

Summer 2014



AVA'S CALL
Advocacy for Victims of Abuse



Yvonne DeV Vaughn
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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THE POWER OF HUMAN TOUCH

The saying "it takes a village to raise a child" has been bandied about for sometime and I wonder if it has become a cliché that rolls off our tongues without much thought. In the work and ministry I am called to, I suggest expanding this saying to the population I serve by saying "it takes a village to support individuals who are dealing with domestic violence or overcoming trauma from childhood sexual assault." In other words, surviving and possibly thriving after these types of trauma cannot and should not be viewed as the sole responsibility of the survivor. That takes them on an individual, singular journey that requires pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. And it takes more than just intellectual acknowledgment and agreement from those who cheer them on. It requires what some might call "skin in the game" i.e., some thoughtful, and often, up close and personal involvement from others that admittedly, can be risky and at times uncomfortable.

Recently I was reading a sermon by G. Campbell Morgan and his statement "it is the human touch that arrests the human race" jumped out to me. Given that I work with the results of "wrong touch" this statement struck a chord in my thoughts because I know up close and personal the colossal damage violent/wrong human touch can create and how the destruction and ramifications of that touch often lasts a lifetime.

When I was growing up I heard and sang an old Spiritual titled "There is a Balm in Gilead" which probably grew out of Jeremiah 8:22 *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?* The refrain and lyrics of the song are as follows:

Refrain: There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin sick soul.

Some times I feel discouraged,
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
Revives my soul again.

Refrain

If you can't preach like Peter,
If you can't pray like Paul,
Just tell the love of Jesus,
And say He died for all.

Refrain

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FREE TUTORIAL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NOW ONLINE

A pop quiz:

1. How many teen girls/teen boys admit to experiencing physical violence in a dating relationship in the past year?
 - a) One in 5/one in 3
 - b) One in 10/one in 11
 - c) One in 15/one in 6
2. Victims of domestic violence in the relationship may stay because:
 - a) They believe that is what God requires.
 - b) They enjoy it.
 - c) They can later use the abuse as a reason to get back at the abuser.
3. Ministers are required to report to law enforcement allegations of child abuse/abuse by an adult partner.
 - a) Yes/Yes
 - b) Yes/No
 - c) Yes/Maybe
 - d) Maybe/Maybe



The answers to these and other questions can be found in a new self-paced online tutorial for the faith community published by Advocates for Victims of Abuse (AVA), a ministry of Women Ministries of the Evangelical Covenant Church. (Answers also provided below.)

The course includes 10 lessons as well as a list of resources. It is intended to provide a biblical perspective on issues of abuse as well as practical suggestions for addressing the issue. It is not intended to address counseling topics.

A statement from the Department of the Ordered Ministry on the tutorial website reads, "It is our hope and expectation that everyone holding a Covenant ministry credential will, in short order, complete this basic tutorial. For some this may be a review while for others it will contain new information; however, it should become a goal that our entire community has common working knowledge and language for responding to this pervasive problem."

AVA director Yvonne DeVaughn says, "A recent study by Sojourners reveals that pastors underestimate the prevalence of abuse in their churches, and they rarely address the issue." She adds, "This online curriculum was developed specifically to help pastors, ministers, leaders, and congregants gain more insight and understanding and to raise awareness of and stand alongside those experiencing any form of abuse." DeVaughn adds that the tutorial aligns with the Covenant's holistic approach to the gospel. "We believe God earnestly desires that we flourish and experience the abundance and fullness of life that Jesus speaks of in John 10:10. Abuse blocks human flourishing and abundant life. Learning more about abuse and its impact on lives is one way of working on this problem."

For additional information about abuse and domestic violence, visit AVA's website.

– by Stan Friedman

Find quiz answers are on the bottom of page 5.

TRIBUTE TO JUDY INGLIS



On June 11, 2014, Judy Inglis of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, one of our beloved AVA Regional Coordinators in the Northwest Conference passed away. Judy was passionate about many things: her husband, children, grandchildren, family, church, community and various aspects of ministry.

She served as her church's secretary and became an AVA Regional Coordinator in 2011. When Ava's ministry was in its beginning stages, Judy decided to attend special training to be a leader, and went on to teach churches in her area about AVA's ministry. When Mending the Soul was added as a resource for AVA, Judy enrolled in the training so that she could go on to facilitate several Mending the Soul groups in the Thief River Falls area.

Judy traveled to areas out of her local area to start the process of getting AVA up and running in MN. She had a willing and open spirit to do whatever she could to get churches interested in AVA. No open door was too far away or too much bother. In Judy's own words she said, "I

just know when you pray for God to use you, and ask for whatever you need to do with what he brings to you, AWESOME things happen. I pray that prayer every day and God gives me something every day that I can use for His glory."

Judy's commitment to AVA had a lot to do with her passion for those in need or those who had been impacted by violence. Some examples include: 26 years of daycare in her home, teaching and presenting a court-mandated class to men who were referred by the court for domestic abuse, speaking to those required to attend DWI (Driving While Impaired) sessions, regularly speaking at a drug and alcohol treatment center in her neighborhood, children's events and helping with the distribution of food for the elderly on fixed incomes. Operation Christmas Child was especially dear to her heart, and her enthusiasm was palpable as she coordinated her church as a drop off center for boxes. Her most recent accomplishment was being asked to serve on a board in the Twin Cities to help look at ways to improve the state's foster care system. In all of this she was not shy about sharing her story and her deep faith in God.

Judy will be deeply missed by all who were impacted by her life.

– by Laurel J. Johnson

NEW AVA REGIONAL COORDINATOR – CANADA

I am pleased to let you know that Karen Bayley, Regional Coordinator for Canada, successfully passed the AVA leadership baton to Brenda Impey at the ECCC (Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada) Annual General Meeting on May 3, 2014.

Brenda Impey reported the following: AVA had a very good presence at the AGM (Annual General Meeting). We were able to present during the Women's Ministry meetings, during the AGM itself and we had two AVA information sessions on Saturday afternoon. There were many questions for us, many positive comments and feedback throughout the weekend, and a tentative training weekend scheduled for July in Creston, British Columbia.

LILADA'S LIVINGROOM

In 2005 Lilada's Livingroom nonprofit organization began in Madison, Wisconsin that specializes in providing Afro-centric services to African American girls, and women and that are grossly underserved by mainstream organizations. This ministry is an outgrowth of Fountain of Life Covenant Church. Lilada's Livingroom creates a safe place for female survivors of sexual abuse to step out from behind the veil of shadows, secrets and shame; opening a healing pathway to renewal, recovery and restoration. Survivors young and old gather in Lilada's Livingroom for a dynamic healing journey of spirit, mind and body, in a loving, supportive and nurturing environment.



In 2012, Lilada's Livingroom opened the doors to their home for homeless teen moms. Services focus on empowering residents to reclaim their spirits, minds, and bodies through personal development, parent education and resources for economic independence. Settled in a quiet, accessible neighborhood, the house itself emanates a sense of warmth and support. A supportive living community, the home is dedicated to providing the space, time, and support for these young mothers to reimagine their lives.

Black Woman Heal! initiative was launched in 2014 to fill the wide service gaps for black survivors in the state of Wisconsin. Black Woman Heal! serves to educate, empower, engage and equip black women in healing from and preventing of sexual abuse in their families and communities. Lilada's Livingroom is spearheading healing services in several Wisconsin communities that offer no cultural specific services for black survivors.

For more information, please visit www.fb.com/LiladasLivingroom

Lilada Gee,
AVA Regional Coordinator, Madison, Wisconsin



*"If you would like to be added to the AVA Newsletter e-mail list,
send yourname and email address to
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Yes, when the “right touch” (believing, grieving with, encouraging and just being a listening presence, etc.) is given to another human being it can become a healing balm, that creates room for those so desperately in need of a path forward into a life of wholeness. Right touch can be a place where our broken brothers and sisters can finally rest their weary souls. I believe that our elder saints knew the secret of serving those who were broken and wounded emotionally, physically, and spiritually. They understood that they, as Christ’s servants, had an advantage to ministering to hurting people. They owned that they were the people of Christ, his living, breathing people who had a balm that exuded Christ’s love and care for others. Yes, it is our Christ-filled touch that can make the difference in a world so broken and torn by violence. We can be the balm (because we are Christ’s living epistles, his love letters) to a broken world. Let’s be who we are! Amen.

– by Yvonne DeVaughn



October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
–John 10:10

Women Ministries is inviting every congregation to focus on domestic violence one Sunday in October, which is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

We’re encouraging every congregation to speak from the pulpit on DV and issues of abuse during October, and we’re compiling a list of potential preachers and speakers who would be able to bring a fitting message—a speaker team.

Please keep an eye on our AVA website: covchurch.org/abuse for a list of potential speakers.

Meagan Gillan,
Executive Minister, Women Ministries

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