

### Calendar of Events

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

August 16-19, 2006 (Exhibit)  
Panama City, Panama—ASI Inter-American Convention (Based upon availability of funds, the Latino Division is tentatively scheduled to exhibit at this event.)

Conferences and programs for the following locations are currently being considered and will be confirmed as funds are available:

Tucson, AZ; Redding, CA; Jacksonville, FL; Toowoomba, Australia; Minneapolis, MN; Seattle, WA; Houston, TX; Detroit, MI; Philadelphia, PA; St. Louis, MO; and Akron, OH.

If you'd like to schedule or sponsor a conference or abuse prevention program 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](http://www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com)

### Current Project Needs...

▶ Support for the Australian Division start-up costs (estimated \$5,000-\$7,500).

▶ Funds for Panama City, Panama, exhibit (approx. \$5,000; includes printing brochures in Spanish).

▶ Funds for Dallas, TX, exhibit (approx. \$4,000).

▶ Ongoing operating expenses (postage, office supplies, utilities, printing, etc.).

▶ Funds for conferences and conventions—some of the best ways to spread the word and share hope with others!

▶ Funds for expansion, staff, additional educational materials and victim assistance.

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:

She wasn't the first and I'm certain not the last but, to Jesus, she was the reason He'd left Heaven with the adoration of an innumerable host of angels, to come to this earth, live the life of a servant, and to die in her place. To the crowd that surrounded Him, she was just a spectacle of worthless humanity, a woman whose life of sin had earned her the title of adulteress and the law declared she must die.

The reality is each one of us has been in her place. While our acts or sins may not be the same, we still stand arrayed "before the judgment seat of Christ," condemned to a sentence of death.

As the scribes and Pharisees did to the woman so long ago, Satan does to each of us today. He stands as the "accuser of the brethren," holding out your sins and mine for the entire universe to see, displaying all our secrets—yes those things we wish to keep hidden from view—in their most exaggerated light and we have no excuse. Like the woman, we bow our heads in shame waiting for the sentence of death and to feel the pain from "the first stone."

But Jesus does not argue with Satan, for he is a conquered foe. Instead, He says "the LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" And then He turns to you and says, "Take away the filthy garments from him. ...Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." (Zech. 3:2-4) The love that He so lavishly showered upon the woman caught in the snare of Satan, He desires to pour upon each one of us today.

Are you beginning to sense the freedom you have been given? Jesus proclaims for everyone to hear, "neither do I condemn thee...." (John 8:11) The burden of sin, with all its guilt and shame, has forever been removed and "as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." (Colossians 2:6) You are free! "Sin shall not have dominion over you." (Romans 6:14) Jesus has pardoned you from the sentence of death charged against you and now He desires to have you share your newfound freedom with others.

Today you can be the hands and feet of Jesus, lifting up others caught in the depths of sin and despair—whose hearts are longing for one simple word of comfort and cheer. Words that will set them free to a new life in Him. They to need to hear the Savior speaking through you and I can tell you from experience, by His grace, they will

choose to "go and sin no more," for they have found the Source of life and happiness in the One who gave His life to pay the death penalty for them.

You may be wondering if you can experience firsthand how God's transforming power changes the lives of others. At this time, He may be calling you to use the resources He has placed in your hands in order for this ministry to accomplish its mission from Him.

Currently, we have a tremendous need to bring awareness in the Latino community. You can help make that happen by sponsoring us at the upcoming ASI Inter-American Convention in Panama City, Panama. Or reach down, way down, to help us launch The Hope of Survivors' Australia division. And, last but not least, we are still in need of sponsors for the ASI International Convention in Dallas, Texas. All of these projects are urgent and in need of immediate funding—this month—in order to make them happen. So, if God is prompting you to help, please don't delay.

Yours in Christ,  
Steve Nelson

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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.



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## Whiplash and Sin

On April 8, Steve and I were stopped at a red light when we were suddenly struck from behind. The impact was hard and we felt pain in our necks and backs immediately. As we pulled over and Steve got out to examine the damage and speak to the other driver, I could feel my left arm and leg going numb. I called the police and, while we waited for an officer to arrive, we both began to feel various pains throughout our bodies. It was late when the officer arrived and, thinking we'd feel a little better in the morning and within a few days we'd be fine, we refused to go to the hospital. Unfortunately, the pain did not go away; it got worse. We began chiropractic treatment, which helped some, but we were not prepared for what would take place nearly two months after the accident.

On June 2, I had been complaining to Steve most of the day that my neck was hurting and there was a persistent burning sensation. Not being one to take medicine or rush to the doctor, I just lived with it and we went about our errands. As I slept that night, I was awakened each time I turned over by the ever-increasing knot forming in my neck. By morning, I was in excruciating pain, unable to move my neck or head at all, unable to lift myself up on my own without experiencing severe muscle spasms from my neck to my shoulder. Through my tears and screams of agony, Steve helped me get around so we could go to the chiropractor for an emergency visit and see if he could help. He said he could not adjust me because my neck was too swollen and the best thing I could do was keep ice on my neck and shoulder until the swelling went down and then come back for an adjustment. I spent the next few days with an ice pack on my neck and it did help to relieve the swelling and some of the pain but definitely not all of it. For both of us, there is ongoing pain.

I don't intend to bore you with anymore details of my aches and pains. The point I want to make, and felt this experience served as a wonderful illustration, is that sin has consequences. Just as we thought we would be fine and later discovered there were lasting effects from the accident, many people believe they can sin and face no consequences. In Numbers 32:23 we discover sin—and its consequences—always have a way of surfacing, "...ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."

Daily we are in contact with people who are

hurting and in pain (emotional, spiritual and often physical) because of someone else's—a pastor's or spiritual leader's—sin and, possibly, even their own. At times they seek to protect the one who has hurt them, fearing what will happen if word gets out. What might the consequences be? Unemployment? Damaged reputation? Blame? Well, yes, these and many other outcomes are quite possible when pastoral sexual abuse is exposed. Does that mean we don't bring it to light and provide help and healing to all affected by it? No, I don't think so. Ephesians 5:11 states, "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*" As difficult as it may be, when a spiritual leader is involved in sexual misconduct and abuse, it must be exposed. It must be stopped. Why? Because if it's not, it will become as a cancer and will eat away at the heart of the church—Christ's beloved Bride.

It's important for me to clarify we are speaking of the few spiritual leaders who go astray and turn from God. We praise the Lord the majority are God-fearing, respectable and morally upright men (and women) who would rather die than sin against God or His sheep under their care. Many pastors who take advantage of their power and position to abuse others do so because they think there will be no consequences. They think, "*If I'm caught, I'll tell people she tried to seduce me. Everyone will believe me; I'm the pastor.*" Or many believe they will be relocated to a new church, a new position, when the abuse has been discovered. I am deeply saddened to admit this happens more often than we'd ever care to believe. Some have even claimed to be God's "anointed" while they have been engaged in such sin and, by their power and persuasion, have convinced the victim that they are not guilty of any wrong at all. They are, in their deceived minds, "untouchable." They believe God is with them no matter how heinous their sin, and that He will bless and prosper them even in their sin. Sound far-fetched? It may to some of you, just as it did to us many years ago but, sadly, these are actual comments pastors have made while abusing a member of their congregation, someone entrusted to their care, someone they were to edify for God's Kingdom, not destroy by their own sinful acts.

Galatians 6:7 warns us, "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*" There are consequences to sin—some immediate, others delayed. Whether the pastor is terminated, or protected and relocated, consequences will come. Just as a

whiplash injury can flare up at any time, those who stray from God, those who intentionally use His name in vain, will face the sure results of their evil course.

There are consequences for the victim from day one. There is a breakdown in her family life. There is a sense of guilt and shame, a wonderment that one is even in such a predicament. There is a disconnect from God and an ever-growing resentment and anger at times for God "having allowed" this to take place. There is a bewilderment that no one seems to notice or care about what is happening. There is a desperation as many reach the point of depression, self-injury and suicidal ideation. There is a feeling of betrayal—by God and the pastor. Then, there is the belief that one is lost, lost for eternity, with no hope of life or healing. Praise God He has raised up a ministry to provide hope to those who have lost all sense of it! I ask you again, are there immediate and ongoing consequences to sin? Yes, there are.

What about the pastor who is controlling the situation and trying to convince the woman God intends for them to be together, despite all Biblical evidence to the contrary? Does he face consequences? Yes, although they are not always readily apparent. The first consequence is the loss of genuine communion with God. For a pastor to allow his mind to stray to thoughts of seducing a counselee or member of his congregation, there has been a breach in the relationship between him and the Lord. He has unplugged himself from the Source of all power, and is left to his own devices and vain imaginings. Whether he senses his danger or not is almost irrelevant, as his mind focuses only on the object of his desire, his new "idol." His thoughts become absorbed in her, and he loses sight of God almost entirely. His sermons become empty words, void of the Holy Spirit. God does not work through those who are in league with Satan.

His family suffers as well, often unaware of what is going on and unable to comprehend the sudden changes in him as father and husband. Other church members find they can no longer count on their pastor, as he is preoccupied and "busy" all the time now. When the word gets out, as it inevitably does, not only has the pastor shattered his family's life and that of the victim's, he's also shaken the entire congregation to their very core. God ends up on trial, when He has done nothing wrong.

There are lifelong consequences to pastoral sexual abuse, for the victim as well as the spiritual leader. Like a whiplash, pain and symptoms may flare up unexpectedly from time to time and in the worst possible moments. There is a nagging fear that God will not hear, that He will not save, that He is distant, unforgiving, and unloving. I want to encourage you that "*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*" (Psalm 126:5) Your tears, pain and sorrow are not in vain, for God will heal you and you will be drawn closer to Him as you allow Him to work in your life.

God is faithful to forgive all who sincerely repent of their sins and desire forgiveness. May Romans 6:22-24 encourage you, "*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

May God bless you,  
Samantha Nelson



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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*"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."*

—Galatians 6:8