

Transcript: Dr. Christy Sim's Presentation at the For Such a Time as This Rally outside the Southern Baptist Convention June 12, 2018



We have this saying for transplants in Texas: "I'm not from Texas, but I got her as fast as I could."

So, today I say, "I'm not Southern Baptist... but I got here as fast as I could."

I'm Dr. Christy Sim. I'm an expert in domestic violence and sexual assault.

And I'm an author, I'm a writer (I have a book coming out soon).

I've been an expert witness for our District Attorney, I have over 500 hours of expert training (mostly from the Office of Violence Against Women).

But that's not why I'm here today.

I'm here today because my heart and my passion is enabling ministry leaders and giving them the tools for proper responses to domestic violence and sexual assault.

I'm not just an expert. I'm also a survivor. I know what it's like when the church doesn't respond appropriately. And if you want to read my story, it's in the book "Talking Taboo."

But I'm here today to talk to you about what I do with ministry leaders and what I do with pastors.

Some of the ministry leaders come to me in an absolute panic. Right? "Help me! I don't know what to do!" and I love that. I welcome that. Some of them are a little bit more laid back. They're like "how's the weather? I thought that since we were talking about the weather anyway that you could just tell me what to do about this situation."

And I welcome both of those and I validate all of those responses.

Because it means they care. It means that they want to make a difference when survivors come to them and disclose violence.

The number one thing I tend to advise and counsel for pastors and ministry leaders,

Are you ready? (pause)

Violence takes away autonomy.

Violence takes away your ability to control the situation.

It takes away your choice, your agency.

It treats you like an object.

So, I say to all the pastors and ministry leaders, find ways to give people back their humanity.

Give them their choices, give them their agency. Affirm their value and dignity as a human.

If we had pastors and ministry leaders doing this, I think the whole world would change.

So, I told you I have a book coming out.

It is with Wesley Foundry Books, available through Cokesbury and anywhere books are sold. It's called: **"Survivor Care: What Religious Professionals Need to Know about Healing Trauma."**

So, in **chapter one**, I kind of lay out a basis. This is what to expect. This is what violence is. This is what sexual assault is. This is what is happening internally for a person who's experiencing violence. There's shame. There's isolation. And what does that feel like.

In **chapter two**, I talk about the neurobiology of trauma. That's my favorite thing to talk about.

And you'll see business cards on the back table and you'll see my logo that kind of reflects that neurobiology of trauma.

Because our brains and our bodies were designed to respond to trauma in certain ways. And so often we call it sin when it's just biology. And so, in chapter two I explain that, I walk us through what it looks like. These are the behaviors you should expect from victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

In **chapter three** I talk about healing.

In **chapter four** I talk about vicarious trauma. How do I take care of myself while I'm helping other people?

In **chapter five** (it) is about partnering with your community partners.

How many of you know your local domestic violence agency? (eeeh) How many of you know your District Attorney Prosecutor's Office (or the Domestic Violence Unit)? How many of you know your Law Enforcement Victim Advocates? Chapter five will be fantastic for you!

And then in **chapter six**, I also teach and train with AIMS Training and Consulting with Chief Anthony Williams and we do Church Safety Training and I'm the Family Violence Expert. And so, chapter 6 will talk about how do we think about those things before it's too late.

I also have a Patreon account where you can sponsor pastors I work with or you can sponsor yourself. I have over 40 resources on there now. I post more every month. And there are things like worksheets and resource lists and all sorts of different things.

But mostly, what I want to say to you today, remember the part about giving victims back their agency. Instead of saying “you’ve got to forgive. You’ve got to this. You’ve got to jump through this hoop,” find ways to give them back their (sense of) humanity. And celebrate who they are and their choice and their active agency.

