

Summer 2013



# AVA'S CALL

*Advocacy for Victims of Abuse*



**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

**AVA Director:**

Yvonne DeVaughn  
[devaughn3@gmail.com](mailto:devaughn3@gmail.com)

**DONATE to AVA by clicking on the donate now button on the AVA Website:**  
[covchurch.org/abuse](http://covchurch.org/abuse)

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



## WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

When my mother passed away I went into a state of shock and deep mourning. Returning to my job about two weeks later, one of my co-workers took me out to lunch to give me a "pep talk" and told me that my silence in the office was deafening. I remember thinking, "it's obvious that she's never had anyone die who is close to her."

That's what it feels like for our sisters and brothers sitting in our pews who are suffering from abuse (current or past) when we deny, diminish, ignore, or push them to "just get over it." They know that we don't get it.

The population of individuals who have experienced the slippery slope of a relationship moving from love to violence continues to grow. Some relationships gradually erode and others explode instantaneously. No matter how the violence occurs it hurts and leaves lasting effects that can be taken to the grave. I have met individuals who are in their teens to 90's who are broken-hearted as they tell me their horrific stories of violence from early childhood to long years of marriage!

Unfortunately, even in our congregations when someone declares their love for another their patterned responses and actions may be anything but kindness, tenderness, care or self-sacrifice. In fact, every 4 seconds someone around you may be experiencing domestic violence. One, two, three, four -- violence happens! It can be subtle or overt through the use of looks, words, fists, hands, feet, restraints or even weapons. The population of those impacted by violence is not limited to those who are abused but also affects those who witness the violence; in fact it is estimated that 3-10 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year!

Last year I was able to see part of the LOVETOWN, PA exhibit. Artist Gene Schmidt used scraps of wood to cut out letters and laid out each word of the text of I Corinthians 13 over several miles of neighborhoods of Philadelphia.



Love. When I hear or see this word it evokes in me a sense of something or someone that is treasured, treated as precious--beloved. According to scripture some characteristics of love include: patience, kindness, humility, courteousness, generosity, not self-absorbed, considerate, unselfish, self-controlled, peaceable, flexible, and truthfulness.

What a difference extending real love in words and deeds can do for those within and without our congregations who are silently suffering domestic violence. May Christ cause us to be more aware, compassionate and sensitive to those around us who are hurting and see them through eyes and hearts full of love.

– Yvonne DeVaughn



AVA is a ministry providing education, awareness, and support for persons dealing with childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence. Mending the Soul (MTS) is a strategic partner with AVA bringing a healing ministry to those impacted by abuse. MTS facilitators lead healing support groups that empower individuals to face the

pain and damage of their abuse and find healing from the scriptures, the group, and their relationship with God in Jesus Christ--to experience the abundant and full life Jesus refers to in John 10:10: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Training of facilitators has already begun and small support groups are happening. It is exciting to hear the impact this additional resource is adding to the the AVA ministry.



## ***AVA AND MTS IN MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA***

When God's people pray, are obedient to His will, and put into His hands their plans and desires, God does the miracle for His honor and glory. Fifty-six people from five cities in Colombia and from the United States gathered for the AVA (Advocacy for Victims of Abuse) and the Mending the Soul 3-day Workshop held recently in Itagui, Colombia. As the AVA team from Medellín, continued to pray, to plan, and to raise funds, God continued to confirm, multiplying their efforts and their resources. These leaders from Medellín worked together regarding: informing and inviting the AVA leaders from other regions, fundraising, arranging for the housing for the 18 Colombian out-of-towners, making the tablecloths and floral centerpieces, getting the materials organized in folders, and providing wonderful lunches and snacks during the conference days. The ECC AVA Director, Yvonne DeVaughn, and her husband, William, were able to return to Colombia to lead the workshops. And, this should not be surprising as we know from Ephesians 3:20 and 21 that – "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurable more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."



One goal was to continue to encourage us and others to move from apathy to advocacy, seeking justice for those oppressed and abused. Another goal was to present the Mending The Soul (MTS) materials as a companion ministry to AVA. As AVA raises awareness regarding all types of abuse, equipping people to advocate and accompany victims of abuse, MTS equips facilitators to offer specific helps and an invitation to begin a healing ministry for victims of abuse. These goals were and are being met.

Mary Lou and Gary Sander  
Colombia Covenant Missionaries



## ***MTS TRAINING IN THE NORTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE***

AVA (Advocacy for Victims of Abuse) and their partnership with Mending the Soul shines the light on domestic abuse through equipping pastors, leaders, men and women nationally and internationally to be informed advocates, able to provide safety, encouragement and ways to begin a healing journey. In May 2013 forty-two leaders and pastors in the North Pacific Conference came together to receive MTS training.



“Thank you for connecting us to Mending the Soul Training in Portland, OR. It was a hard-hitting, realistic view of the wounds many of us carry as a result of abuse and the hope-filled path ahead of us through God. The attendance of 150 compassionate lay people and pastors was incredibly encouraging! Twelve women from Grace Community Covenant in Olympia, WA attended this Basic Training. What an answer to prayer! Our church can now be adequately trained and equipped with a tool to bring God’s healing! “

Colleen Hicks  
Women of Grace Coordinator  
Grace Community Covenant Church  
Olympia, WA

***“If you would like to be added to the AVA Newsletter e-mail list,  
send your name and email address to  
[devaughn3@gmail.com](mailto:devaughn3@gmail.com)***

## OPENING THE JAR OF SECRETS – LISA VAGLE

I participated in a Mending the Soul group in the Northwest Conference. As I was working on the MTS materials, I was asked to draw a picture of what being healed would look like. At the time, I really didn't know what it would look like. I had a dream and below is the image I drew from that dream.

In my dream I had this jar that was full of all my "secrets". I continually kept trying to hide it, it was my jar... it was my stuff... no one could take it from me. I couldn't let anyone see what was inside because they would find out who I really was. I was running trying to keep it hidden. The whole time someone (I believe it was God) was after me, persistently telling me to give it up. I had to hand it over. I got very angry and finally gave up. I turned and slammed the jar down on the table and the lid flew off and thousands of butterflies burst out of the jar. They fluttered all over the room, and I can't even describe what it felt like to be standing in the middle of a room filled with butterflies, it was so peaceful and quiet. I was amazed that all those beautiful, delicate butterflies could possibly come out of "that" jar. The drawing doesn't do it justice.

Now I have this drawing to remind myself what I'm working towards.

