



AVA

# Advocacy for Victims of Abuse

Report to  
ECC Executive Board  
June 22, 2007

By  
Ruth Y. Hill

## **IN THIS REPORT:**

AVA'S VISION – Page 2

AVA'S MISSION STATEMENT – Page 3

AVA'S GOALS – Page 3

HISTORY – Page 3

2004 – 2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS – Page 4

FUTURE AVA GOALS – Page 6

---

## **AVA'S VISION**

*(from Women Ministries' Project 2004 promotional brochure)*

There is an epidemic affecting one out of every four women. They suffer behind closed doors, most often concealing their pain, fearful of those on both sides of the doors. Who are these women?

They are victims of abuse. Neighbors, co-workers, friends, loved ones, these women come from all walks of life, for this epidemic knows no boundaries. While the secular world can offer protection and advice, it cannot provide the one thing most needed: Jesus' healing touch that brings renewal and hope.

Project 2004 "**LIGHT FOR AVA – Advocacy for Victims of Abuse**" will shine light in this dark area. It will:

- Provide resources to bring healing to victims of abuse.
- Equip the Church to minister to victims.
- Promote preventative measures against abuse.

The goal is to support a Project Manager for AVA for three years to give focused and sustained leadership to this initiative.

---

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To empower and equip the Covenant Church to provide safety and healing for victims of abuse and to help bring an end to violence against women and children.

---

## **GOALS**

- Provide resources to bring healing to victims of abuse.
  - Equip the Church to minister to victims.
  - Promote preventative measures against abuse.
- 

## **HISTORY**

Repeated encounters with women who had suffered abuse brought the epidemic of abuse before the leadership of Women Ministries. In December 2002 a vision began to take shape, involving hiring a Project Manager to advocate for victims of abuse through sustained and informed leadership. It was first presented to WM Board Chair Betty Howard, who prayerfully studied it and moved it to the WM CMJ Committee. This Committee, after wrestling in prayer with it, presented it to the full WM Board. President Glenn Palmberg offered wise counsel and encouragement throughout the process. Three months of prayer and dialog resulted in a unanimous vote to present it to the June 2003 WM's annual meeting where it was approved.

AVA, a three-year initiative, was launched in January 2004. The search process for the AVA Project Manager began in that spring. Rev. Aleese Moore-Orbih, from Fremont, CA, recognized that AVA's three goals matched her own vision perfectly. She candidated and in June 2004 was unanimously affirmed by the AVA Search Committee, comprised of two WM leaders and four other denominational leaders, as the AVA Project Manager. She was consecrated for service at Triennial XI August 2004 and began work that September. Discovering later that the Lord gave her the same vision in the same month as he gave it to me was yet another confirmation of God's leading.

---

## **2004 – 2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **GOAL #1 Provide resources to bring healing to victims of abuse**

Accomplishments:

1. Created and published brochures for victims/survivors
  - *Forms of Abuse*: The misuse of power and control in relationships\*
  - *How Healthy is Your Relationship*: Healthy relationships and healthy families equals healthy churches\*
  - *Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*: Healing the wounds\*

*\*Available in Spanish*

2. Provided online resources for victims/survivors
  - Maintained web site with current information and helpful resources
  - Produced *AVA's Call*, a quarterly online newsletter
  - Provided information on *Circle of Healing*, a small group curriculum for DV victims/survivors
3. Provided opportunities for direct ministry to victims/survivors
  - Offered healing/counseling opportunities at Women Ministries' conference fall retreats
  - Offered healing/counseling opportunities at local Women Ministries events
  - Trained AVA leaders provided counseling in the course of their work
  - Publishing *AVA's Book of Prayers and Meditations*, a devotional book for victims/survivors (target date: August 2007)

### **Goal # 2: Equip the Church to minister to victims of abuse**

Accomplishments:

1. Created two DVDs to create awareness of abuse and partnerships to end it
  - Light for AVA (2004)
  - Standing with AVA (2005)
2. Conducted awareness raising seminars, workshops and presentations for:
  - Midwinter Conferences
  - Annual Meetings
  - Triennial Conferences
  - CEOP
  - North Park Theological Seminary

- North Park Faith and Health Center
  - Covenant Ministerium
  - WM Fall Retreats
  - Mission Conferences
  - Individual churches
3. Created educational seminars
- *Domestic Violence 101* (DV 101)
  - *Child Sexual Assault 101* (CSA 101)
  - *Resources to Roadblocks*, designed for clergy and lay church leaders
  - *What's Love Got to Do with It*, designed for parents and teens
  - 14-Hour Clergy Curriculum
4. Trained regional and local AVA leaders
- 8/05 Regional Coordinator training– trained 8 people
  - 8/06 Regional Coordinator training – trained 10 people
  - 8/07 Local Advocate training – to be offered during Triennial XII

### **GOAL #3: Provide preventive measures against abuse**

#### Accomplishments

1. Created and maintained the AVA web site, refreshed monthly, with resources and information for victims/survivors, AVA advocates, and lay and clergy leaders.
2. Created/provided resources for the church
  - *Dos and Don'ts of Domestic Violence for Clergy: Empowering Clergy to Become Partners on the Journey to Safety and Healing* (also in Spanish)
  - *What Every Congregation Needs to Know About Domestic Violence*, gift to clergy through Faith Trust Institute (also in Spanish)
  - *A Pastor's Handbook on Domestic Violence*, a gift from private donor and CMB for 2005 Midwinter attendees
  - Flyers, bulletin inserts, bookmarks for the church
  - *Keeping Teens Safe*, an online resource on teen dating and family violence (posted on WM's AVA site and CF's Youth Ministries site)
  - Suggested reading list for online Covenant Bookstore
3. Provided bracelets and t-shirts saying NO ABUSE IN THE COVENANT
4. Created and resourced *Domestic Violence Awareness Month/Sunday* in ECC
5. Collaborated with the Commission on Response to Domestic Sexual Abuse Project to promote Domestic Violence Month.
6. Affiliated with other denominations and non-profit agencies working to end abuse in order to enhance our knowledge and share resources.

There are many more qualitative accomplishments that have taken place in the minds, hearts and lives of the ECC family that cannot be bulleted in this report. In the ECC we have dethroned ignorance, silence and powerlessness as it relates to domestic and sexual violence. The results are our clergy are better equipped and therefore safe people. Our churches are better educated and more compassionate and therefore safe places. Women are being empowered and our girls will be more empowered. We have begun to end abuse against women. Our daughters will not have to suffer as past generations have. We have sown the seeds for a healthier generation.

---

### **FUTURE AVA GOALS**

The future of AVA is in intervention locally and prevention denominationally. With adequate support, AVA would pursue the following goals:

1. Intervention work: Intervention is in education and empowerment.

AVA serves in the biblical model of pastor. Its call is to equip the body to do the work of the ministry. Therefore AVA's goals for the future are:

- To continue to train Regional Coordinators
- To continue to train Local Advocates
- To continue to provide educational and inspirational materials and resources
- To continue to consult with churches in the development of AVA ministry and community outreach
- To train youth pastors/leaders to deal with youth dating violence
- To integrate conference support of AVA Regional Coordinators
- To integrate the 14-hour training curriculum for clergy
  - Required for all clergy in "good standing"
  - Integrated into CEOP requirements
  - Integrated into NPTS core curriculum
  - Integrated into CHET core curriculum

2. Prevention work: Prevention is in education and transformation.

If AVA is to play a part in the changing of our culture, as it pertains to gender equality, it must participate in the transformation and the discipleship of our members. Therefore AVA's goals for future preventive work are:

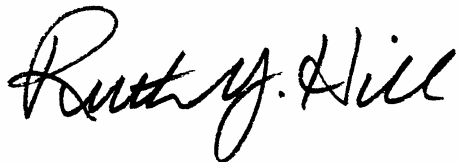
- To partner with the Commission on Biblical Gender Equality on a theological paper on Biblical principles for healthy.
- To partner with Christian Formation to develop an adult Bible study or small group curriculum on biblical principles for healthy marriages and that clearly defines abusive patterns of power and control as a sin.

- To partner with Christian Formation to develop a curriculum that teaches teenagers how to incorporate their sexuality with their spirituality and how to honor God by honoring and protecting their self worth and value.
  - To partner with the Seminary to create theological, biblical, and pastoral care modules to be integrated into the curriculum.
  - To partner with other denominational leaders in developing ministry to help girls grow up equipped, safe and strong, successfully navigating the challenges of the teen years with a strong identity in Christ.
- 

## **CONCLUSION**

We want to express our gratitude to the leadership of the Evangelical Covenant Church for embarking on the challenging and difficult journey of advocacy for victims of abuse. The support we received in 2005 from denominational leaders who participated in "Standing with AVA" is significant in the life of the Covenant and we sincerely thank you. The journey is not over by any means, and we pray the Covenant will continue to "stand" with those who still need an advocate.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Y. Hill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruth Y. Hill, Executive Minister  
Women Ministries