

Spring 2014



AVA'S CALL
Advocacy for Victims of Abuse

THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE



Yvonne DeVaughn
AVA Director

AVA'S CALL is a quarterly publication of the Department of Women Ministries' program Advocacy for Victims of Abuse.

AVA's Goals are to:

- Provide resources to bring healing to victims of abuse
- Equip the church to minister to victims of abuse
- Promote preventative measures to combat abuse

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DONATE to AVA by clicking on the donate now button on the AVA Website:
covchurch.org/abuse

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-Safe (7233)



Although February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month it is extremely disheartening and disturbing that this violence is happening to our teens everyday of the year. When I was young most of the violence to teens seemed to occur in broken homes—parents against their teenage sons or daughters and less likely from a dating relationship. Perpetrators of violence against teenagers has widened to include boyfriends and girlfriends. Instead of our teens being carefree and exuberant while learning and experiencing new and exciting things, creating beautiful friendships, and making happy memories that they can look back on without angst and pain, the opposite is true for many.

Following are a few examples of the size and scope of the problem. As you read them, imagine the teenagers in your congregation. The likelihood of someone in your church being affected is real!

- 1 in 5 teens that has been in a serious relationship report being hit, slapped or pushed by a partner.
- 1 in 4 teenage girls who have been in a relationship reveal they have been pressured to perform oral sex or engage in intercourse.
- More than 1 in 4 teenage girls in a relationship report enduring repeated verbal abuse.
- 1 in 4 teens who have been in a serious relationship say that their boyfriend or girlfriend has tried to prevent them from spending time with friends or family; the same number have been pressured to only spend time with their partner.
- Nearly 1 in 5 teenage girls who have been in a relationship say their boyfriend had threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a break-up.
- 1 in 3 teens say they are text messaged 10, 20, or 30 times an hour by a partner inquiring where they are, what they're doing, or who they're with.

Lest you think that these stats do not represent teens growing up in Christian homes, think again. I have found that domestic violence and childhood sexual assault statistics mirror what is happening in Christian homes. In destructive relationships like these, our teens have the potential of having their view of love, God and themselves distorted. Our message to them needs to be what I Corinthians 13:4-7 describes as love. "Love is patient, it is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres." In other words, as scripture so aptly says, "there is no fear in love.... the one who fears is not made perfect in love." I John 4:18

If you are interested in reading true stories about teen dating violence see:

<http://hawctalk.org/2013/02/27/ambers-story-teen-dating-violence/>
<http://www.dosomething.org/blog/chatterbox/true-tales-teen-dating-violence#>
http://www.operationkeepsake.com/articles.cfm?ID=219&category_ID=5

— Yvonne DeVaughn

AVA TRAINING AT TRIENNIAL XIV

In August 2013 approximately 22 women attended AVA Trainings. An all-day training was held, one in English (led by Elouise Spencer, Executive Director Wellspring Center of Hope and Yvonne DeVaughn, AVA Director) and the other in Spanish (led



by Lynda Delgado, PSWC Regional Coordinator). Many of the Spanish speaking attendees were women who had travelled from Mexico to attend Triennial because there is a growing interest to meet the needs of those who are impacted by domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse and human trafficking in that country. The trainings were well received and when the topic of forgiveness was presented, both groups—Spanish and English—came together to listen and learn.

AVA MINISTRY CONTINUES IN COLOMBIA



...News from Colombia via Missionary and RC Cathy Campobello

UPCOMING COURSE WITH FOUR COUNTRIES IN COLOMBIA

After more than a year of planning, representatives from four countries will be gathering in Colombia in March to discuss and address issues of human trafficking and various kinds of domestic abuse; including physical, sexual, emotional, financial and other abuses.

North Park Seminary professor of missions, Paul Deneui, is heading up the initiative with a support team from each country. There will be people from Colombia, the United States, Mexico and Ecuador in Colombia to learn what the reality is concerning these issues and what can be done through the church and other ecclesiastical entities.

I will be sharing in some of the workshops and would appreciate your prayers for the preparation of this for myself and all of those involved in the course. Also pray for travel mercies, health, protection and for God's leading as to what He would have us to do concerning these issues in a practical way. I have been involved in the training of Advocacy for Victims of Abuse (AVA), and this will help those of us in Latin America to be better equipped to address these issues.





Mending the Soul (MTS) groups continue to meet. After doing weeks of work, the participants are asked to ask God to help them see themselves as He sees them and to write it down in their own words. Below is a letter one participant shared which may encourage those who may be on their journey of healing.

2-18-14

In this letter I believe God is saying to me:

Dear Karen,

You need to know are my child. Karen, I am your father. I understand you Karen and I will protect you. You are not a victim. Today you only have to live one day at a time. You don't have to be afraid. I am with you and I will continue to take care of you.

Listen girl, all of your fears, circumstances, situations, problems and misunderstandings in this life will now be met with my strength and power. All that concerns you needs to be met with my strength and you will find your own strength in me.

Be still for a moment.....listen! Karen you must know and believe I am your Father, your God, your Savior, and your Deliverer. I am your I am. I do care that you we're hurt, wounded, and torn apart. I know you felt all alone and unable to trust. Listen to Me! All of that is past. Look around I am present. You are in my presence and I am restoring you.

I love you Karen. Accept my comfort and stretch out your hand. You are in my reach and my reach stretches endlessly from as far as the bottom depth of the sea to the top height of the sky. My love for you knows no limit. You are mine. I will take care of you and give you all that you have need of. My provisions are limitless. Come my child, grasp, take hold of life in me. Trust me, I will take care of you.

I bring to you rest..... Karen. You will now have My peace, My comfort and My healing. Accept it! Own it! My love is for you Karen. You no longer have to just exist while trying to survive.

In the past much wrong was done to you. Karen I've heard you cry.....and I'm calling you out. Karen, leave the painful memories behind. Discard the past of hurts and evils done to you.

Give it to me. I will take the burdens you carry. I will be with you. Stand strong Karen. Stand strong. I am your God. I am your Father and I Love you. Grasp my loving kindness for you. Grasp my power. I'm bringing you into newness and abundance. Come my child, live and thrive!

I got you!. And all that concerns you. Come, this is the way. Your direction is changing, fear nothing. You are not running away, you're running to me. I'm drawing you to me and I joyfully receive you my child.

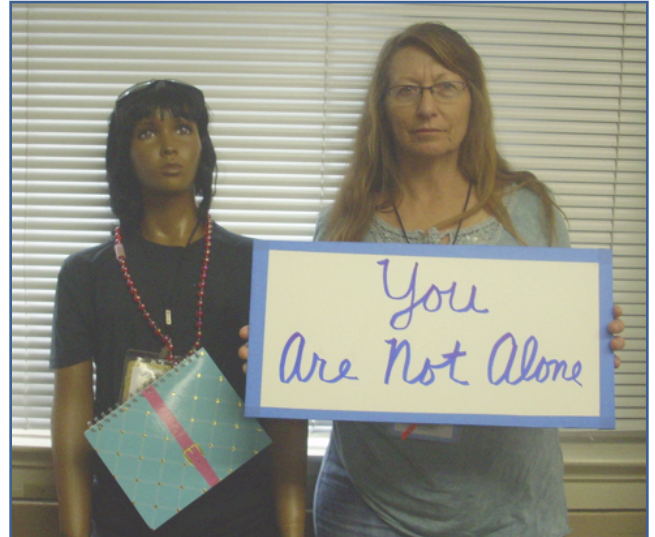
*Your loving Father,
God*

AVA JOURNAL STORY

I would like to share something new that I did at our Pacific South West Conference Women's Retreat this fall. My desire was to give women an interactive experience that would both educate and motivate them to serve and support AVA.

I got a mannequin, which I named "AVA". I strategically placed her in different areas at the retreat at different times. She had a name tag like the rest of the women with "AVA" as her name and "your church" as her church name. I attached a journal with a pen to her so that people could "talk to her" during the retreat.

At our opening session we announced that there was a woman named AVA who was at the retreat for the first time and had come by herself. We explained to the women that we would be sharing pages of her journal—her story—throughout the retreat. We encouraged them to look for AVA and when they found her to write in her journal. They were to write words of encouragement, or share their own story with her so AVA would know she was not alone.



Then we proceeded to share a PowerPoint video of AVA's Journal. The PowerPoint was set up in such a way that it appeared as though someone was really writing in their journal, word by word. The whole room was silent as the worship leader quietly played her guitar in the background. You could hear a pin drop. It caught the attention of everyone as they entered into AVA's story.

Over the course of 3 days we had 4 sessions, each one building on the next. AVA went from being distanced from God as a result of her painful abusive relationship, to desiring to be in relationship with God, and to receiving help in her abusive situation. The response was twofold. Some women could relate as they had or were experiencing similar stories, thoughts and emotions. Others learned for the very first time what a woman being abused feels. The response was outstanding. It was determined that out of the 350 attendees, there were at least 87 women there (1 out of 4) who had their own stories of abuse. Many of these women shared those stories with AVA as they wrote in her journal (the one I had placed with the mannequin). Many more shared words of encouragement and love. It was truly amazing.

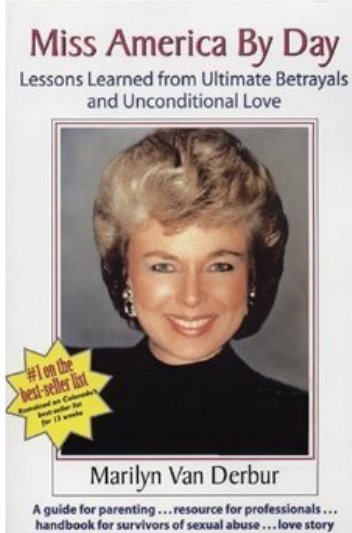
Looking forward, I think I will continue the story for one more year to show AVA's journey of healing now that she has found help. I don't think I will need to use the mannequin again, because the mystery of who AVA was seemed to be enough to keep their interest.

It was an awesome way to bring awareness to AVA. If you would like the power point of this I would be happy to share it with you.

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***"If you would like to be added to the AVA Newsletter e-mail list,
send yourname and email address to
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BOOK REVIEW



This is one story I would recommend to anyone to read and although it can be difficult to read, the end result will be worthwhile. Marilyn Van Derbur who won the Miss America title in 1958 publically broke silence about years of childhood sexual abuse/incest when she wrote this book.

It is a must read for all people who deal with children—judges, doctors, pastors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, therapists, camp counselors, survivors, perpetrators, spouses, child care workers and parents because she provides excellent advice and education on ways to keep our children safe. Marilyn shares her story in graphic detail “to help them (those she is addressing) to better understand the family dynamics that can occur, even in a seemingly “perfect family.



October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

This year AVA is asking that churches get involved by hosting an AVA emphasis Sunday (typically this is the 1st Sunday of October). Our dream is to have someone preach about domestic violence (DV) in every pulpit at least once in that month. We are asking for those who are interested to begin planning for this event now. AVA is putting together a list of potential speakers that churches can invite (they will also be listed on the AVA website) to preach on the topic of DV and there will be a host of service suggestions on the website in the next few months. Watch for more information.

(AVA) Advocacy for Victims of Abuse
Covchurch.org/abuse
or
AVA-online.org

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

- National Crime Victim's Rights Week 4/6 - 4/12
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month – April
- Child Abuse Month – April
- International Day of Families – 5/15
- Elder Awareness Day – 6/15

