



*Reaching Souls for  
Christ Since 1971*

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*"Thou shalt no  
more be termed  
forsaken; . . .  
but thou shalt be  
called Hephzibah"  
Isaiah 62:4*

*In Hebrew, "Hephzibah"  
(my delight is in her)  
is a symbolic name for Zion*

# Hephzibah House

*A Ministry of Believers Baptist Church*

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Dear Friend of Hephzibah House:

Warm Christian Greetings! Because we have been the object of recent scrutiny from a national news network (CNN), I have been impressed to inform our praying friends and supporters about what has been happening to our work in recent years.

Approximately 4 ½ years ago, a small group of our former students from about 20 or 30 years ago began a determined attack of defamation, sensational accusations (that they were beaten, starved, abused, etc.), and efforts to destroy and/or close Hephzibah House. What made these sudden and vicious attacks so surprising to us was that some of these accusers had previously been cordial and friendly with us. They would occasionally call and ask counsel about their families, send friendly emails, send family photographs, send boxes of used clothing for my grandchildren, and keep us up-to-date on their households. In fact, at least two of these ladies invited us to their weddings! Then suddenly and inexplicably, these same ladies turned on us with a vengeful determination.

We were shocked and grieved at this sudden turn of events from these precious souls that we thought were our grateful friends after several years of amicable communications from them. It was painful to hear the awful accusations they were now making on their websites. To this present hour, I do not know why they had such a sudden and dramatic change of disposition toward us.

Predictably, these evocative and sensational accusations they were making on their websites attracted a sympathetic following of souls who were appalled at how these ladies claimed they were abused. This is the prediction of Proverbs 16:28, "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends." Proverbs 17:9 says, "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." So it became apparent very quickly that their objective was not reconciliation or peacemaking for the offenses they claimed we had perpetrated against them, but the harm and destruction of Hephzibah House.

Folks who were longtime friends or at least ambivalent toward our work, after reading all of the vitriol on these websites, began to regard us with a "jaundiced eye." Sadly, some take accusations on web sites and media at "face value" instead of doing due diligence in verifying all the facts.

It was brought to my attention that when some of our friends and supporters would go to the websites, blogs and forums of our accusers and try to be peacemakers and convince these ladies to give up anger and bitterness, they were "put in their place" and their postings were sometimes removed.

A lady who is very accomplished in using computer technology stopped me one night as I was leaving a church auditorium. She knew all about the attacks against our work, and had taken the time and effort to investigate some of these ladies who were trying so assiduously to close our ministry. She related to me that several of these ladies had experienced heartaches with their parents, their personal relationships, their marriages, their children, etc. She theorized that we were the "scape goat," i.e., we were being blamed for the tears and problems they have experienced and were experiencing. This is a tempting theory that would explain these inexplicable facts after 20 and 30 years of cordiality with us. Our culture thrives on "victimhood": it is someone else's fault for my problems.

These ladies then set out to find as many past students and staff as they could to join them in their "crusade" in closing Hephzibah House. Sadly, some of the ladies profess to be Bible



believers. As I would hear of their postings, their comments were animated with emotion, passion and determination. They were "driven" as only a bitter, resentful soul can be. All the while, they believed they were doing God's work! Like the ancient Pharisees, they were willing to compass land and sea to accomplish their objectives.

Patti and I (and many others) began to pray for the protection of Hephzibah House and for God to bless these misguided, driven souls, that their spiritual needs would be met.

As time wore on, they found more and more past students and staff because of modern technology. Many of these past students as far as we knew were friendly or at least neutral toward our work. However, after chats, communications and postings back and forth with these disgruntled, angry souls, they also decided Hephzibah House was an awful place. One such lady who was with us as a teenager was called by another fellow student who told her how horrible Hephzibah House was. She then called our office to ask how we were and to let us know that she did not agree with what was being said on these websites, and that she was helped by her stay at Hephzibah House. Shortly thereafter, she joined in with these girls and has claimed that she was abused here. In football, this concept is described as "piling on," i.e., getting in another punishing, gratuitous hit, even though the play is over. Some social scientists refer to this as "social syncretism," the felt need to go along in an approving way with peers so as to not appear to be "different." One professional friend described this concept this way: "I go jogging every morning past a dog on a nearby corner. He would lazily look at me and then go back to sleep. One day, there were two dogs on that corner. They chased after me and bit my ankle." He was saying that what one would never do alone or even think about doing, they would definitely do in the company of others!

Students from the past who would try to point out the falsehoods, hyperbole and errors of their accusations were harassed, intimidated, and became the victims of vicious "ad hominem" (against the man) attacks. It was for this reason that we removed all names from the testimonies of students, pastors, parents and staff from our ministry web site - to save the grief of such harassment.

Soon this group became emboldened to come to Winona Lake and picket around our county courthouse, carrying outrageous signs and distributing leaflets with horrible accusations of the multiple abuses they claim they suffered 20 and 30 years ago, demanding that we be closed. The local mass media they contacted were only too happy to become facilitators and enablers of their crusade, including biased reporting by a South Bend television station. They visited our sheriff, newspaper and other officials to gain support for their cause.

Following their day's activities of expressing their indignation against Hephzibah House, many of them retired to a night of relaxation, dancing and drinking at a local bar. These events attracted an atheist/pornographer who began harassing local officials to close us down. He also made numerous harassing phone calls to our ministry phones. A "married" Lesbian couple (one of whom was a former student) walked hand-in-hand down our driveway and were politely asked to leave. Two other former students purposely veered off the road and nearly hit two of our men providing security at the entrance to our property. Filthy and vile epithets were screamed at our men as the women passed by in their car. These demonstrations took place in Warsaw and Winona Lake on three separate occasions.

You can imagine the scandal such behavior caused in our small community! Uninformed and misguided citizens wrote impassioned letters to the editor about how such a wicked place as ours needed to be closed. We appreciated those that wrote supportive letters to the editor on our behalf.

Because these past students could only accuse but not prove allegations of abuse, no charges have been brought against Hephzibah House. Also, the allegations they made were from so long ago, the statute of limitations excluded any legal action. But despite any legal limitations, these accusations are either completely false, or are twisted stories to cause sensation and sympathy.

We praise the Lord for State Representative Dave Wolkins. He has visited our ministry on several occasions over the years, and has steadfastly vouched for our integrity and credibility, although he has also suffered abuse from the local paper and on the web for supporting us. If you would be disposed to do so, you may write a letter of thanks and appreciate to him at: Representative Dave Wolkins; 501 E. Pierceton Road; Winona Lake, IN 46590.

It was about 1996 that we made the decision to stop spanking. This meant we could no longer take violent or defiant students, but we were still able to receive students who had not progressed in their rebellion to the stage of being uncontrollable. Unfortunately, many parents wait until there is an absolute crisis before they call us, when the child is either too old or too far progressed in her rebellion.

Had Patti and I known what we would be getting into back in 1971 when we started our work, we would have given serious pause to our decision. However, we were convinced the Lord had called us into this unique work, so we used my government retirement money to help launch the work, and soon had wonderful believers and churches partnering with us.