



A Very Special Someone: Kim Barry

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners...” Isaiah 61:1



You might already know Kim Barry, but then again, you might not. Quiet and unassuming, Kim passionately goes about her work without fanfare. But Kim Barry is a powerhouse, a faith-wielding champion for suffering people, especially women in violent relationships. Kim was the force behind the establishment of the Domestic Violence Ministry at The People's Community Baptist Church (TPCBC), a Ministry that has helped -- and perhaps even saved -- countless lives. She is indeed a Very Special Someone.

Originally from the South American country of Guyana, Kim witnessed violence as a young girl. It was common in her community and an accepted part of the culture. Only later, as an adult, after being exposed to emotional and verbal abuse herself, did she learn that there was a term for it -- “domestic violence” -- and that the cultural practice was unacceptable.

Kim came to the United States in 1990, first landing in New York City, then relocating to the Washington, D.C., area, where she joined TPCBC in 1994. A licensed clinical social worker by profession, Kim has worked for thirty years in child welfare, criminal justice, addiction and “everything,” as she says. Yet, domestic violence was a personal interest.

After attending a domestic violence conference at the Spencerville Adventist Church, Kim was certain that TPCBC needed such a Ministry as well. She sought support from church members and eventually, with Pastor Robinson's blessing, established in 2006 Women Empowering Women (WEW) with Vanessa Davis and Annisa Cline-Thomas. The work of the new ministry was to educate the congregation about domestic violence and connect those in need with the resources available to help free victims from the abuse. The first WEW awareness event was based on a powerful memoir entitled, “Laying Down My Burdens,” by Brenda L. Thomas, about her personal journal from domestic abuse to self-discovery.

In the early years, WEW offered workshops and trainings for various TPCBC ministries, instructing members on how to recognize and appropriately respond to potential victims of violence within our congregation. WEW also partnered with Montgomery County's Interfaith Community Against Domestic Violence to support their annual domestic violence awareness conference, which eventually was hosted at TPCBC. WEW established a confidential domestic violence helpline at TPCBC, and offered monthly domestic violence education presentations at the former TPCBC Wellness Center. WEW has been an effective resource for members of our church family dealing with abuse, and in 2009, when, on the church steps, a woman was shot to death by her estranged husband, Kim and WEW were there to help.

Kim continued to grow the Ministry and expand its impact. A multi-year grant from Verizon enabled WEW to develop and facilitate empowerment classes for women returning to work after leaving violent relationships. WEW supported women's domestic violence shelters by providing resume-writing workshops for the residents and hosting Christmas and other parties for the women and children. WEW collaborated for several years with Women Who Care Ministries to co-sponsor their annual "Restore the Joy" domestic violence awareness conferences. Most importantly, Kim ensured that sharing the love of Jesus Christ as well as the Word of God was central to all WEW activities.

After building, by God's grace, an impactful ministry, in 2014, Kim stepped down from her position. She transferred WEW leadership to Gloria Miller and Alice Ellison, who have since continued the Ministry's important work. Around the same time, the Ministry received a new name: Yasha Circle Ministry. The word "Yasha" (Yaw-Shah) is an Old Testament Hebrew word meaning "to save, deliver, liberate, and to be victorious." Yasha Circle Ministry continues the work that Kim began, helping those seeking freedom from and rebuilding after domestic violence.

Kim may have stepped down from leading the Ministry, but she has not slowed down. A member of TPCBC's Judah Family, Kim also serves in the International Multicultural Ministry. She continues to be a sought-after speaker and presenter at domestic violence awareness events and has even been contracted to provide counseling and recovery workshops for batterers. And when the Lord gave Kim the vision to write a book, she released last year, "*How We Got Over: Stories of Real Women, Reflections and Solutions*," a workbook and self-care guide for women facing adversity. With Scriptural references and questions encouraging reader reflection, the workbook addresses issues such as marriage, parenting, faith, divorce, suicide, blessings, sexual assault and prayers. Through her book, Kim encourages women to overcome by applying the Word of God to every situation. *How We Got Over* can be purchased on www.Amazon.com.

Kim is truly a force, and our church and community have been blessed by her invaluable contributions. Without doubt, Kim Barry is a Very Special Someone.