

Molestation In America

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This quarter's newsletter focuses on the insidiousness of sin—specific to sexual molestation. According to Clinton, Hart and Ohlschlager (2005), in the U.S. 1-in-3 women and 1-in-6 men will be sexually victimized before they turn eighteen. Sadly, an overwhelming number of those who are sexually molested are victimized by someone they know and trust. If these same statistics apply to the men and women of our congregations (and it's highly probable they do), then the church has a very serious issue on its hands.

At our core, God created us to be sexual beings (Gen. 1:27). His intent was that we would share this intimate, most vulnerable part of ourselves with our spouse under the covenant of matrimony (Gen. 2:24). Within the boundaries of marriage, sex is a beautiful thing. However, the spiritual and emotional implications of sexual molestation pervert God's intent and design of our sexuality. It is the ultimate violation, often affecting the survivor's relationship with God, as well as with all other people.

When this type of sin is perpetrated, it not only damages the psyche, it establishes a stronghold of the enemy in the mind of the victim that perpetuates darkness.

The enemy keeps survivors of sexual molestation in the dark by weaving a tangled web of lies; binding them with fear and shame.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians stating, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them." (Eph. 5:11, NRSV). In order for survivors of sexual molestation to break free from the chains of the enemy, the unfruitful (i.e. sinful) works of their perpetrators must be brought out into the light. Yet, for many survivors the thought of doing so is terrifying. Working through the spiritual and emotional trauma brought about by sexual abuse is very much a battle; wherein, the survivor literally takes back ground that the enemy had previously occupied in their mind.

Because we fight against an adversary that is both cunning and determined, taking back what the devil has stolen can prove to be arduous. Sexual abuse survivors often struggle with denial and a distorted view of who they are in God's eyes. While coping mecha-

nisms like disassociation and splitting (i.e. altered identity, consciousness and memory) initially helped the victim to survive the abuse; such methods of coping prove maladaptive when it comes to living the abundant life Jesus said he came for us to have (John 10:10). Additionally, many survivors attempt to cope with their past abuse through: rationalization and minimization; addictions, self-abuse, deviant behaviors, codependency, withdrawal, abuse of others and more.

Yet, there is hope. Through a specifically designed process, survivors can effectively grieve the pain and anguish brought about through sexual molestation; as well as learn to move-off of dysfunctional thinking and behavior associated with the abuse, and move onto a life of power and strength lived through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through this process, survivors come to understand that it is for "freedom Christ has set us free." (Gal. 5:1, NRSV).

For more information on the process by which survivors can find liberation from the unfruitful works of darkness associated with sexual abuse, see [Method To The Madness](#) on page three; or contact Dr. Mannia at 661.324.4070 or at drm@kcmcounseling.com



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KCM Announces Jennifer Anderson



Jennifer and her husband Jeff, on vacation in Hawaii

“My passion is helping others through the pain we must endure to be able to ultimately grow in Christ.”

It is with great joy that we announce the addition of Jennifer Anderson to the counselor roster here at Kingdom Community Ministries. Jennifer has been a resident of Bakersfield for more than a decade, and is a graduate of Master’s College (BA in Biblical Studies), as well as an ordained and licensed minister of the gospel of Christ Jesus. She will soon hold a Masters degree in Ministry, with emphasis in Christian Counseling from Summit Bible College.

In addition, Jennifer has received specialized training in grief and trauma through the instruction of Dr. Norm Wright, and has honed her skills in this area by serving through Grief Share (a system of support groups intended to help those in grief). She has also studied under the tutelage of Dr. Michael Mannia, specific to Christian counseling (a cognitive-behavioral approach wherein a counselee’s thoughts and behaviors are brought into alignment with Scripture).

As a young widow, Jennifer came to know the pain and anguish associated with trauma and grief. Yet, through life’s tragedies God has molded and shaped her to serve Him in the capacity as a Christian counselor. Jennifer has effectively demonstrated her call to this specialized area of ministry, as well as her expertise in Christian counseling during the past months as she has interned here at KCM. She states, “My passion is helping others through the pain we must endure to be able to ultimately grow in Christ. People are my passion! I am finally in a place where I do not fear refinement, but know it is truly for my own good and to better my relationship with my Lord. Through these eyes, I see much clearer and am able to lead others into this place.”

For the past two months Jennifer has co-facilitated an intensive, Christ-centered program for women seeking to overcome the crippling effects of

sexual molestation. This is not your typical support group; rather, it is a closed group, meaning—participants commit to weekly group sessions for three months at a time. Most will initially spend six months to a year working on this painful issue. Through our specialized recovery program, survivors learn to tell their stories, assess the damage of the abuse, and come to experience the transforming power of God’s redemptive work.

Jennifer is happily married; she and husband Jeff enjoy life together as a blended family with six sons. She affirms, “Our family is complete as we focus on Christ and His purpose for our lives.”

Welcome Jennifer, we are blessed to have you aboard and anticipate that God will continue to work through you to help others overcome the crippling affects of sin and guilt.

Jennifer can be reached at 661.324.4070 or Jennifer@kcmcounseling.com

Sexual Abuse Defined



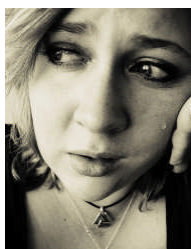
In their book, *Renew: Hope for victims of sexual abuse*, authors McGee and Schaumburg provide a clear and concise definition of sexual abuse; stating its “any sexual activity, verbal, visual or physical, engaged in

without consent, which may be emotionally or physically harmful and which exploits a person in order to meet another person’s sexual or emotional needs. The person does not consent if he or she cannot reasonably choose to consent or refuse because of age, circumstances, level of understanding and dependency or

relationship to the offender.”

Many people are surprised to learn that sexual abuse does not have to be physical. Sadly, the accuracy of this definition widens the scope of those affected by this type of abuse.

Method To The Madness



When it comes to counseling a survivor of sexual molestation, counselors must ensure they are equipped

to take-on such matters. Sin perpetrated via sexual molestation produces complexities that need to be addressed with specific competencies and experience. If you doubt your abilities in this area, offering the counselee a referral is a wise approach.

The first phase in treating a survivor of sexual molestation is to build trust and provide symptom relief. One method by which relief can be rendered is through normalizing symptoms. The counselee needs to know their symptoms are *reactions to severe trauma*. Just as a survivor of a train wreck might experience anxiety at the sound of a train horn; so too might a survivor of sexual molestation experience anxiety when a certain word is spoken, a smell is detected, non-sexual physical contact is made by another, etc. Normalizing without condoning maladaptive behaviors (e.g. self-mutilation, etc.) provides contextual reasoning.

Relief from symptoms can also come through development of more functional coping skills, such as: reduction of anxiety, decreased phobias, addressing addictive behaviors, etc. Suicidal ideation should also be assessed and addressed if present.

The second phase in counseling survivors of sexual molestation centers on memory work. Issues such as suppression, repression and disassociation all tend to play-out in the mind of the survivor. Initially, whenever trauma is experienced, the mind

seeks preservation; thus, we tend to experience shock and denial. However, when the shock of the trauma begins to wear-off, the fear, pain and anguish associated with the trauma often proves too intense for the survivor to cope with, and the cycle of suppression/repression starts over again. Eventually, this cycle can become perpetual, leading to disassociation of essential parts of one's psyche.

As the counselee comes to trust their Christian counselor, they come into a healing relationship; wherein the counselor reflects the character of Christ. To this extent, the counselee comes to understand they are cared for and is given a voice to speak the truth. The power of speaking the truth strengthens the counselee. While painful and anxiety provoking, exposing the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11) also proves liberating for the counselee. However, memory work can also become another traumatizing event; thus, the counselor must possess the experience and expertise required so as not to press the counselee beyond that which they can tolerate.

As the counselee progresses through their memory work, perpetrators and co-contributors are identified, and eventually symptoms begin to abate. It is at this point that the counselor assists the counselee to move-off viewing themselves as a victimized individual and onto viewing themselves as a responsible person.

During this phase of the process, the counselee shifts towards renouncing the lies of the enemy, their perpetrators and co-contributors. Inexperienced counselors are often caught off-guard during this phase, as many counselees tend to present resistance in moving forward. This phe-

nomena appears to stem from associated losses as a result of their abuse. During phase two, counselees tend to become aware of such losses as: innocence, virginity, trust, integrity, certain key relationships and more; and often times prove excruciatingly painful for the counselee—hampering progress. It is up to the counselor to encourage and nudge (when appropriate) the counselee towards progression of the last phase.

In the final phase of treatment, a sense of strength and individuation develops in the counselee. This tends to be a time of joy, peace and hope. The immense burden they have carried as a result of the sexual abuse has been lifted. In addition, healthier, more functional coping skills have now been developed. Typically, some of the last efforts of this phase include: extending forgiveness toward the survivor's perpetrators and co-contributors; focusing on developing healthy relationships; establishing friendly terms with one's own body; as well as giving to others in need. This final part—*giving to others in need* tends to present itself as a natural response to the redemptive work of God. When the counselee comes to understand the power and freedom associated with redemption, Fruit of the Spirit is typically evidenced to one degree or another (see Gal. 5: 22, 33).

In the case of sexual molestation, the road to redemption may prove to be long and arduous at times; yet, it also proves to be liberating and empowering for those who submit to the process.

When the counselee comes to understand the power and freedom associated with redemption, Fruit of the Spirit is typically evidenced...

If you are interested in finding out more about KCM's counseling services and support groups for survivors of sexual molestation, please contact Dr. Michael Mannia at 661.324.4070 or via e-mail: drm@kcmcounseling.com



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Kingdom Community Ministries (KCM) exists to serve the Body of Christ by offering biblically-based, Christ-centered counseling services. Our mission is to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ by bringing counselees into a closer relationship with the Lord; and helping them to overcome the crippling effects of sin and guilt. KCM counselors are licensed ministers with graduate level degrees in Ministry with emphasis in Christian Counseling; however, we are not licensed psychotherapists. We offer evening appointments, and a sliding scale payment plan for those who qualify. Your prayerful consideration of our services is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

The Absurdity of Truth

ab • surd (əb-sûrd'), *adj.* Ridiculously incongruous or unreasonable.

Consider for a moment how absurd the truth can be. Take, for example, Galatians 5:19-23 and you'll begin to see what I mean. Truth is I can readily admit to the fleshy side of my dichotomous nature (i.e. fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing and things like these—NRSV). I can acknowledge my bent towards this iniquitous side of my humanness. However, I find it to be a whole other matter when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit (i.e. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—NRSV). For when I operate in the flesh I cannot produce fruit (see Rom. 8:5-8).

Thus, in order to produce fruit I need to die to my fleshy nature. This is no small task; in fact, it is of the highest degree of difficulty for me as a follower of Jesus

Christ. The reality of this matter is that the mere suggestion of dying to my flesh is ridiculously incongruous to this very side of my nature. My flesh does not want to die! When I choose to operate in the flesh, I want to argue and justify my selfish behavior. I work to create quarrels and dissent; and yes, factions too. In such matters there is no joy, no peace—just pain and anguish.

However, when I take-up the mind of Christ, the concept of producing fruit of the Spirit no longer seems ridiculous; in fact, in such a state-of-mind it becomes rather congruous and reasonable. From this side of my nature; ya know, the Spirit-filled side, it makes sense that I would extend love to others—which results in joy and peace. The more at peace I am, the more patience I find I have. The more joy I have the more I want to be kind and generous. When I'm faithful to follow after Christ, I'm strengthened to be gentle and self-controlled.

But in order to achieve such a state, my flesh must die! I must yield my will to my Heavenly Father's will. And I'm not going to lie to you—there's nothing easy about the crucifixion of my flesh. Doing so requires me to bend and flex in directions that are not natural to my sinful nature. This in turn creates a good deal of friction and thus, it gets rather hot on the inside of my being. How hot? Red hot at times!

What I have come to accept is that I cannot bend and flex to such degrees without Christ being infused into my life. In order for me to produce fruit of the Spirit, I must turn to my Lord and receive strength from Him. How about you?

Dr. Michael Mannia is founder of Kingdom Community Ministries. He holds a Masters in Theology and a Doctorate in Ministry; both with an emphasis in Christian Counseling. He can be reached at: 661.324.4070 or drm@kcmcounseling.com