



# HOPE Ministries Highlights

January 2012

## Special points of interest:

- James Wagler, upcoming seminar guest speaker, shares about how God uses our pain
- Join us for our upcoming seminar on March 8-10, 2012. See p. 3
- Alex Thayer shares his testimony on p. 3
- Read inside a note from the HOPE Ministries Board about the new cottage project
- Board member, Arlen Mast, shares about the HOPE that Jesus gives

## Mission Statement:

*HOPE Ministries seeks to help individuals explore patterns that may have developed over their lifetime and provide opportunities to allow Jesus to bring healing and HOPE to their lives in fresh ways.*

## God Never Wastes Pain—by James Wagler



Why does God allow homes to be broken? A child's glory to be taken away? (Prov. 17:6) Why does God allow a child to be abused, taken advantage of by others? If He is such a loving God, why doesn't He stop the pain? Why does He allow parents to destroy each other? Couldn't He intervene and stop all of this?

The answer, of course, is yes, He could. But God has created us with a free will. He has given us the ability to choose between right and wrong. The choice to do either good or evil. God will never violate our will, else we would be puppets on a string.

I believe God allows us to go through difficult times for a couple of reasons. Number one, it allows us to be transformed into His image. The gentleness, love, and patience of God is shaped and molded in us as we go through difficult times. The opposite response makes us angry and bitter.

A hurting person hurts others. It is difficult for me to sit in my office and see someone who has been hurt deeply attack the spouse over and over. Out of the pain in his/her own heart, they attack and try to destroy the one who initially hurt them.

Until a person can see how he or she is playing into the picture by retaliating for the wrongs, you cannot help that person.

Secondly, God always has a purpose in trials. Some of the most beautiful people in the world are those who have been through very deep waters. Instead of becoming bitter, they grow through

(continued on page 2)

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## What's Been Happening??

The seminar in November was an exciting time as 220-250 people made their way inside the Journey@Yoder Fellowship Hall. It was pretty cozy. We were excited at the support and encouragement and hunger of the community. The amount of local speakers was a real highlight.

We say good-bye to and thank Merlin and Molly Miller for serving on the HOPE Ministries Board this past year. Their encouragement and input in decisions has been a blessing.

We welcome aboard Ray and Gina Miller of Plainview Mennonite Church. We are excited with their commitment to HOPE Ministries and

look forward to having them as part of the team!

We've been taking a look at our schedule with the HOPE Ministries Board and it seems necessary to slow down the counseling schedule a bit to get the other ministry phone calls, email, paper work done that is also necessary. It's been a challenge to find time for other things as well.

People continue to call and we are now booking into 2013. God continues to work in the lives of people and we enjoy seeing people's lives changed by Him! Thanks for your ongoing support and prayers.

-Nevin and Joann

## God Never Wastes Pain (continued from page 1)

the experiences. Because of the past experiences, the person can identify with others in the same situation.

A person who has lost loved ones can identify with others in the same situation. A person who has been ridiculed a lot in life will understand those who are belittled. A person who has been taken advantage of sexually will see the abuse on another person's face, and reach out to care. A rejected person will pick out every lonely heart in the crowd.

Once we allow God to use the past to reach other people, we come to the third and final reason I have for why God allows pain. Number

three; there are always eternal values attached.

If we allow God to work through us to touch the life of someone we can identify with, we make a difference for God's kingdom. We would not be able to identify with the person if we would not have walked through a similar trial. Hebrews 2:17 tells us that it was essential that Jesus was made like His brethren in every respect so that He might be a merciful and faithful high Priest in the things related to God.

As we find answers in our own lives, we begin to reach out and touch others in ways that have an eternal impact. A cup of cold water in His name,

an encouraging word for a downcast person, a helping hand in time of need, or a touch of love for a lonely one will not be forgotten for all eternity.

God allows the difficult times because He wants what is best for us. If we allow the trial to do its perfect work, there is a purpose. (James 1:2-5) And in the end we find that God never wastes pain. It's our choice. Will we become bitter or will we become better for it? Don't give up!

James Wagler, was a pastor at Woodside Mennonite Church in Corvallis, MT, 1997 - 2000. He then completed his internship under John Regier, and is employed at Freedom Hills in Walnut Creek, OH since 2002 as a marriage and relationship counselor.

"If we allow God to work through us to touch the life of someone we can identify with, we make a difference for God's kingdom."

## From the Board —The Hospitality Cottage Project

If you are interested in donating funds for the Cottage project, please earmark your checks as "cottage" and send to:  
Julian Nisly  
4311 S. Herron  
Hutchinson, KS 67501  
OR  
You can send it to  
HOPE Ministries.

Several months ago, Nevin's shared a dream that they have had with some of us. This dream was to have a multi-purpose facility on their property. This facility would have sleeping accommodations for counselees that are from a distance. Also, this facility would provide a second counseling room for the times when both Nevin and Joann meet separately. A third purpose is to provide a place for people to watch instructional DVDs, and it would be handicapped accessible.

We quickly became excited about this idea and thought that maybe this is an area that the community can show their support for the ministry. Quite a bit of the background work has been done as far as plans, layout, pricing, etc. The dirt work may have started by the time you read this. A number of you have volunteered labor to make this project happen. Now, you guessed it, we still need money! The ministry's budget is not in shape to build this facility and neither are we comfortable in

Nevin's using their personal finances to make it happen. The current estimate for the project comes in at around \$35,000. If you feel like this is an area in which you could help, it would be greatly appreciated. These donations are above what is needed for the general operation of HOPE Ministries. Please earmark you checks for the cottage project as "cottage." We would welcome your feedback and wish you God's blessings as we all work together to build God's kingdom.  
-by Arlen Mast

## What God Has Done For Me

-Alex Thayer

The past number of years have been a difficult journey for me. I felt like I was walking through a deep, dark valley of loneliness. It seemed I stepped on plenty of sharp rocks, too. I had family and friends around me. I tried to share my painful struggles with them, but it seemed like I couldn't really express my heart. And I could tell they didn't really understand what I was facing, so I felt so alone on this journey.

"Where was God?" I wondered. I knew He was with me. I told myself so, and hung onto many encouraging verses. But why didn't the deep pain inside go away and joy come to stay? I prayed and tried to counsel with people but nothing brought the change I was longing for.

"Okay, I'll just keep on going and sometime it will all be better," I told myself, though I didn't know how that would happen! I just hoped it would. A few times even that hope left me. "Please let me die, Lord! Then this painful night would be over!" Of course, that didn't happen.

Let's back up a bit. Before this time, I had a bad experience teaching school in a foreign country. I went there without teaching experience and didn't have support in the classroom. Relationships with the students went bad and I had to quit. I felt like a failure. "What do all the parents and the whole church think about me now?" I wondered. My alarm would ring in the morning and I would groan, "Not another day already!" I remember

walking to school in tears.

When I came home to the states, I went for counseling. That helped me to understand better what was going on inside. I knew I was miserable, but I hadn't known the reason why. The counselor helped me understand my hurting emotions. He indicated that Jesus cared about how I was feeling.

He helped me to see a broken relationship in my childhood. I hadn't received the love and affirmation my heart needed. A little boy inside was hurting. That certainly was an eye-opener; a new concept for me!

In addition to these challenges, I began to struggle with my health. I felt fatigued, anxious and tired a lot, only I didn't realize it was a health problem. In certain situations, I would lock up and panic inside. I couldn't look at people or talk to them.

These moments were so embarrassing and painful. This drove my heart down; my way was so dark. I did not know what was going on.

Fortunately, through some other relationships, a close brother began to see that something was drastically wrong. He pointed me to HOPE Ministries. I didn't really want to go at first, but finally agreed to. As I went to HOPE Ministries, I was looking for some sort of breakthrough experiences. On one of my first visits, I still remember very

clearly, sitting there tired of talking about all this and tired of feeling, I looked over at a picture of JESUS holding a baby. Suddenly that picture spoke volumes to me! Through my heart went a surge of warmth and a smile brightened my sad face. "Jesus loves ME! I'm special to Him!" I realized. It was so real to me. I hadn't realized that Jesus is so personal!!!

Now, I wish I could say I was a different person from that hour, but that's not true. God did not choose to bring healing all at once. It's a journey of walking with the Good Shepherd! And it's a sweet experience. Jesus has given to my heart so many thoughts and pictures of our Heavenly Father's love, acceptance, affirmation, and honor for me. (The list of descriptive words could go on.) "... the LORD bestows favor and honor..." Ps 84:11 (ESV)

It's hard to share all this, because I'm not all through the tough times yet. It's also very personal. I'm not where I'd like to be. But that's okay. I'm headed in the right direction. My life is in the Master's hands. I don't want people to think that I'm a super-special person or better than others. I share this in hope that others can identify pain in their hearts and find healing in our dear Lord Jesus! He has the touch that we all need. May His worthy name be praised!

"Jesus loves ME! I'm special to Him!" I realized.

## Marriage and Relationship Seminar—March 8-10, 2012

### LOCATION:

Maranatha Mennonite Church  
3115 Blanchard Ave. SW, Hutchinson, KS

Thurs. & Friday—6:45-9:00 p.m.  
Saturday—9:00-4:00

**Guest Speaker:** James Wagler,  
director of Freedom Hills Ministries

James will be bringing a team of counselors along and there will be opportunity for individuals to receive one 3-hour session. If interested call 330-893-3857 to reserve a time, as availability is limited.

**No child care will be provided.**

### Session Topics:

#### Thursday

6:45-7:55—A Damaged Heart  
8:05-9:00—Pressure Patterns and Emotional Issues

#### Friday

6:45-7:55—Identifying Emotional Pain  
8:05-9:00—Ten Core Issues

#### Saturday

9:00-10:25—Depression/Negative Thoughts  
10:35-12:00—The Effects of Spiritual Abuse  
**12:00-1:30—LUNCH**  
1:30-2:40—The Effects of Sexual Abuse  
2:50-4:00—Freedom Through Forgiveness

**PLEASE REGISTER BY MARCH 1, 2012**

### ABOUT FREEDOM HILLS

Freedom Hills Ministries is a faith-based ministry in OH which began in 1990. Today Freedom Hills serves as a ministry sharing Biblical concepts on relationships for couples and individuals at their facility and in various seminars.

**CALL or EMAIL  
HOPE Ministries  
to register for  
seminar**

## From a Board Member:



Arlen Mast and family

In Luke 7 we read of a funeral procession making its way through the streets. Out of respect for the widow, many people joined the throng of mourners. As they neared the edge of Nain the procession was met by another group of people. This group was more like a parade. The parade included the noise of the formerly dumb and the energy of the formerly lame. When the two groups met it made for some tense moments. The jubilant laughter died down to a respectful silence.

Jesus didn't step aside to let the mourners pass. He even made the moment more awkward by telling the grieving widow not to weep. What was she supposed to do, count her blessings?

Then Jesus went over to the coffin where the young man lay and touched it. To an onlooker's perspective, that was a mistake. For a Jew, touching a

coffin meant a whole day's uncleanness. It looked as though He was headed for another blunder, touching a corpse meant a week's uncleanness. To top it all off, Jesus started giving orders to the dead man.

What happened next stopped the wailing in mid-cry. The dead man sat up and began to ask questions. Awe and amazement swept through the crowd as the miracle they had witnessed began to soak in. What moments before had been a hopeless situation was suddenly filled with jubilation.

What was the ingredient that changed the grim picture? Jesus' presence was all that it took. That is how it still works today. No matter how hopeless a situation may be, when Jesus shows up, there is a solution. We don't expect Jesus to show up at present day funerals to awaken the one in the coffin. But, I am afraid if we are honest, there are people among us who feel dead inside. They have subconsciously crawled into the coffin and given up hope. I don't believe that Jesus went to the cross for us to experience life like that.

At HOPE Ministries, Nevin and Joann will quickly tell you that it is Jesus who is the Counselor. He is the one that does the healing. While I believe that Nevins are gifted in the area of counseling and they rely on the help of the Holy Spirit for guidance, Jesus is

still the one that brings hope to the situation.

*Hope is the weightless sunrise that displaces the gravity of the night.*

*Hope dilutes the toxic past.*

*Hope energizes the lethargic present.*

*Hope enjoys the future in advance.*

It has been exciting as a board member to be a part of a ministry that instills hope into hurting individuals. Whether it is through counseling sessions or in a seminar setting, it is encouraging to see change happening in the community as people become more aware of God's love for them as individuals.

As board members we get to see that gaining back ground from the enemy is not done without effort. Nevin and Joann's schedule can be taxing at times as they involve themselves in people's lives on a regular basis. Please pray with us that the Spirit would give them direction and that God would give them the strength that they need for each situation.

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Arlen and his wife Gloria have served on the board for nearly 1 1/2 years and see HOPE Ministries as a powerful tool in the community. Arlen has been a minister at Arlington Amish Mennonite Church since April 2009. He works part time for Choice Books and also does other construction related projects. Arlen and Gloria have 2 boys, ages 5 and 2.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE:

Our desire is that no one will be excluded from meeting with us because of finances. All counseling is done on a donation basis where people can give with the idea of making this available to others and allowing us to be full time in this ministry. God has been faithful in supplying our needs and because of His people, we ended the 2011 year in the black. We are grateful for all who have stood with us in so many ways and do trust in God's continuing provision. As a 501(c)(3) organization, we are accountable to our board for the finances and the operation of HOPE Ministries. If you wish to know more details about our finances, please contact Julian Nisly, our treasurer, at 620-664-5304. As God leads you to think about HOPE Ministries, please pray for us, and if He prompts you to join in our financial support, donations can be made in several ways as stated below. Tax receipts will be issued upon request.

Donations can be sent to:  
HOPE Ministries  
Box 103  
Partridge, KS 67566

OR

You may use bill pay for electronic processing

