospital where she was treated shared a campus with a Christian high school. The good doctor offered to pay for my initial entrance fee and help me get started. There was one problem though; this was not a boarding school and I would need a place to live, as the school was over 50 miles from my present home. The doctor asked around and found that there was a couple that worked at the hospital that had taken in boys before. Their children were grown and they had plenty of room. The husband (Elder G) was the head elder at the local church and comptroller of the hospital. His wife (Mrs. G) was one of the dietitians at the hospital. They were well liked and

respected in the community. The most gracious part of what they offered is that they would let me live with them at no charge!

Ultimately, the decision was mine... or was it? I knew that I wanted to go to a Christian school. Public school was a nightmare for me. I felt isolated and misunderstood. I also knew that my mother was going out on the road playing music and, honestly, I did not feel like I had a home to go back to. I felt trapped, but my desire to go to a Christian school was so strong that I thought living with strangers—especially Christian strangers—could not be that bad. My idea of a true Christian was someone who loved Christ, who read and tried to follow the Bible, and who cared about those in need and looked out for those who were weak and struggling.

So it was decided! I would live with Elder and Mrs. G and attend the school! I moved in with the family and started attending the little Christian school. I was nervous with all of the newness. This was such a change for me. I was understandably a little scared. The first nights with the family were difficult for me. The food was strange and, having spent most of my life on a farm, living in a suburban environment was foreign. School was also difficult, as I did not make friends easily. In fact I am very shy. Also, the public school education that I had had in no way prepared me academically for my sophomore year at the school.

Elder and Mrs. G supplied all of my physical needs. I had a bed to sleep in and food. I remember Mrs. G making me chocolate chip cookies on the first night. It all started out innocently enough. Elder G tried to gain my trust. I was shy and (to be honest) a defensive 13-year-old boy. Their house was on a lake and they enjoyed boating. Elder G also liked cars. He had luxury cars as well as sports cars. They had two boats, one that was very fast and the other for a young kid to putter around in. He would take me out in the boat and let me drive. Then he would let me take out the small one-man boat by myself. Looking back, I can see that he was trying to gain my trust. In the relationship Elder G was fostering, it was anything but good.

Later in that school year the G's decided to move closer to the hospital, which also made it more convenient for me to get to school. The house was close enough that I could ride my bike



or walk to school.

I had my own room in this new house but things started to change. Remember, I am a very private boy. I locked the door when I went to the bathroom. I locked the bedroom door at night. I became very uncomfortable when they told me that I could not lock my bedroom door at night. It did not make sense to me. I do not know why, but I did not feel safe with my bedroom door unlocked. They told me it was an issue of safety... in case of a fire or some other emergency. That did not make sense to me because I could easily open the door from the inside or leave the house by the window if there was some emergency. It was not my home and, for some reason, I felt like I had to comply. After all, what could be the harm? I was living in a home with two Christians ... and the head elder of the local church!

It was soon after this that Elder G began his physical advances. I had just turned 14. Now, with the door unlocked, he would come into my bedroom each morning and wake me up. He would usually come in wearing a t-shirt and his underwear and sit on the edge of the bed and rub my back. I was afraid. I would lie face down in the bed with my head buried in my pillow. My body was rigid and I just wanted him to go away. I hated it. I dreaded every morning. During this time Elder G would always talk to me in what I call “baby talk” which made me sick to my stomach. So, why didn’t I just leave? I had nowhere to go. I had no home to go to and he knew it. Such is the behavior of a predator. They look for opportunities, something that gives them an upper hand.

For months the morning wake-up routine was the only inappropriate contact. I felt like I had to endure it so that I could stay in school. Looking back, whom could I have told? I was embarrassed. Who would have listened? Maybe nobody would have thought that it was a big deal. Wasn’t he just a fatherly figure trying to be fatherly to a young man? Now who would listen to a boy of 14 over a well-esteemed church leader? This was a time when kids weren’t encouraged to tell, abuse was a private matter in society, abuse was easy to get away with, especially under the cover of religion.

It did not stop with the morning backrubs. When Mrs. G was not around he would take opportunities to have private conversations. He would frequently bring up discussions of a sexual nature. He would ask me questions about my “being a man” ... and “proving I was a man”... He would combine things that most boys are

interested in—fast cars, boats, guns, etc.—which would inevitably lead to some discussion of a sexual nature. He always wanted to touch me or to lure me into some such discussion. I was constantly on guard against his advances. I always felt that I had to protect myself from him.

All of this conduct was confusing to me. I could not make sense of the difference in my knowledge of how I believed Christian people should conduct themselves compared with the pressure I was under. How can a person say grace at the dinner table or have the pastoral prayer at church and then conduct himself in this manner? I could not make the two worlds match. I often asked myself, “What could I do, who could I tell?” I should have felt comfortable to tell someone else... but I didn’t. Eventually, when I was around 16 I confided in my two best friends. I let them know what was going on but that I felt I could handle the situation. If it got physical, I felt like I could defend myself, even though I was only about 100 lbs. Eventually, I would be forced to put that theory to the test.

Unfortunately, I felt as though I had to endure the advances. As I look back, I know it was not true. I was so embarrassed... in fact so mortified of the situation that I only told my best friends. Telling someone did make me feel less isolated; unfortunately, it did not make it stop. Predators see the big picture. They can ascertain when a young person is in a vulnerable position. They take advantage of the situation. It is what they do.

One time Elder G showed me a magazine or calendar with naked girls that he claimed to have “confiscated” from one of the employees of the hospital. He kept it in a safe in his house and would try to use it as a bribe. He wanted me to look at it. I suppose he wanted to see if it would evoke some physical effect on me. He would also tell me that I needed to “prove” that I was a man and give him a sperm sample. He put so much pressure on me that, eventually, I gave in to that demand. He said that he was going to take it to the lab to have a sperm count done. I lived with constant vigilance.

Then there was a time where it became a real physical struggle. One time when Mrs. G was away he challenged me that I could not keep him from unzipping my pants and “spitting on my peepee”. We literally had a knock-down, drag-out fight in the den. It was a bitter physical struggle and I ended up with rug burns and bruises. I was young but I was scrappy! Even after that, I ended up living there for nearly two more years. Though I felt like I could stand up to his advances, it was a very stressful time. Elder G tried to bribe me with driving his corvette or his Z car. He would take me to stock car races and

*continued on page 7...*



## **Simon Says: “You Can Prevent Clergy Sexual Abuse!”**

—Jennifer Jill Schwirzer

They call me Simon the Pharisee. “Simon” means “hearing.” In accordance with my name, I heard the call of Jesus and became a disciple after He healed me of leprosy. Candidly, the physical disease symbolized the deeper spiritual disease from which Jesus also delivered me. I was guilty of clergy sexual abuse, a practice that fed on my Phariseeism like crustaceans feed on sewage.

August 1 was **Clergy Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention Day**. I thought it would be appropriate to honor that day by telling my story. Now a recovered offender, I can pinpoint how elements of my religious experience led to the double life I lived. Here they are:

**Pride**—We Pharisees warded off the encroachments of Greek culture, which threatened to rob the Jews of their identity. Because of this, the people thought of us as heroes, holier and better than the common man; in fact, the name “Pharisee” means “separated.” Consequently, we became very puffed up in our own conceits. Human praise affects the brain similarly to an opiate, so when the praise died down we went in search of another fix: another contrived rule to impose, another righteous ritual to perform, another innocent woman to deflower.

**Legalism**—We instilled in ourselves and our followers the belief that we could save ourselves through compliance with the law. Since no one can obey in their own strength, we then lowered God’s standard to fit human limitations. This is how legalism teamed up with disobedience and produced a scenario where we strained at gnats and swallowed camels. And molested women. And then tried to have them stoned.

**Hypocrisy**—High standards minus grace equals hypocrisy. Graceless religious leaders, pressured to be “good,” can only manufacture an appearance of holiness and conceal their true, unconverted selves. Such double living forces carnality into hiding, where it can flourish like anaerobic bacteria. We Pharisees helped each other hide, too. When one would get caught perpetrating, we’d hush up the matter and shuttle him off to another district.

My best-known victim was my niece Mary Magdalene. Just a child when I met her, she bloomed into a stunning beauty before my eyes. She called it an “affair,” and indeed it felt that way to her. But I know now it was abuse, in spite of her spellbound consent. Specifically, my abuse of Mary qualified as incestuous, religious, power rape, because I was a relative, a clergyman, and an authority figure. It disgusts me to admit it, but I must.

At my house party—the feast to celebrate my healing from leprosy—I still didn’t “get it.” I thought evil of Mary as she poured out her soul in gratitude. Jesus saw the spite on my face and told me a parable that revealed His knowledge of my guilt. Two debtors. One ten times guiltier. Both forgiven. Which one should love him the more? I read Him perfectly: “Stop lording it over her. You’re the one who led her into sin! You should be ten times more grateful, because you’re ten times more guilty.” He knows! I panicked, breaking into a sweat. How could He know and yet spare me? Could it be that He was Isaiah’s prophetic sin-bearer after all?

The weeks after my feast found me paralyzed, as one struck by lightning. Remorse crippled my energies and sickened me to earthly things. At last I turned fully to Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing. I realized I had no reason to live except to testify of God’s mercy.

**In the place of pride, Jesus gave me contrition.** Through the parable, Jesus confronted my sin discretely. The goodness of God in not publicly rebuking me, even when I wanted a public rebuke for my victim, led me to repentance.

**In the place of legalism, He gave me the gospel.** The message of Christ’s righteousness supplanted my own self-righteousness, and ultimately led to obedience to all the commandments of God, including the command to be sexually pure. Jesus forgave my sin and cleansed me from all unrighteousness. Then He showed me how to walk without falling. I noticed that Jesus never lusted simply because He loved so much. Each woman to Him was a soul for whom He would die in agony. He cherished them far too much to ever objectify them.

**In the place of hypocrisy, He gave me honesty.** I learned to put off pretension, admitting my weakness and humanity. I learned to confess my faults to trusted accountability partners and then seek the Lord with them for complete restoration.

If a Simon comes into your life, help him out by doing what he wants least. Tell the truth. It’s not “tattletaling” to reveal that a clergyman has taken advantage of a member of the flock. Do as Mary did and tell Jesus what happened; then share it with trusted counselors and friends. Do all you can to stop the abuse; thus you’ll be sparing future victims. Lying to protect another is still lying. Be tactfully, discreetly honest. You may lose all your friends for a time; the Pharisees may hate you. But you’ll have the infinitely more valuable blessing of a clear conscience. Remember that Jesus said, “*Leave her alone.*” That same Jesus will defend you. And perhaps your honesty will set a precedent that a Pharisee like I can follow. Remember, Jesus died for us too. And His grace can heal

even the spiritual leprosy of clergy sexual abuse. As one writer noted about me: “The proud Pharisee became a lowly, self-sacrificing disciple.”

You can prevent clergy sexual abuse! For more information, go to [www.thehopeofsurvivors.com](http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com).



*Jennifer Jill Schwirzer is a licensed professional counselor, musician and author who serves on the board of directors of The Hope of Survivors.*

...Nowhere to Run *continued from page 5*



make me sleep in the same bed with him. It makes me nauseous to think about it. I was just trying to survive. I know that he tried to keep his actions hidden from Mrs. G. One time when he was being particularly aggressive, I ended up hitting him with my belt. The blow made a bruise on

the inside of his leg that he could not hide from Mrs. G. She scolded me about hitting Elder G. I don't think she had any idea. After that incident there was a period of time when I was able to sleep outside of the house in a camper. It was cold and cramped but sleeping there was such a relief. I finally felt safer because I could lock the door!

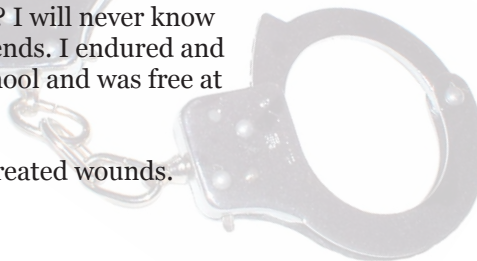
One time, after I got my driver's license, he tried to bribe me. He said that I could take a girl that I liked out for a drive in the Corvette if I would let him touch me. I refused. The pressure was constant. During this time, he put pressure on me to allow him to “touch me” and bring me to a sexual climax. I actually secretly recorded him trying to bribe me. I did this to protect myself in case I needed evidence. It was at this time that I told my two friends what was going on. They were supportive and ready to help if I needed it. I do wish that I could have confided in an adult; but who could I tell? Who would believe me—a little kid vs. the head elder of the church? That is what I thought. Was I right? I will never know because I only told my two best friends. I endured and eventually graduated from high school and was free at last.

Unfortunately, these experiences created wounds.

Through all of this I never questioned my own sexuality. I am strong willed enough that it did not make me feel inferior. It did keep me on a constant alert. It made me keenly aware of the actions of others. I did not know it at the time but, at some point, they did resurface. They showed up in my lack of trust of others, lack of trust in the church and the leaders of the church. I have rarely talked about the experience over the past 30 years. I did not share any of this with my wife. We have been divorced for nearly 20 years. If I could have better understood how this all affected me, and could have shared that with her, then she could have understood me better. Though I suffered no physical scars, the spiritual and emotional scars remain. How are Christians supposed to act? What happens when “I love you” comes out of their mouths but you feel the blood trickling down your back as you walk away? I will struggle with the spiritual and emotional issues for the rest of my life.

If there is any positive outcome from me telling my story it is this... if you find yourself in a situation with a pastor or other person in a position of physical or spiritual power over you, please, do not be afraid to talk with someone about it. You must find a person that you can confide in. If you can, find an adult that you can trust so that you can tell what is going on. I know there are enough truly godly people in the church who will listen and take steps to help you. You must know that you don't have to stay in the relationship; you don't have to live in fear. You can, and must, get out. Boys, young men, grown men; we all have natural boundaries. When we feel those boundaries being violated do not be afraid to step back and question. If you are young and vulnerable, please, find a trustworthy man to confide in. No man (or woman, for that matter) has the right to touch you, or threaten to touch you, sexually. If you find yourself in that situation, get into a public area where you are not alone with him (or her). Get some help from a trustworthy adult.

Young men, my advice is the same. Protect yourself from immoral advances. Grown men, if you are a predator, get help because you know that you are walking on the devil's ground. This is not just a physical fight; it is spiritual warfare! Trustworthy men of God, keep your eyes open for opportunities to be a mentor, to be a safe haven if one is needed. Pray for opportunities to be used by God. If a young man ever approaches you, do not be afraid to listen to him. Commit yourself to being a tool for God and that, no matter the name or position of the person being accused of abuse, you will stand firm for the right.



## Highlights from August Clergy Sexual Abuse Awareness & Prevention Campaign Events



Steve & Samantha Nelson were guests on the program *God Answers Prayer*, hosted by Ted Gonzales and Linda Cobb on KCHF-TV (Son Broadcasting) in Santa Fe, NM.



Volunteers Gail & Elgin Jenkins staffed The Hope of Survivors' exhibit at the Pacific Union Conference Session & Ministerial Council held in Ontario, CA. Gail reported things went very well, with many pastors and leaders

requesting more information about the organization and more involvement with other initiatives to end abuse within the church. Both English and Spanish booklets, as well as the *Enough Is Enough* buttons, were distributed at this event.

The awareness campaign month ended with a grand finale—the *Hope & Healing* Conference for victims, held in Indianapolis (Plainfield), IN. Dr. Martin Weber (board chair), Steve & Samantha Nelson, and Sandy Kirkham presented at this event where victims from CA, NY and many places in between attended. We'll let the responses speak for themselves:



*"I am so glad I was there today. Thanks to you and Steve and Martin and the rest of the board for the good work you do."*—CA

*"What a blessed time for me and my husband! Thank you for the hope and healing you've given to me and countless others who were pursued, used, and abused*

*by spiritual leaders. It was definitely worth the drive and the vacation day we both took! :-)"*—NY



*"What an amazing day! Thank you all for sharing your time and energy! What a blessing you all are to us! Thank you with all my heart!"*—IN



*"Thank you to everyone who works at The Hope Of Survivors. The Hope & Healing Conference is a blessing!"*—IN



*"I so much appreciated the time we shared yesterday. I definitely came away much more clear on the line of abuse vs. adultery. I think this was one area that truly was torturing my heart... The seminar was very helpful..."*—MI

*"Thank you for coming, for your time, for the giving of yourselves."*—IN

*"Thank you to all of you who helped and presented!! I feel refreshed, blessed, encouraged and HOPE-ful!"*—MI

*"Great! Real stories bring others into understanding on so many levels. I feel balanced."*—WA

*"Everything was great. Thank you for your ministry! We both have been blessed in coming!"*—NY

*"All information was very helpful. Being a husband, I could really connect with Steve's story."*—NY

*"Amazing weekend for us! God again did more than we asked or imagined..."*—NY

*"We were both pleasantly surprised at how encouraging it was, not depressing, but a blessing! It was so great meeting everyone! Although it is unfortunate we experienced clergy sexual abuse, we are extremely fortunate to find hope and healing in our God! Thank you THOS for this conference and for speaking the truth!"*—NY

The following letter from a pastor who attended was a great encouragement as well:

September 1, 2011,

Hi Steve and Samantha,

I want to thank you for the *Hope & Healing* Conference you held in Indiana. It was very well done. As a pastor, my initial feeling regarding the Ministry Description was that it could lead to more distrust and disrespect toward the pastoral ministry. (Ministry Description: Support, Hope and Healing for Victims of Pastoral Sexual Abuse.)

However, one of the things that impressed me about the conference was how you elevated the work of the pastoral ministry. You communicated very effectively the high calling and influence of the ministry.

I have known clergy who have had to leave or should have been asked to leave the ministry as a result of inappropriate sexual behavior. I have also counseled individuals who have been victims of this kind of abuse.

You communicate with much sensitivity and balance and truly lead people to hope and healing as a result of what you do and the example you have set. The video you put together is very well done.

I would recommend a conference inviting you to do a seminar for pastors.

Clinton Meharry

## Testimonials

*"I've seen a number of websites for survivors, but yours is exceptional!"—MN*

*"I feel that I have come to a place of healing and peace. I have laid down my fear and pain and have taken up the hope and joy in my relationship with the Lord. Any lingering thoughts or possible future problems don't have as much power to hurt or consume my thoughts anymore. I continue to give thanks to you [Heather] and Hope of Survivors for all the help you have given helping me understand what happened and for your continuing prayers and thoughtful guidance. As you have blessed me, I will continue to bless Hope of Survivors with a monthly contribution so that you may help others out there who have suffered from clergy sexual misconduct. I will continue to keep you in my prayers and Hope of Survivors and if it is God's will try to use my experience to help others however He leads. May God's blessing be with you all."—MD*

*"I was so excited to have found The Hope of Survivors' website and a way to "speak" to someone that I failed to look over the entire website. There's plenty there for me to read and so far it has all been very helpful. ...and most of what I was trying to ask or express is found on the website. Thanks so much for your time and caring."—VA*

*"From a recent blog on THOS, I have written a rough version of my story at the hands of my Pastor, please find it attached. I thought mine was such a rare occurrence in the S.D.A. Church and it was only when I found THOS that I realized mine is not so unique as I had feared, unfortunately. ...I want people to be aware. Knowledge can be strength!"—Australia*

*"The Hope & Healing conference in Indianapolis was inspiring and uplifting, as Samantha, Steve, Martin, and Sandy all did a fantastic job explaining and educating us all about clergy sexual abuse. They all used their own past experiences as inspiration and as proof that there is hope to overcome and heal from abuse. The materials were presented in a very easy to understand fashion and the presenters made sure the atmosphere in the room was peaceful and inviting to all who attended. They made sure that everyone knew they were welcome and that their lives can be changed for the better.*

*I greatly appreciated all the presenters taking time away from their busy lives and full time jobs to help everyone who attended gain a better understanding of clergy sexual abuse. I look forward to the next one!"—Heather Brockett*

We thank God for giving us the opportunity to minister to victims of clergy sexual abuse and to facilitate their healing process, by His grace. Your support makes these much-needed conferences possible. Thank you!



## Update of benefit concert held in Simpsonville, SC, August 6, 2011:

We were blessed to be able to participate in the Clergy Sexual Abuse Awareness month by hosting a benefit concert at Word of Life International Ministries in Simpsonville, SC. We had anointed musicians and singers that lead us straight into the presence of God. The testimonies were filled with hope and healing. I was so inspired by the bravery of those who stood up and shared their experiences with us.

Our attendance was low, but that was to be expected when breaking new ground in an area that is saturated with clergy sexual and spiritual abuse. I believe that those in attendance were ordained to be there. We are hoping to do another CSA Awareness event within the next six months or so. We realize that we will have to continue to plow the spiritual ground in the upstate area of South Carolina and stand firm in our resolve to eradicate CSA from the Body of Christ. I want to thank Hope of Survivors for their support and contribution to this event. May God richly bless you as you continue to bring hope and healing to survivors of Clergy Sexual Abuse.



Denah Moon  
Soul Care Ministries  
Head Counselor

## Update of benefit concert held in Vancouver, WA, August 19, 2011:

A nominal-sized gathering was present for the concert and testimonies held at Oasis Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Vancouver, Washington. The concert presented “spiritual-recovery music” by Linda B-K accompanied by Awaken with Rob Louis and Jeff Hancutt. Testimonies were presented by three survivors of clergy sexual abuse. The closing testimony was presented by Linda Beldin-Korter, LCSW, who also described the progressive steps that occurred in the process of the abuser toward the victim. The program flier included *Progressive Steps To Healing* (from clergy sexual abuse). This event was positive, spiritual, and uplifting to all present. The music and the testimony by Linda Beldin-Korter were also recorded so as to be available to the public at a later date.

### ***Creative Ways To Help!***

Contribute with ease by setting up **monthly recurring donations** to The Hope of Survivors. It's easy! Just go to [www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/donate.asp](http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/donate.asp) and type in the amount you'd like to contribute.

**NEW!** The Hope of Survivors has been added to IBM's list of charities that U.S. employees and retirees can chose from during annual Employee/Retiree Charitable Contribution Campaigns. Employees have several contribution options—automatic deductions from every paycheck, onetime payroll deductions, IBM stock contributions, or a pledge to write their own check to the charity. If you work for IBM, please consider supporting The Hope of Survivors through IBM's ECCC campaign. Thank you!

Did you know The Hope of Survivors is listed on the social networking site **Facebook**? Check it out! ([http://apps.facebook.com/causes/47537?m=33935&recruiter\\_id=12747904](http://apps.facebook.com/causes/47537?m=33935&recruiter_id=12747904))

No money? You can still support The Hope of Survivors! We will receive a penny each time you search the Internet using **www.GoodSearch.com**. You can also earn money by shopping at your favorite stores! Just be sure to type The Hope of Survivors in the charity to be supported box. Happy searching and shopping!

You may also donate through **American Express Giving Express** by going to: <http://amex.justgive.org/non-profits/donate.jsp?ein=65-1211701>.

As a nonprofit organization, The Hope of Survivors may be listed as a beneficiary on life insurance policies, trusts, etc. Contact us to find out more!

*Thank you for supporting The Hope of Survivors!*

## Resources

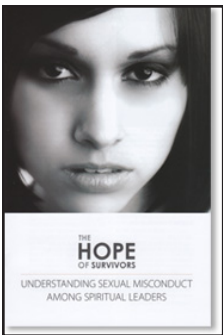
### DVD: *Call It Anything But Love!—The Steve & Samantha Nelson Story*



*Call It Anything But Love!* is a true story of a couple's struggles and challenges as they overcome their painful pasts to find themselves in a spider's web of lies, deceit, adultery and abuse—at the hands of their pastor. \$15.00 each.

Order online at: <http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/products.asp>

### *Understanding Sexual Misconduct Among Spiritual Leaders*



Ever wonder what is really happening to you or someone you know? Are you trying to decide how to help someone who has been abused by a pastor? Or wanting to know how the church should address the issue? This booklet provides information for victims, spouses, youth, pastors and wives, church leaders and congregants, and an overview of the issue of pastoral sexual misconduct. It is a "must" for

those who need answers and help! (8.5x5.5, 20 pages) Only \$2.95 each.

Order online at: <http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/products.asp>

## International Division Contacts

### Australia Division

Coralie Roll (Administration)  
Arlagene Groves (Victim Support Services)  
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### Canadian Division

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Email: [Wendy@TheHopeOfSurvivors.org](mailto:Wendy@TheHopeOfSurvivors.org)  
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### THOS Support Group Manual



Do you like to lead small groups? Do you have a heart for sharing the pain of others? Have you ever wanted to be involved helping victims of pastoral sexual abuse? Then *The Hope of Survivors' THOS Support Group Manual* may be just what you need! This manual provides step-by-step instructions and guidelines for becoming a THOS Support

Group Facilitator in your area.

(Full-size Binder) **\$39.95 \*\*\*New Price!\*\*\***

Order online at: <http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/products.asp>

**Please Note:** The purchase of *THOS Support Group Manual* does not automatically grant you permission to begin THOS Support Groups in your area. You must comply with the guidelines in the Manual and submit to a background check and review process before being approved as an official THOS Support Group Facilitator.



### Latino Division

#### (La Esperanza de los Sobrevivientes)

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### Romania Division

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## Calendar of Events

### October 21-23, 2011

Louisville, KY—CCEF Convention  
The Galt House  
140 North 4th Street  
Louisville, KY 40202



The Hope of Survivors will be exhibiting at this conference, Friday-Sunday. For more information about the convention and lodging facilities, please visit CCEF's website (<http://www.ccef.org/conference>). All are welcome to stop by The Hope of Survivors booth and pick up resource materials or purchase DVDs. We look forward to seeing you there!

### December 28, 2011-January 1, 2012

Houston, TX—GYC Convention  
George R. Brown Convention Center  
1001 Avenida de las Americas  
Houston, TX 77010



The Hope of Survivors will be exhibiting at this conference, Wednesday-Sunday. This is an excellent venue for reaching victims of pastoral sexual abuse and for raising awareness among youth and young adults in the church. All are welcome to visit the booth, pick up educational materials and speak with representatives from The Hope of Survivors. There is no fee to enter the exhibit hall and visit the various exhibits. For more information about the convention and lodging facilities, please visit the GYC website (<http://gycweb.org/conference/gyc2011/>).

Samantha and Steve Nelson are Co-Founders of The Hope of Survivors. They strive to facilitate healing in the lives of those who have been wounded by a spiritual leader.

The ministry is founded on the commission in God's Word, which calls us to *"...comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."* —2 Corinthians 1:4



*Hope & Healing* victim's conferences are currently being considered in various locations (i.e., Long Island, NY; Jacksonville, FL; Denver, CO; etc.) and will be scheduled when funds become available to conduct such programs.

To schedule or sponsor a conference in your area, call (866) 260-8958. Check our web site for additional details and the most current information.  
[www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com](http://www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com)

## Immediate Needs...

- Conference and convention expenses for raising awareness and providing assistance to victims (meeting space rental, meals, travel, materials, etc.).
- Monthly operating expenses (postage, office supplies, utilities, website hosting—THOS maintains multiple websites, printing, etc.), staff, educational materials and victim assistance.
- Donations to offset the current budget deficit.

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.



THE  
HOPE  
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