

Calendar of Events

October 15, 2005
Ottawa, IL—*Trust & Truth* Conference
This conference, held at 807 LaSalle Street in downtown Ottawa, is for church and community members who wish to better understand the dynamics of pastoral sexual abuse between an adult woman and a pastor. Time is from 1:00pm-5:00pm. Registration is not required, and there is no fee for the conference. Donations will be accepted.

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

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

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

www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com

Projects & Goals...

Many burdens have been placed upon our hearts for the expansion of The Hope of Survivors. It will take human resources, as well as financial, to accomplish these projects and goals.

Proposed new projects include: a retreat center, advertising campaign, establishment of resource centers, production of videos, and much more.

For detailed information about these plans and needs, please download our prospectus at: www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/you_can_help.asp and join us in prayer for the Lord's blessings and for His will to be done. Please review and feel free to share this information with others, too.

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:

What is faith? God's Word tells us that *"faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1-3)

For one who is going through the trauma of abuse, faith is the only thing you have to hold on to. Faith that "this, too, shall pass." Perhaps right now you are wondering to yourself, can I really get through this? Will the pain, memories, heartache and devastation ever go away? Can I ever know peace and happiness again? Can I trust a God whose character has been so badly distorted that I'm not sure I will ever know His voice again?

These questions are difficult to face but, without an answer, life is meaningless and without hope. I'm glad I can tell you with confidence that, even though you cannot see through the darkness that surrounds you, there is hope. The God whom you think has betrayed you, "loves you with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3) You may be wondering, how can you say that, you don't even know me? It's because I've been where you are and I've shared your heartfelt cry and desperation.

I want to share with you a few simple steps you can take in order to rebuild your faith. Faith in the fact that you are of ultimate value and truly loved. Faith that God can be trusted and will bring you through this difficult time.

1) Pray—You may be wondering, how can I pray when I'm not sure He hears me, or that I even care what He says? This is the first step in faith. Take a moment and think of how you used to think about God before this terrible abuse happened. You trusted Him and knew He loved you. Well, He still does. God hasn't changed. It's difficult when someone you trusted, someone you thought was like Him, hurts you. But it was not God who hurt you. I promise you this, if you will take a few moments each day to tell God of your hurt, sorrow and pain, He will meet you with open arms and restore what you've lost.

2) Read—Take time to fill your mind with the Word. His Spirit will breathe new life into your soul, even if you can only spend a couple of minutes at first. This is the best way to begin hearing His voice clearly again.

3) Rest—As you take time to seek Him, He promises to give you rest. *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:27-29) I'm not promising you an easy way or a quick fix, but I'm pointing you to *"the way, the truth, and the life."* (John 14:6)

At The Hope of Survivors, it is our mission to inspire you with faith in the One who gives you hope and the One who will restore what you've lost. It is because He has done it for us that we can, with confidence, say He will do it for you!

Now, for a few news items...

◆ You may now order brochures and DVDs online at <http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/products.asp>.

◆ The Webby Awards—We are excited that The Hope of Survivors' web site has been given a *Webby Worthy* award. This honorable distinction was introduced for the first time this year to recognize sites exhibiting remarkable achievement. Read the press release at: http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/news_notes/web_by_worthy.asp.

As you read about our recent activities inside, please visit the web site and take a look at the photos, too.

Until next time, God be with you.
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 are now thriving and 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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Vertical Vision

As I prayed about what to write for this newsletter, I was impressed to share the message, “Look to Jesus.” In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and our concern for some with whom we have not been able to reconnect since that time, it becomes increasingly evident that we live in volatile times—times of unrest, times of great pain, and times just before the soon coming of our Savior.

When life becomes difficult, when pain becomes too hard to bear, we often find ourselves focusing on that pain and the circumstances that surround us. As long as we do that, we will not see the “big picture,” as it were. We are locked into our own little worlds, our own pain, our own trials and tribulations. These things loom ever larger in our minds and soon Satan has convinced us that there is no hope, no way out of our depression and pain.

What can we do? I am reminded of an antique piece of art I acquired from my father. It was my grandmother’s, and I obtained it long after her death. The piece depicts a very realistic “photo” of Daniel in the lion’s den. Some of you may know where I’m going here, as I have shared this on an individual basis with a few of you previously. In the photo, Daniel is seen standing in the lion’s den, surrounded by lions. It is dark; the lions are hungry, yet they do not come near him. Daniel stands with his back to the lions; his face upturned toward the shaft; where a light, streaming as it were from Heaven, shines down upon his countenance.

I fell in love with this image the moment I saw it. As I reflect upon it, the lesson is so very clear. We are to look up—we are to look to Jesus. Jesus is the Light of the World. Here is Daniel, surrounded by lions, the “problems” in his life. Is he looking at the problems? No. Daniel is choosing to look toward the heavens; he is choosing to look to Jesus, the Solution.

And so, we, too, must choose to look to Jesus, our Problem Solver, rather than the many perplexities and difficulties that surround us each day. Whether you’ve suffered pastoral abuse or any one of a number of abuses and injustices, the pain you’re in may seem unbearable, yet Jesus is the answer. 1 Corinthians 10:13 holds a promise for each of us, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted

beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (NIV)

It is our natural human tendency to focus on ourselves and on our problems. Yet, if we will look to Jesus, if we will go to Him in prayer and seek His wisdom, we will find comfort, hope and courage. Luke 21:28 tells us, “*And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*” We know we shall have tribulation in this world, but that doesn’t mean we can’t have hope. The problems we face here are temporary, although they may, at times, appear to be never-ending. There is hope, despite the inevitable pain life brings. Titus 2:13 states, “*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” We have hope in Christ!

What do you do when you encounter difficulties in life? Do you try to fix them yourself? Do you focus on the problem? Or, do you go to your Problem Solver, as did the Psalmist when he penned, “*My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*” (Psalm 5:3)

We need to look up. We need to have a “vertical vision”—a vision that directs our eyes to our Savior, not to those troubling circumstances on every side of us. Hebrews 12:2 describes what our actions should be, “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” I don’t know about you, but I choose to look to Jesus. I am not capable of solving my own problems or overcoming life’s cruel blows. But, I know Someone who will help me. I encourage you, look to Jesus and live.

Perhaps you can almost hear the melody as I close with a few lines from this old-time favorite hymn, *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*.

*O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There’s a light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

(Words and music by Helen H. Lemmel, 1922.)

What a precious promise—what hope! “*Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*” (Jude 1:21) May God direct your eyes toward Him at all times, especially in the hour of your greatest need.—Samantha Nelson

Updates on Recent Activities

In June and July we were privileged to attend the General Conference Session of Seventh-day Adventists, held in St. Louis, MO. For those of you who’d like to see a glimpse of what the General Conference Session was like, read the update and watch the video at the following URL: http://www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com/GC_2005_Update.asp (scroll to the bottom and click on the link to view the short video).

In August, we exhibited at the Lake Tahoe camp meeting (Lake Tahoe, CA) and at the ASI International Convention in Sacramento, CA. Then we prepared for the Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day sermon and The Hope of Survivors benefit concert. Read more at http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/benefit_concert_2005.asp.

The Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day (August 27) sermon, presented by Steve Nelson, President of The Hope of Survivors, is now available online at: http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/media_programs.asp.

Testimonies

“Thank you so very much for being there. You helped me to remain strong enough to break free of the spell this church had over me and I am so grateful to you for helping me. May God bless you and your organization for what you do. With heartfelt thanks.”—California

“Please, if I get emotional at times, it’s more overwhelm that I feel that HELP for my family has finally arrived! I said a prayer to God this morning while running after reading Psalm 37. You, to me, have been a life-saving drink of water in the seemingly bone-dry desert of nine years that the United Methodist Church sent my family to. Again, the overwhelm is tremendous, again, our thanks!!!!”—Ohio

“This prospectus makes me so excited! Your ministry has touched my life so much...”—Idaho

“I have to tell you what your kindness and caring have meant to me. You have been a light in a very dark and lonely place for us. I thank God for you with all of my heart. I know all glory goes to the Lord in your life—I’ve heard you say that many times. But this is the truth. Hearing from you—reading the words you just sent me—it was like getting a message from Jesus Himself. I’m not confusing the fact that you are His servant—but I want you to know, your voice in Him is so pure. I am very honored to call you my sister in Christ. And that means so much to me, since I have had to say goodbye to so many “sisters” lately. I thank God for you with all my heart.”—Washington

“Thank you for listening and your sincere concern. Your web site has helped me feel so much validation. I feel like I am not crazy anymore.”—Missouri

And we say, “*To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!*” (Revelation 5:13)



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.

“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.”

—Acts 7:55