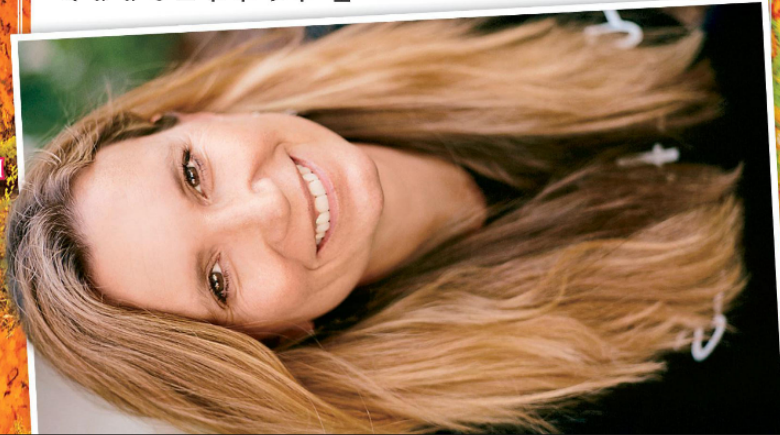


# “The Lord turned my pain into purpose”



**After enduring childhood sexual abuse, Becca Stevens spent decades trying to overcome anger and hurt. But God's love inspired her to help thousands of women find a new lease on life, which led Becca to her own forgiveness, freedom and joy**

By Nancy Fitzgerald

**F**or Becca Stevens, it was just an ordinary day. An ordained pastor, wife and mother, she was living a busy, challenging life. She'd just picked up her 5-year-old son from day care when he pointed to a nearby billboard. “Look, Mommy,” he said. “That lady’s dressed like a kitty-cat. Fun!” The billboard featured an exotic dancer on a pole, and the little boy’s comment

stopped Becca cold. Her son was the same age she’d been when her sexual abuse had begun. *I couldn’t stand up for myself as a little girl, she thought, but I can help women now.* In that moment, Becca felt God placing a new mission on her heart. Little did she know, it would lead to her own healing.

## INNOCENCE STOLEN

Becca remembers the first time it happened. She was 5 years old, and her father, a beloved pastor, had recently been killed by a drunk driver. At a church supper, Becca wandered into a side room with her plate of spaghetti when a well-respected deacon in their congregation grabbed her and molested her. Terrified, the heartbroken little girl told no one. The abuse lasted three years. “As I got bigger, I realized I could make it



Becca (top right) and her family in 1994, the year before her son (far right) saw the billboard that inspired Becca to help women

stop,” Becca recalls. “I remember staring him down the last time, thinking, *Never again.*”

Despite the horror Becca endured from a church member and the heavy secret she carried, the kind women of her congregation nourished her faith in a way that deepened her love for God. “I never blamed God for what that man did to me,” Becca says. “I always turned to the Lord for shelter and comfort.” ▶