

# HopeSPEAK

Dear Readers:

It's been a hectic quarter with the transition into pastoral ministry, the *Hope & Healing* conference for victims in St. Louis, and relocation of our home and The Hope of Survivors office. We praise God for His strength and watchful care over us!

There are many important announcements, including the new address for The Hope of Survivors, in this newsletter, so please review carefully and take note of the changes.

In closing, I'd just like to share some of the feedback from the conference in St. Louis. We praise God for His presence and blessing there.



"[The conference contained] a good balance of information, testimony and pointed back to Christ."—IN

"Thank you for your love and compassion! Please always include the "ministry hour" where couples/individuals ministered to each other—powerful! Thanks for providing the morning and midday ministries that set tone, and gave direction to the afternoon hours. Excellent!"—Gail Coridan, Women's Ministries, IA-MO Conference

"It was great, thank you so much! I am very grateful for your ministry."—MO

"After the Q&A session, I feel much better, hopeful and positive among friends."—OH

"[The conference] encouraged me to hang in there and to keep focused on those who have been abused as I have."—MO



"Thank you for being vulnerable in sharing such a painful experience in order to help other hurting people. You are to be commended. My prayers will be with your ministry."—Robert Peck, VP for Admin., IA-MO Conference

We are so thankful God provides these opportunities to impart hope to those in need!

God bless you,  
Samantha Nelson  
Vice President



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## *License to Prey*

—Ruth Collins\*

My story is ongoing, as my perpetrator lives in the same small town as my children and me. He continues to tell anyone who will listen that I “lied” to the New England UCC Conference investigating committee; but I have extensive, written proof of his professional misconduct.

Ralph\*, my former minister, and his church leaders have attempted to commit slander against me—both verbally and in written newspaper print—and have done all they can to discredit my character.

However, I have been telling the truth—the truth that some do not want to label as clergy professional misconduct and abuse of power. Those who are able to reason, who understand right from wrong, and who are familiar with the character traits of an abuser also know the truth.

My perpetrator, as most do, portrays himself to his current congregation as the victim, as he truly believes he has done nothing wrong. To this day, he continues to deny wrongdoing, has not displayed repentance (that I have witnessed), and blames me for “ruining his career” (quotes are his exact words). However, my former UCC minister did do something very wrong. His actions eventually led him to be suspended for clergy misconduct and I was one of his victims.



In general, a clergy person, a priest, or a Rabbi’s powerful and authoritative vocation, the blind faith of his followers, the colleagues who choose collusion over transparency, and the antiquated legal system give my former pastor—and all other unethical church leaders—a license to prey. At this very moment in time, my offend-

er is back at the pulpit and, consequently, has been given authority to abuse again.

My story—my truth—began in the early winter of 2007.

My offender was my trusted UCC minister of seven years. I thought he was my friend and a man whom I could trust. Little did I know that he was grooming me for what many congregants considered an “af-

fair” and no one else’s business. But, it was clearly professional misconduct, clergy abuse of power, and NOT an affair.

My minister knew I was vulnerable, as he had counseled me on other occasions, about other topics; but now, both newly divorced, we had a new topic of conversation: divorce and Christianity. Initially, our conversations were over the phone; then, he had me at his home to discuss the after-math of divorce and how it affected one’s spiritual life.

My minister offered me compassion and healing words. He knew my former husband was cold and inattentive. Ralph went out of his way to pamper me, make me feel special, and loved.

Since my family joined the church, officially, in 2000 or 2001, I had always been an active member as a church schoolteacher and I participated in various church fundraisers. So, assisting him with an upcoming confirmation class made sense to me. There was no cause for red flags yet.

Now, winter of 2007, my minister invited me out to dinner—on two different occasions—to prepare for the confirmation classes. Later, he confessed to me that he viewed those dinners as our “first dates.” In hindsight, I now realize an ethical minister, with good boundaries, would not have invited me out to dinner under the guise of preparing for confirmation classes. Our dinners together provided us opportunity to discuss our personal lives, as well as the church business.

When I spoke of my reuniting with an old boyfriend from high school, my pastor suggested to me that I “date around...” This was my first RED FLAG.

By the end of March 2007, our professional relationship and long-time friendship took a drastic turn toward a romantic and very intimate nature. Ralph suggested I be open to “a love that I was so deserving of...” and that he could provide for me. Up to that point, I considered my minister to be my moral compass. I looked up to him for spiritual guidance. I trusted him. He was the authority figure, the experienced and educated professional, and the one whom I had learned to trust.

In the beginning, I did not question him because he had my blind trust; that was my fault. I do own the fact that I was extremely vulnerable and naïve. But, we parishioners are conditioned to give our faith leader “blind trust.”

My pastor made me feel special. As of May 2006, I was newly divorced. So, it was comforting to be with someone who made me feel special. In hindsight, with his background in psychology, I believe my minister knew how to target a vulnerable woman and use her for his own selfish needs. I later concluded I was just that: his latest target.

My UCC minister used his vocation, Scripture, and his calling to seduce me. He told me that “spiritual heat” was “hotter” than physical heat. He read to me *Song of Solomon*. He spoke of a love between us that was like no other he had ever experienced. He told me when he was with me he was “home” (again, the quotes are his exact words).

***“I have since learned clergy/parishioner relationships are never consensual because of the imbalance in power.”***

Months into our relationship, whenever I questioned his obsession or preoccupation with sex, he claimed he was extremely deprived in his marriage of many years. But, my intuition was telling me there might be more to his obsessive and quirky behavior.

I have since learned three facts: (1) at the time he seduced me and invited me up to his bedroom, he was still romantically involved with a woman from out of town. In fact, he had plans to travel with her, out of state, in order to celebrate his upcoming birthday that following April; (2) UCC ministers do have an Ethical Code of Conduct that forbids romantic relationships between parishioners and clergy. My minister led me to believe our relationship was sanctioned by his UCC superiors; and, (3) in nine states, what took place between my minister and I would be considered a criminal offense in the eyes of the State’s law. However, it is not yet a criminal act in the state in which I live. Thus, my minister has a license to prey.

I have since learned clergy/parishioner relationships are never consensual because of the imbalance in power. Web sites such as The Hope of Survivors have been a Godsend to me; teaching me, among other things, about what imbalance in power means. In hindsight, I now realize my minister was being immoral, unethical and, in the eyes of the law of some states, engaging in a criminal act.

Back to my story...red flags came and went. My minister gave me many mixed messages. He asked that we be discreet; which was another RED FLAG. And, by being discreet, my children and I could remain at his church; the only church we ever knew since mov-

ing to town. So, discreet I was.

The other red flags led me to ask many questions. My minister was able to talk his way out of every tight corner he put himself into. I believed him because of WHO he was; he was my trusted minister. He was articulate, charming, romantic, and obsessive of me; which, at the time was flattering. I thought I was special; an exception to the rule.

Toward the end of our relationship, whenever I questioned his intent or ethics, he used the threat of postponing our eventual engagement as a way to silence me. Our time of engagement went from Spring 2008 to December 2008 because I was asking him too many questions; questions he could not truthfully answer and questions that seemed to agitate him.

I eventually found out I was not his first parishioner romance. He confided in me that a few years back (approximately 2004-2005), he had sought “counsel” from another divorced woman who was also a member of our church. He was still legally married when that parishioner relationship took place. It leads me to the questions: how many other parishioner romances did he engage in or will engage in, in the future? After all, he did admit to me he knew he had issues with boundaries but would not specify to me what those boundary issues were.

My minister was consumed by the topic of sex. He spoke of it all the time. He spoke of the TV show “Desperate Housewives” as being one of his favorite shows. He claimed it had “Christian themes” to each episode. He even mentioned, in one of his youth group emails, he intended to watch the show after the church Youth Group meeting.

During the summer of 2007, my minister was due to go on sabbatical for the months of July and August. He wanted to take me away to his favorite vacation spot. He owned a trailer; so, off we went. Ralph told me it felt like a “honeymoon” to him. It now appears that his modus operandi included romantic trips away so he would not be seen with a parishioner. How many other church parishioners has he gone away with on romantic trips? I have since wondered. As I stated before, he admitted to me that I was not his first parishioner romance; which was another RED FLAG for me.

By the end of summer of 2007, my minister promised me marriage and spoke of the idea that once public, I would have to find another church but added it would be only “temporary.” He then promised me that my children and I would soon return to my church—our church—as his new wife and as his

children.

He forgot to tell me he had also promised marriage to his last girlfriend; the one he went away with during the beginnings of our romance. You see,

***“He cared not that he was stripping me of my faith in church, my faith in men, and my faith in my church community. I had been spiritually raped by my own minister.”***

the other lady had since moved to our small town and I was able to converse with her, via telephone, one week after Ralph terminated our relationship. Yes, he lied to her as well. She suspected he had involved himself with someone else during the last

remaining months of their relationship; but, when questioned, he denied it. Lying comes easy to my former pastor. Most predators lie well. Pastor Ralph was also an adult child of an alcoholic—thus learning at a young age to manipulate the truth, reality, and to get his needs met with lies.

By mid-winter of 2008, I had more questions; questions Ralph would not answer. Questions I needed to be answered before I would accept a ring of engagement from him. So, I conferred, via telephone, with another UCC minister 50 miles north of our community. She stated I should speak with our State’s UCC headquarters.

I then sent an email inquiry to the State’s UCC headquarters. That inquiry prompted an investigation into the ethical practices of Reverend Ralph. I was then asked for an interview numerous times by the State’s UCC Conference committees. However, I NEVER met with the 19-member Diaconate Committee of my church. They—my church family—shut me out. They quickly turned their backs on me and held tightly to my minister’s slanted and twisted version of our story.

Consider the trauma: On February 5, 2008, I was in love, planning a trip away with my minister, and on February 6, 2008, my minister—in a fit of rage—terminated our relationship stating I put his career “at risk” by conferring with a UCC minister about us. I felt total shock and disbelief. All along, he had told me our relationship was sanctioned by his UCC superiors and mentors. How could one conversation with a UCC minister, from miles away, threaten his career? BIG RED FLAG.

The light bulb finally went on; I quickly concluded my former minister used me for his own self-grat-

ification. He cared not that he was stripping me of my faith in church, my faith in men, and my faith in my church community. I had been spiritually raped by my own minister.

One week later, February 13th, I was able to speak with Ralph’s previous girlfriend and we were able to exchange information, emails, and dates of our involvement with him. It then became quite clear that all of those red flags were accurate, therefore, confirming my former minister was not trustworthy, nor ethical, nor moral.

During the investigation process and eventual suspension of my former minister, I was harassed by angry church parishioners. Together, they made great efforts to blame me, shame me, and silence me.

Letters of support—for my minister—found their way to the local papers; all from people who neither knew me nor spoke to me to hear my side of our story. They publically responded to a situation they truly knew nothing about. Hearing Reverend Ralph’s twisted version of our story was their only source of information. It was unreal how these self-proclaimed Christians behaved.

The local UCC church leaders shunned me like a modern-day Hester Prynne from the *Scarlet Letter*. The State’s UCC leaders gave me validation that the actions of my former pastor was not condoned behavior as they recommended he be suspended for three months without pay.

The aftermath: My children were deprived of the only church they ever knew. I lost my church friends and church family. I was re-victimized by the words, actions, and inactions of the local church leaders. As a result, I felt pain and a level of betrayal so deep I contemplated ending my life. Thank God I have two precious children and my faith to keep me on my two feet! I have lawyer bills, medical bills, and lost wages from time taken off work, as some days were just too hard to bear.

It saddens me that so many parishioners are still blinded by my charming and charismatic former minister. He is back at the pulpit. I am sure he continues to counsel troubled teens and vulnerable women. His vocation allows him to do so. His vocation allows him to have a license to prey.

The Hope of Survivors web site and their work are a Godsend. We survivors need to support such

*continued on page 12...*

## Calendar Project Update

*Due to the lack of funds received for the calendar project, we have decided to include the case studies that were submitted to us in the next several newsletters. We hope you will be blessed by these testimonies of God's grace and healing power and that you will remember to pray for these individuals and for The Hope of Survivors.*



“Like many victims of abuse, whether it’s spiritual, emotional, physical or verbal, I was in denial. I couldn’t grasp what happened to me. I sat in a support group with women who had been raped, or sexually abused by a spouse, relative, or stranger. I felt that I didn’t belong there, because I wasn’t ready to identify what happened to me as abuse. After all, this man was my spiritual father whom I prayed for and looked up to. There was no sexual activity involved. He never made any sexual innuendoes to me. His conversation was always about God, and what God said.

Perhaps this is the reason why I allowed him to rub me down with oil, wearing only my sports bra and biking shorts. He said that God told him to do this three times. At the time, I was given a diagnosis from the doctor, and I was experiencing some discomfort. The pastor told me that the “oil” was a twofold thing: one, to protect me and bring healing; and, two, to transfer the anointing that was on his life to mine. I wanted both.

It took a few months before I saw the light. God whispered in my ear “manipulation,” and so began my journey to healing. It’s been a rough road, and God was there all the time. This experience affected me spiritually because I was mad at God, so I didn’t pray or read the Bible like I use to. I was hurting inside. The very thing that I was called to do—prayer and worship—the devil used to hurt me through this man.

What helped me was knowing I was not alone. I stumbled across The Hope of Survivors web site and got in contact with Samantha. In my spirit, the Lord let me know this (spiritual abuse) was bigger than what I’d imagined. The information posted on the web site confirmed what God was telling me. It was abuse.

Samantha’s story has blessed me in that I know God can turn a mess and make it your ministry. I have written a book, *Breaking the Silence from Shame*, which details my experience. God has healed me. I’ve forgiven that pastor, and I’m moving forward with my life.

Now I can say, “*Am I in the place of God? What the devil meant for evil God has turned it around for my good.*”  
*Genesis 50:10-20*

Wykeeta Michele Lee, MO

## New Volunteer for Victim Support Services



We are pleased to introduce you to Josephine Mweu who has been volunteering as one of our victim support service representatives since May.

Josephine was born in Kenya. She worked with Voice of Prophecy as an administrative secretary before she accompanied her husband to the UK for further studies. She is married to Frederick and they have two children ages 21 and 24. Frederick went through Baraton University and completed a BST in Education. He has served the Lord as a teacher and elder. Josephine has served as a Family Life Director and Women’s Ministry leader in her local churches. When Josephine and the family arrived in the UK in 2000, Frederick was diagnosed with cancer. Although he could not continue with his studies, Josephine was able to complete her BA in Biblical Counseling.

They have a passion for working with the church. Both have had an experience of trusting God even in the midst of uncertainties. It has been their ambition to spend the remaining time of their lives ministering to the broken hearted.

Welcome aboard Josephine! We trust that God will use you to bless those you minister to on behalf of The Hope of Survivors.

## Baylor University Clergy Sexual Abuse Research Update

—June 15, 2009

*\*The following is a letter from Diana Garland, Ph.D.—Dean of the Baylor School of Social Work who is conducting this research study. We include it in our newsletter because The Hope of Survivors has been a key service partner in this study. The Hope of Survivors is anticipating a tremendous increase in the number of victims reaching out for assistance after the results of the survey are released and the media coverage begins. As such, we are praying and taking steps to expand our operations in order to provide these much-needed services for victims. If you can help in some way, whether through financial support or volunteering, please contact us! To review the letter of recommendation from Baylor, go to: [http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/images/Baylor\\_Recommendation.jpg](http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/images/Baylor_Recommendation.jpg)*

Dear Friends,

I am writing to update you on the project you served, either as a consultant or an interviewee, on the topic of clergy sexual misconduct with adults. I am grateful to you for your participation, and I am long overdue in giving you a status report.

Our work has involved two companion projects: (1) a national random survey to determine the prevalence of clergy sexual misconduct (CSM) with adults; and (2) a qualitative study of women and men who self-identified as survivors who had been the objects of CSM, family or friends of survivors, and offenders who had themselves committed CSM. The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the social characteristics of CSM. The goal of both projects was to define the scope and nature of CSM as a foundation for developing prevention strategies. Clergy sexual misconduct was defined in this study as:

Ministers, priests, rabbis, or other clergypersons or religious leaders who make sexual advances or propositions to persons in the congregations they serve who are not their spouses or significant others.

The study is reported in two articles submitted in April 2009 to *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*: Chaves and Garland, “The Prevalence of Clergy Sexual Advances towards Adults in their Congregations”; and Garland and Argueta, “How Clergy Sexual Misconduct Happens: A Qualitative Study of First-Hand Accounts.” The findings of these studies must remain confidential until the journal review process is complete, indicating that professional peers have reviewed the research methodology, findings, and conclusions and judged them to be

sound. If the articles are accepted for publication, we anticipate release of the findings in early September 2009.

We are preparing for major media coverage when the results are released, since this is the first broad-scale research project on the topic of CSM with adults. Therefore, we are attempting to prepare so that we can use the media coverage to educate the public on the nature of CSM as abuse of power rather than a consensual “affair,” and to provide approaches for prevention. Thanks to the generous funding of the Ford Foundation, we have been able to engage the services of a wonderful publicity organization, Levick Strategic Communications, LLC, in Washington, DC; our colleagues there are Melissa Arnoff and Megan Fox.

Melissa and Megan have held two media training sessions for us, one in Waco and one in DC. We have had six volunteers from the interviews agree to be the public “face” of this project, to tell their stories to the media if/when the opportunities present themselves. Melissa and Megan have also helped me learn how to talk about the results of this study in ways that are clear and compelling rather than academic jargon. Don’t hold them responsible, however, if I botch it!

Vicki Kabat, the Director of Communications and Marketing in the Baylor School of Social Work, has developed a web page dedicated to this project, which is now functional:



<http://www.baylor.edu/clergysexualmisconduct>

The website is designed to be a resource to which we can direct the media, congregational leaders, and survivors if/when they contact us when the findings of the project become public. We welcome your

checking it out and giving us feedback!

In particular, I would direct your attention to the three case studies on the website; each of them also has a video clip of one of the survivors, telling a short version of her personal experience as the target of a religious leader's misconduct. I am eternally grateful to these very courageous women. I wish we could have posted all six, but we had to limit to three, so we tried to pick the three that would really show the diversity of experiences that are involved in clergy sexual misconduct. All six of them stand at the ready to speak. If you want to send a message to them, e-mail me and I'll forward it on!

We have written a short piece on "dual relationships" (under resources, and then documents), since we found that most cases of CSM took place in a relationship that included counseling. Also, there is a sample code of ethics we are proposing for religious leaders. And, of course, there is an annotated bibliography of resources and websites.

There is a link for "legislation." We hope soon to have sample legislation to put there to make CSM not only unethical and immoral but also illegal. The faculty of

the Baylor School of Law is working on the sample legislation for us.

We are working now on a curriculum on "power and the Christian life," to address the power we have as bosses, community leaders, teachers, and religious leaders. We are hoping that a broad curriculum that addresses the broad issue of power and its abuse will get more attention than the narrower focus on religious leaders. We hope! We don't want to develop a resource that speaks truth but that no one will use because the topic scares them so much. Because we are Christians, the prevention sources we are developing for congregations will have a bent toward Protestant Christians, but we certainly will encourage others to adapt any resources we develop for their own faith traditions, and we would love to provide links.

We are hoping to launch the study into the public media immediately after Labor Day. I will let you know, most certainly!

That's the update. We welcome your thoughts and feedback.

Diana

### ***Creative ways to help...***

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))

Have you ever wished you could buy products with The Hope of Survivors logo on them to help raise awareness and generate conversations about pastoral sexual abuse? Now, thanks to **Charlton Commerce's online store**, you can! Just visit <http://thos.webstore.us.com>.

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**. Just be sure to type The Hope of Survivors in the charity to be supported box.

Do you shop online? Then shop through **iGive.com** and earn money for The Hope of Survivors each time you order from popular merchants online!

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

Thank you for supporting The Hope of Survivors!

## **Testimonials**

*"I am so thankful to God that your ministry was there for us when we needed it, had it not been for God using you and Steve I don't think the outcome would have been quite too good. Sometimes all it takes is knowing you are not alone. May God continue to bless your ministry and give you strength in all you do for Him."—SC*

*"I will always be thankful for the day God brought you into my life. You give that special care that I have such a hard time finding. I appreciate your efforts."—WI*

## Being a Pastor of Honor

—Chuck Burkeen

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” At least, that’s what my Mom always told me. In our spiritual lives I find that notion present in James 4:7—*“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

So you’re a pastor or church leader and you find yourself drawn down a road that you know you don’t want to travel. In those moments when the devil comes tugging at our hearts, we can choose the “ounce of prevention” route and resist and he’ll flee. Or we can fall and suffer the consequences, and require the “pound of cure.”

I see three ways that we can go in life as we learn to resist the devil:

**1—You never learn to resist** and end up on skid row or death row or some other nasty row. This is not an option for Christians.

**2—You learn to resist the devil from your mistakes.** This is where a lot of us often are. We’re not really dumb; we just act like it sometimes. Eventually we learn to resist one dumb thing, then we go on to the next dumb thing until we get over it too.

**3—You develop an honorable character by submitting to God.** It can happen!

The Bible gives us examples of these last two. Look at Genesis chapters 37-50, especially chapters 38-39: the stories of Judah and Joseph. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that these two stories are presented side by side in the Bible. Here God is giving us two examples to become honorable people who regularly resist the devil.

Joseph is considered a classic man of honor. Granted, Joseph could have been a bit smarter when he saw the visions from God.

God told him, *“Joseph, you are going to rule over your older brothers. They will bow down to you and serve you.”* Even though it was true, Joseph should have kept his mouth shut. You don’t tell your big brothers that they will bow down and serve you.

That still didn’t give Judah an excuse to act as he did. When Joseph came to check on his brothers out in the pastures, they said, *“Here comes that dreamer. Let’s kill him and see what comes of his dreams.”* Fortunately Reuben had the good sense to stop them from killing Joseph.

But when Reuben was away Judah talked the others into selling Joseph to some Midianite slave-traders. This is where our stories begin.

Genesis 38: Judah married a Canaanite woman and had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Now Judah has two strikes against him: 1—He sold his brother into slavery, and 2—He married a pagan. How do you think his sons turned out?

Verses 6-7—Right off the bat, God put Er to death because he was wicked. Judah had a problem. Er left behind a widow named Tamar. Now Er and Tamar had no children, and the custom was that if a man dies without children, the man’s brother is to go and help his sister-in-law have babies. So Judah sent Onan to help Tamar have babies.

But Onan didn’t want to help Tamar have babies, so God put Onan to death too. Now Judah was left with one son, Shelah. So he told Tamar, *“Go live with your family until Shelah is grown up.”* But Judah had no intention of losing his last son, and here was strike three: he lied to Tamar. The course of Judah’s life was one of jealousy, idolatry, and deceit. He was a classic fool. When trouble came to Judah, he didn’t have any experience resisting the devil.

And trouble did come. Judah never kept his promise so Tamar said, *“It’s payback time.”* She disguised herself as a prostitute and sat along the roadway as Judah walked to town. She set him up for his fall.

We all face those moments when the devil comes knocking, moments that tell if we will be honorable or dishonorable; if we will resist or fall.

Joseph’s story is found in Genesis 39. The Midianites carried Joseph to Egypt and sold him as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh’s guard. But Joseph has no strikes against him.



The Bible says *“the Lord was with him.”* I think that can create a misconception. The Lord didn’t choose to be with Joseph and not Judah. It was the other way around. Joseph chose to be with the Lord, but Judah didn’t.

Joseph stayed close

to God even though he was kidnapped by his brothers, sold into slavery, yanked away from his loving father and his homeland, sent to a strange land filled with strange people who spoke a strange language, and put to work doing the filthiest, nastiest chores in the household. Joseph stayed close to God in the depths of despair, and God lifted him up to the heights of glory. He helped Joseph become an honest, industrious young man. That pleased Potiphar. He put Joseph in charge of everything he owned, except his wife.

God blessed him so much that my Bible says that Joseph grew up to be *“well built and handsome.”* That pleased Mrs. Potiphar. She wanted to get Joseph into bed, so she set him up for his fall. In both chapters we see that both Judah and Joseph are set up for a fall.

H. Richard Niebuhr was a theologian who identified 3 qualities of responsible people. He said that responsible people:

**1—Initiate action.** They don’t just go with the flow. They don’t let circumstances control them. They control circumstances.

**2—Respond rather than react.** They think before they act. They let reasonable, rational thoughts, rather than emotions, guide them.

**3—Are accountable for their actions.** They have nothing to hide. They are willing to let the whole world see what they do.

Let’s look at **#1—Initiate action.**

Judah saw Tamar disguised as a prostitute and he walked over and said, *“Come now, let me sleep with you.”* Did he initiate action? I say no—he merely initiated the conversation.

Proverbs 7:22 says that a man who goes after a prostitute is like an ox led to slaughter. He’s being drug along. Instead of initiating action, he just went with the flow. Judah saw a prostitute and figured here was a good time. After all, everyone else does it. He fell for the devil’s trap.

Meanwhile, down in Egypt, Mrs. Potiphar grabbed Joseph by his coat and said *“Come to bed with me!”* Joseph ran away. Did he initiate action? Yes. It would have been easy to say, *“Everyone else does it. Mr. Potiphar will never know. Maybe this will get her to leave me alone. It’ll be okay just this once.”* But instead he did the hard thing, he ran away. He took charge of his situation and did the right thing—

he resisted the devil.

**Quality #2 is: Respond rather than react.** Now Judah had plenty of time to think about what he was doing. He and Tamar spent a few minutes haggling over a price. *“I’ll send you a young goat,”* he said. *“How do I know you will?”* she said. *“Give me your seal and your staff as a pledge.”* Judah had time to have second thoughts about what he was doing. Did he respond thoughtfully to this situation, or react emotionally? He followed his emotions and went off to bed with Tamar.

Which did Joseph do with Mrs. Potiphar? He responded thoughtfully, but when? All he did was run away! That seems like an instant reaction. He responded thoughtfully every other time she propositioned him and he turned her down.

Genesis 39:10 shows that she propositioned him day after day, and day after day he refused. *“My master has withheld nothing from me except you,”* he said. *“How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”* Even though Joseph didn’t have time to think when she grabbed him, he had already thought out his response several times before. Joseph was a classic man of honor.

**The third quality is: Accountability.** Was Joseph accountable for his actions? Yes. His actions are listed here for all to see. He was innocent, but he went to jail anyway. There he continued to live an honorable life. He became the assistant warden. An inmate became second in command. He eventually became the assistant to the Pharaoh, second in command over all of Egypt, and the visions came true: he was the savior of his family.

Was Judah accountable for his actions? Yes. This is where we often learn from our mistakes. Tamar became pregnant and was accused of prostitution. Judah said, *“Bring her out and have her burned to death.”*

Tamar held out Judah’s seal and staff and said, *“I am pregnant by the man who owns these.”* Busted! What do you do now Judah, lie—or fess up?

He said, *“She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn’t give her to my son Shelah.”* (Genesis 38:26) Judah finally resisted the devil. Judah took the first step toward becoming a responsible person. He confessed (accepted accountability) and began to become a man of honor.

Later, when Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt for grain, Joseph played a little game with them. Joseph

*And Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. I will be a pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.”*  
**Genesis 43:8-9**

“The man who took my cup will be my slave. The rest of you go back.” Now Judah stepped forward and gave an impassioned plea in Genesis 44:18-34.

In verse 33 we see that Judah is willing to stand in the place of Benjamin. Judah, the brother who sold Joseph into slavery, is willing to sell himself into slavery to save Benjamin. He’s learned to be a man of honor. There is hope even for a classic fool.

See what happens when you practice that third quality? You may blow the first two. You may go with the

held Simeon hostage and then sent the rest back to get his younger brother, Benjamin. Jacob didn’t want to lose another son, so he refused to send him.

Read what Judah says in Genesis 43:8-9. Judah accepted personal responsibility for Benjamin. Certainly the devil tempted Judah to abandon Simeon like he did Joseph, but Judah resisted the devil. Judah started down the path of becoming an honorable man.

Joseph decided to have some real fun with them, so he had his silver cup planted into Benjamin’s sack of grain. When they were caught, Joseph said,

flow and get into trouble. You may act before you think sometimes. But when you accept your guilt, when you are accountable for your actions, when you confess and ask forgiveness, then you begin to learn from your mistakes and begin living an honorable life.

Did it help Judah?

Genesis 49:3-4—Reuben lost his position as the first-born son (because of a moment of indiscretion—but that’s another story).

Genesis 49:8-12—The line of Judah became the rulers of the nation of Israel, and Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, came from the tribe of Judah; all because Judah became a man of honor.

Even though God’s plan is that we’ll always live honorable lives, if you find yourself heading down the wrong path it’s never too late to turn back and “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”



*Chuck Burkeen is on the board of directors of The Hope of Survivors and is the Director of Member Ministries in the Oregon Conference. He and his wife, Joyce, have been married for 27 years and have two children and two grandchildren.*

*Chuck began his ministry in the Oregon Conference in 1987, and has pastored several churches there. Joyce has assisted the conference in their child safety process, and they both have an interest in making the church a safe place for young and old.*

## Helpful resources...



**Small Groups Tool!** 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? Well, now you can! The Hope of Survivors has just released a new resource—*THOS Support Group Manual*, available for only \$49.95. This manual provides step-by-step instructions and guidelines for becoming a THOS Support Group Facilitator in your area. Order today at [www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/products.asp](http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/products.asp)!

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

## Important Announcement!

Due to Steve's recent appointment as pastor of a four-church district, it was necessary for us to relocate in order to better serve our congregations. The office of The Hope of Survivors will be in our home until we are able to establish a suitable office space elsewhere. Please update your contact information with the **new address** for The Hope of Survivors. **The toll-free number remains the same, as well as the web site and email addresses.**

**The Hope of Survivors**  
**P.O. Box 27**  
**Effingham, IL 62401**

### Australia Division Update

Plans are well underway for the ministry opportunities in Australia this October! Many thanks to Arlagene Groves and Coralie Roll for their assistance in arranging these meetings and contributing to the travel expenses. We look forward to ministering in person to some of the victims we have been working with via phone and email. For now, our tentative schedule is as follows (per the email we received from Arlagene):

- Friday - Preach at '7:28' (That's the name of vespers) at Avondale College on Friday night.
- Sabbath - Still organising an interview at Avondale College church and then an afternoon program
- Sunday - Rest day
- Monday - Morning seminar held in Chapel at Conference offices at NNSW; conference for SDA pastors in Hunter and Central Coast regions and then an evening seminar for the wider Christian community and clergy at the same place
- Tuesday - Afternoon seminar for theology students at College/possible short seminar for partners of theology students and wives of ministers in the evening
- Wednesday - Still organising at Adventist Safe-places

We are also working toward scheduling a *Hope & Healing* victim's conference and conducting a radio interview on the topic of pastoral sexual abuse while there. More details on these events to come. Please keep these outreach opportunities in prayer and, if led by the Spirit to contribute toward the expense of this undertaking, your donations would be greatly appreciated.

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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



continued from page 4...

### **“Silence sanctions abuse and I refuse to be silent.”**

organizations, as they have been the true catalyst to my healing. Without them, I was left to suffer in silence. I had no voice. Now, I have a voice. I have validation. I have the ability to truly heal and recover from the worst trauma I have ever experienced in my life.

Silence sanctions abuse and I refuse to be silent. And, the silence of victims/survivors of clergy abuse and misconduct are what these perpetrators are banking on. If you too are a survivor, turn your outrage into action as I have! I ask you to also speak truth to power, please. Together, we will be unstoppable.



We all have the power to put an end to hypocrisy and to shine light on the church's hidden secret. Current laws, for the most part, do not protect parishioners—young or adult—from clergy professional misconduct or clergy abuse. I believe there should be transparency within all churches and synagogues so parishioners can find out if priests, clergy,

### **Current Project Needs**

- Brochures: We are in need of printing new educational brochures to disseminate to victims, pastors and others who can benefit from the information contained in them. Your contributions toward this are greatly appreciated! (\$2,000)

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**  
of Survivors

P.O. Box 27 Effingham, IL 62401

rabbi, and church leaders have had allegations of sexual harassment, professional misconduct and/or abuse charges against them.

If church is a business, and parishioners are consumers of such a business, we need consumer protection laws to slow down the rate of clergy misconduct and abuse. I suggest we work collectively to support legislative changes to slow down the rate of clergy abuse in our country. After all, what would Jesus do? I believe Jesus would speak out against injustice. I believe my strength to speak out against injustice and abuse comes directly from the Holy Spirit.

As a survivor, I am not alone and neither are you. God has been with me all along, assisting me on my journey from victim to survivor. I am hopeful that we survivors, as a united front, will be the conduits for change that will eventually lead to safer church environments. Please join us as we learn to speak truth to power and be a voice for all of the clergy abuse victims who are today suffering in silence. Together, let's give them a voice!

*\* Names and geographical location have been changed to protect the privacy of the survivor, the perpetrator, and his family—whom I consider secondary victims of his misconduct.*

### **Calendar of Events**

#### **August 24, 2009**

Redding, CA—Fundraising Event  
Prime 11 Cinemas—Monday Sponsorship Program  
Arranged by The Hope of Survivors' volunteers, Peggy and Dave Mahrt, The Hope of Survivors will be the recipient of a portion of funds collected at **Prime 11 Cinemas** during the day. If you're in the area, please plan to participate in this fundraising event.

#### **October 18–November 2, 2009**

Queensland, Australia—*Hope & Healing* and *Faith & Fidelity* conferences.

These conferences are for victims of pastoral sexual abuse and their families, and for pastors and church leaders. The presentations address the dynamics of pastoral sexual abuse between an adult woman and a pastor and provide information for healing and prevention. These conferences will take place in conjunction with the further training and establishment of the Australian Division of The Hope of Survivors.

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)