

FAITH WALK ENTERPRISES

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“ IN HIS WILL ”



INTRODUCTION

According to some media sources, the community of Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, New York has continued to be stigmatized by a lingering public perception left from the rough times of the late 20th Century as well as from people who are current residents. They also claim that In March 2005 a campaign was launched to supplant the "Bed-Stuy, Do-or-Die" image in the public consciousness with the more positive "Bed-Stuy, and Proud of It".

Bedford-Stuyvesant is said to be culturally rich with beautiful brownstones and a rather diverse community. At the same time, senseless gun violence, pockets of concentrated poverty, high unemployment, high numbers of foreclosures,

struggling schools, teen violence, domestic violence, and high disparities of health issues are plaguing our neighborhood. Unfortunately, the same holds true for surrounding neighborhoods such as: Bushwick; Crown, Stuyvesant and Prospect Heights; Flatbush; etc. This somber and devastating reality takes place in what is historically known as the **"Borough of Churches"**.

As the body of Christ, there is a great need for us to consider what part we play in this dynamic. If we are not a part of the solution then we are a part of the problem.

Jesus said, "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Many of today's greatest singers, Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Mary J. Blige, just to name a few, got their start in church singing Gospel music. Similarly, the church has sitting in its pews some of the most anointed, gifted and talented, kingdom laborers who are equipped to lead the charge of establishing ministries to respond to these plethora of issues. Have you been called by God for a time such as this? Is it your time to build up?

Obedience is better than sacrifice (1Sam. 15:22). Religious observance (ex. attending church) without obedience is empty before God, but a surrendered heart shown by simple obedience is rewarded.

IMPERFECT PEOPLE

"We don't claim to be a perfect people, but we serve a perfect God", says Rev. Lee, Pastor of Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church. These words are spoken at the conclusion of his Sunday morning service as he extends an invitation to those whose hearts are open to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

We are imperfect, and it's because of this that we often

times find ourselves in situations that are embarrassing, shameful, regrettable and sinful. But, because we serve a perfect God, He is willing and able to deliver us from all manner of sin and sickness. Staying stuck in a predicament designed to kill, steal and destroy the one we claim to love should not be an option.

Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). No matter what we've done or how

bad it is, we are over comers.

Therefore, the perpetrator in an abusive situation must first own their mistakes, shortcomings, demons and struggles then just SAY NO to domestic violence. Realize that the sin is against God and turn away from it and towards Him. Confess, repent and turn to Jesus, who is able to give you a new heart with the capacity to love as God originally intended, way back in the Garden of Eden.

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4/21/11: CONNECT Faith- "Interfaith Theological Roundtable", 6:00pm-8:30pm

4/28/11: CONNECT Faith- "Monthly Men's Roundtable", 6:30pm-8:30pm

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



"Too many American women live in fear of the very people upon whom they depend on for love and affection. Instead of providing refuge, the walls of many homes serve as prison bars", says

former Attorney General Janet Reno.

These words are chilling, but women are not alone. Too many children and elders suffer from this harsh reality—men are not excluded.

Domestic violence and abuse are prevalent in our community and across this world. It can manifest itself in ways that disguises the truth and reality of what is really happening. If you or someone you know is in a relationship that inflicts a pattern of behavior used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner (ex. spouses, dating partner, family, friends, cohabitation, etc.) then that person is living in a Domestic violence/abuse situation. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure or wound someone.

Domestic violence/abuse oc-

curs on many levels. In 2007, according to the NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, 11% of male and female high school students reported being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend/girlfriend. Also, in 2007 16,861 teen telephone calls were received by the City's Domestic Violence Hotline. According to Karisable.com, every year an estimated 2.1 million older (adults and seniors) Americans are victims of physical, psychological, or other forms of abuse and neglect. For every case of elder abuse and neglect reported to authorities, experts estimate that there may be as many as 5 cases not reported.

It's time for the Christian community to pay attention. Why are too many of us not talking enough and responding effectively to this issue? Why have we turned a deaf ear and blind eye to this epidemic? The time to SPEAK is NOW. People are dying! Children are losing their parents. Fathers are living without their daughters and brothers without sisters. According to Dawnonline.org one half of women and children are fleeing domestic violence. Moreover, it is one of the leading causes of home-

lessness. Children who bear witness are suffering posttraumatic stress disorders and boys will likely grow up to physically, emotionally, or verbally abuse their partners.

Silence is deadly. Domestic violence is a deep wound in our society that cuts across lines of class, education, religion, race, and socio-economics. Christians are not immune. We need to acknowledge and grieve for our past failure to intervene. We need to SPEAK!. Speak from the pulpit. Speak with the resources to protect the safety and confidentiality of victims. Speak with the development of safe houses. Speak with education and trained Christian counselors in our midst. Speak with trained and experienced individuals who are able to navigate the dangers of these situations. Speak... the Good News Gospel of Jesus for both victims and perpetrators.

"Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering" (*Hebrews 13:3*).

—Earlene Greene

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

"Mommy Confessions" was the name of the segment on the Dr. Phil show, which aired on November 17, 2010. The segment featured a mom of six who sent Dr. Phil a disturbing home video expressing her anger and struggles to parent her seven year old son. To discipline him, she made him swallow hot sauce and stand in a cold shower, while shouting at him the entire time. Other times, she would make him do jumping jacks until he was completely and utterly exhausted. It was heart-wrenching.

What's the big deal?, is the question asked by many on the show's message board who responded to this segment by saying that if this is child abuse, then they were tortured. They continued to say how relieved they were that the seven year old didn't have to deal with an alcoholic parent, a father who locked him in a closet, or chased him with a lighter. They thought the mother in this story was mild mannered because she didn't hit him again and again in the face while simultaneously screaming.

Should this mom go to jail? Should she be separated from her children? Does she deserve far worst treat-

ment than what she did to her son? Yes, may be the obvious response by many. Clearly, she was out of control, and needed time away from her children, but does she also deserve compassion from all of us who stand in judgment and want to see her crucified? As a result of the mother's actions, she is currently facing child abuse charges.

Does this mother deserve credit for taking the important first step in recognizing her crisis then seeking help even at the risk of shame, contempt and legal ramifications? Should she be commended for exposing her truth? What is your truth? What do you do to put those around you in danger? What overwhelms you to the point of being controlling and/or out of control? Do you discipline your children in ways that could be considered abusive?.....Just food for thought!

What's the big deal? Well, the big deal is that abuse is abuse! It is not relative! Just because the extent of abuse is not as severe, demented or cruel for one person as it may be for another, it doesn't negate the fact that it's abuse. Are you in any way, shape or form abusing your children?

RAISING BULLIES

On February 3, 2011, everyone who tuned into the episode of "The View" was moved with emotion when they introduced a young 13 year old boy, named Nadin Khoury who was in the headlines for being bullied. He was beaten up, dragged through the streets, put in a tree and then hung from a fencepost by seven school-mates.

While preparing for the interview with this young boy and his family, *The View* did some research and learned that Nadin was a huge Philadelphia Eagles fan. Some of the players—DeSean Jackson, Jamaal Jackson and Guard Todd Herremans—stopped by to tell Nadin how brave he really was for sharing his story. The teammates also gave Nadin tickets to any game next season and a Jersey signed by all three of them.

Viewers were moved by Nadin's strength and courage, but also by the generosity and love shown to him by the ladies of *The View* and The Eagles teammates. They showed great sensitivity and compassion toward Nadin and his family. Nadin was touched beyond measure. Surely he must have thought that the love, compassion and generosity had in some

You might think that something as simple as talking to a friend about abuse couldn't possibly make a difference. But it really does.

Just knowing that someone cares enough to ask about the abuse can break through the wall of isolation that surrounds victims of relationship abuse. If you think a friend is being abused, talk to them. Listen. Let them know you care. You don't have to be an expert, just a friend. Even if they stay in the relationship and you feel frustrated, your friendship helps.

According to Blue Shield of California, you can do the following to be a friend to "A Friend In Need":

- Listen, without judging. Often a battered person believes their abuser's negative messages about them. The victim may feel responsible, ashamed,

very small measure compensated for the hurt, pain and shame he suffered.

The police arrested six teens involved in this attack. Sadly, six more young people caught up in the prison system. What made them think that this behavior was acceptable? How wounded are they on the inside that they would dare to treat other human being like an animal.

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior used to scare, manipulate or force others to do what they want. Bullying is an intentional act. The child who bullies wants to harm the victim; it is no accident.

Bullying involves repeated occurrences. Bullying is not generally considered a random act nor a single incident. Rather, a child is repeatedly picked on by another child or is the target of harassment from a whole group of children. It is the repeated nature of bullying that causes anxiety and apprehension in victims, such that the anticipation of bullying becomes as problematic as the bullying itself. It can include the following forms: **Physical bullying**—pushing, shoving, hitting, tripping and other acts which physically harm another person. **Ver-**

A Friend In Need

and afraid of being judged by you.

- Tell them the abuse is not their fault. Explain that physical violence in a relationship is never acceptable. There's no excuse for it – not alcohol or drugs, financial pressure, depression, jealousy or any behavior of the victim.

- Make sure they know they are not alone. Millions of people of every age, sex, race and religion face abuse, and many people find it extremely difficult to deal with the violence. Emphasize that when they want help, it is available. Let them know that domestic violence tends to get worse, becomes more frequent with time, and rarely goes away on its own.

- Explain that relationship abuse is a crime, and that they can seek protection from the police or courts. Suggest that

bal bullying—insults, harassment, taunts and other forms of aggression (expressed verbally or in writing). **Emotional intimidation or "relational aggression"**—Withdrawing friendship or rejecting someone in order to assert control over that person. **Racial bullying**—mocking racial traditions, spray painting racist graffiti, making racial slurs and engaging in other racist behaviors. **Sexual bullying**—making sexual comments or engaging in unwanted sexual touching. **Cyberbullying**—sending messages, pictures, or information using electronic media, computers (email & instant messages), or cell phones (text messaging & voicemail).

Bullying is often a learned behavior and according to **ehow.com** parents can take active steps to avoid raising a bully.

Parents are raising bullies. They are the first to be in denial about any behavioral concerns family, teachers and administrators bring to their attention about their children. Understandably so! No parent wants to believe that they have raised a bully, but studies show that bully-like behavior starts at a very young age.

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they call the New York 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-621-4673. TTY users can call 1-866-604-5350.

- Suggest developing a safety plan in case of emergency. It's a good idea to keep money, important documents, a change of clothes, and an extra set of keys in a safe place, such as at a friend or neighbor's house.
- Be a real friend. Tell your friend that if there's anything going on that she wants to talk about, that you are a non-judgmental, supportive friend.

Remember, a friend (when you are) in need, is indeed a true friend.

One Woman's Journey

"As a born again believer, I found myself in an emotionally and psychologically abusive marriage that was slowly inching towards being physically abusive. Although I knew my marriage would be classified as abusive, I still struggled with the concept and reality of it. I struggled because in my mind it was not the abuse that the average person would understand and identify with. After all there were no swollen black eyes or bruises on my skin, my scars/bruises were internal.

I struggled mostly because as a born again believer, I felt I would be breaking a sacred covenant, disappointing God and be seen as a failure. I grew up hearing that God disapproved of divorce and what God put together should not be broken by men.

I sought the services of

DOVE Initiative after an announcement at my church advertised what the organization was about. I found DOVE Initiative to be very helpful, not only in assisting me to access the various services of agencies and other organizations that were able to work with me to end my abusive marriage but also to help me deal with my personal guilt as a born again believer ending my marriage.

What I really found helpful was the spiritual aspect of the counseling I received. I was assured that what I was experiencing in my marriage was not something that God would want me to go through and that it was okay to end a relationship that was detrimental to my health—physical and mental."

**A "Thriver's" Testimony
Top Development Corp./DOVE
Domestic Violence Program**

POSITIVE THOUGHTS By Marianne Williamson

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you *not* to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Shout Out!

A big shout out to all who attended the Domestic Violence Awareness event at Mount Lebanon Baptist Church on February 26th. It was successful on so many levels! The feedback from participants were encouraging and echoed sentiments of excitement and support for the development of a Domestic Violence Ministry. We express our gratitude to our passionate and competent facilitators: Rev. Dr. Sally N. MacNichol, M.Div, PhD and Quentin Walcott, Program Director of CONNECT Faith and Dr. Audrey Dupree-Sealey, PhD, FNP, Asst. Dir./Trauma Coordinator, Kings County Hospital Center

RAISING BULLIES

Hence, two questions every parent should ask themselves are "**How Am I Raising My Children?**" **What Am I Raising Them To Be?**

According to education.com, there is no one single cause of bullying among children; individual, family, peer, school, and community factors can place a child or youth at risk for bullying. These factors work individually, or collectively, to contribute to a child's likelihood of bullying.

Family risk factors for bullying include: a lack of warmth and involvement on the part of parents, overly permissive parenting (including a lack of limits for children's behavior), a lack of supervision by parents, harsh physical discipline, parent modeling of bullying behavior and victimization by older siblings.

Peer risk factors for bullying include: Friends who bully, friends who have positive attitudes about violence, some aggressive children who take on high status roles may use bullying as a way to enhance their social power and protect their prestige with peers, some children with low social status may use bullying as a way to deflect taunting and aggression that is directed towards them, or to enhance their social position with higher status peers.

Models of bullying behavior are prevalent throughout households and society, especially in television, movies, and video games. It behooves every parent to know what's going on what their children—in school, at home and anywhere else they may be. Build the kind of relationship that models good behavior. Be supportive and look for signs of bullying and symptoms of victimization.

NEED HELP?

Safe Horizon 24 hrs. DV Hot Line 24 hrs. 800-621-4673

CONNECT'S Legal Helpline: 212-683-0605

The Healing Center (Faith Based) 718-238-5138

Day One NY (teen abuse) 800-214-4150

Women In Need, Inc., 212-695-4758

National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800)799-7233.

Black Church and Domestic Violence Inst. 770-909-0715

FAITH WALK ENTERPRISES

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Our Mission: FAITH WALK ENTERPRISES is a Christian based organization designed to assist individuals in the development of faith, knowledge and skills directly related to one's spiritual and personal growth, professional development and financial stewardship.