

Broken Branches

Issue 54

Oct/Nov 2006

John 15

"Take courage! God has healing in store for you; so take courage" (Tb. 5:10)

The Effects of Abortion on Males.

Whilst research into post abortion grief in the female has been steadily mounting and now cannot be denied, the effects of abortion on men still remains doubted and largely unknown, though it also appears that abortion grief in the male damages just as much, as abortion psychologically and spiritually damages the female.

Considering the millions upon millions of abortions carried out each year (globally) and the tens of thousands carried out in Australia, (annually) we need to begin to look at the abortion effects on men and perhaps maybe see violence as a fruit of this practice.

Studies into abortion grief and trauma in the males seem to suggest that only "some" are affected by that decision. However, even, if only some are affected, then there is the possibility of a whole personality change leading to self violence and self destructive behaviours. And further even if some enter into this downward spiral of destructive and malignant reactions, then these males bring into the ambit of their society/environment a potential to harm either themselves and /or those around them.

It is very easy to dismiss the males as not caring for their unborn infant and perhaps be

painted as the culprit in the whole miserable

abortion saga, but this is not always the case. It is not always the male who wants the woman to have the abortion, but at times he is told to just pay for the procedure and just be supportive because this is her body and she will do as she wants. In fact he is told that he has no say in the matter and has no law to support his desire.

To be in this situation and to really have absolutely no say in the matter can be devastating for him. Alternatively he at times is not told about the pregnancy and finds out about it after the abortion (of which he had no say at all) and carried out without his consent.

Further still, even if he does know about the pregnancy, and that it is an unwanted pregnancy, he feels a need to hide his feelings or beliefs or ideas about abortion in the false belief that its his fault for getting her pregnant in the first place, and that it is her "right" as a woman and over her own body to do as she wants. This sense of guilt stifles his own ideas and beliefs about abortion and he in fact is rendered speech less.

When this happens a barrier is immediately installed in their relationship, because with this decision, a life changing event occurs, thus changing the dynamics of their friendship/relationship.

One of the really important things to know about male thought about abortion is that communication is really strangled during this time. Where once the couple were able to speak on all matters, unplanned pregnancy and abortion introduces something alien which

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induces withdrawal from dialogue.

I often wondered why this would be, and my only thought is that perhaps there is a deep sense of 'knowing' that something is wrong with abortion decision but the 'fault' factor predisposes him to self blame for the pregnancy and because of this abdicates his right to speak about his thoughts and feelings on the matter. She in turn has a sense of her own guilt, anyway, or alternatively she 'blames' him for getting her pregnant, and so the first steps towards the end of the relationship are taken.

I have yet to meet a man who has not blamed himself for her 'being pregnant, therefore I have to support her decision, whatever it is.'

The males that I see or who are grieving for the child, do not blame her and her failure to contracept adequately, but always when asked, did he like the decision that his girlfriend/wife made regarding the abortion, and emphatically the answer is always "no, but I couldn't do anything about it."

Of recent times I have spoken to a 23 year old young man (Ted) who has been devastated by his long term girlfriend's decision to abort their child. Indeed this young man's first call to me was made at 3.30am. He was most apologetic and most distraught and felt suicidal.

As I verbally calmed him down (at 3.30am I was too stunned to be myself anything but calm!!!) and the story unfolded, it transpired that his girlfriend, with whom had had been with for nearly 4 years (and known since high school), had told him that she had gotten pregnant (by

him) and that she and her sister had gone together and had procured an abortion.

She told him she didn't want to tell him before in case he wouldn't let her have the abortion but now she would like him to also help to pay for the procedure, as she had to repay her sister.

I suppose little should surprise or make me angry or scandalise me, but sorry, this was one of the times. The woman and her sister without speaking to this young man about the pregnancy, (his baby) made the decision, went and had the abortion, paid for the abortion without even giving the young man a moment of consideration, and now post the event, he is to pay? It seemed even too hard to comprehend such logic.

I have since met the young woman who told me that "I am okay I don't feel bad about the abortion, it had to be done. I am not ready to have a baby yet but one day I will." There was coldness in her voice which really intrigued me. I suspect that she was being "hard" in order not to suffer.

This young man was utterly devastated. In all our conversation he kept calling the baby "baby" and not once "embryo" or "foetus" which obviously meant to me that he had personalised and humanised the infant. He had seen the infant as his "baby" and not some indistinct "bunch of cells" As per usual with the men that I speak with, he had not been given a choice. He had not been told about the conception. He had not been asked or invited into the discussions about the situation. He was told about the abortion as "fait accompli"

"...he kept calling the baby 'baby'..."

Whenever I hear about this type of situation, I am reminded that it's not surprising that men have moved away from their responsibilities.

Women first decided that they would be in control of fertility (when they decided that they would take the pill in order to facilitate unrestrained sexual activity without responsibility) and then when fertility methods fail, then they decide what happens to that which has been conceived. Therefore, it's not surprising that nearly two generations later and the male does not want to be responsible for the conception, or indeed, has become so used to hearing that it's not his business, and she will do as she wants, so he withdraws into that space of non caring.

In my office I have seen both types of males the one who doesn't want responsibility and runs or threatens to run. And the one who has had responsibility violently taken from him. I can tell you that the grief of the man who has lost an in utero child against his wishes or desires, can be just as complicated and as acute as that of the woman.

In my office I have seen and counselled men

who had fatherhood wrenched from them and several who (accompanying their partner) admitted their complicity in the abortion outcome.

One of the most important and sad outcomes of abortion is the at times break-up of what could have been a really good marriage, or relationship. At times this relationship ends quietly and definitively whilst at other times with much angst. And whilst not all marriages or relationships end following the abortion, those that remain together find that there is a new element present which was not present prior to the abortion, and that is a "silence." A topic which cannot be even hinted at because of the possible anguish of either one or the other of the couple.

A further sign of breakdown of the intimacy of a close relationship is the "secretiveness" which becomes apparent, and the belief by either one or both of the parties, that there is now a place which they cannot enter and speak about, and that place is children and abortion.

I believe, from experience, that the certain trust which is present in a love relationship also

"further sign of breakdown...is secretiveness..."

is affected, thus leading to withdrawal of that special bond of sharing all with the "one that I love. I don't trust him anymore. He let me down badly. He didn't look after us" (Sally K).

In my encounter with the few men who actually do seek help for grief and suffering following the abortion of their child, I have found that as it stands there is a no win situation for them. They have absolutely no rights in respect to that child which they had a share in the conceiving, at least whilst it is in utero. And therefore they cannot protect the child. Yet alternatively they blame themselves that the woman has made that decision, even when

that decision was made without their knowledge.

Further to this, post the abortion, they may also be blamed for not insisting that the baby be kept and brought forward to birth.

One of my young ladies, told me recently that her husband desperately wanted the baby (first child) and she didn't because her career was at a critical stage. Yet after the actual abortion and the ever present unseen barrier between them, she uttered in desperation her anger at him not being stronger, and his not demanding that they have the baby. Especially if he had wanted the baby so much. "it's his own fault he

should have insisted!" And her real anger at him for not taking control of the situation and their family and actually preventing her from proceeding with the abortion.

I found it of particular interest when this young woman and her husband came in to see me and the animosity, anger and contempt she showed as she was describing that period of their life. She could not see that her demands for her career, her insistence that it is her body and she will do as she wants, resulted in the outcomes which we have before us.

I suspect that whilst women want to be independent; Want to have careers; Want to climb mountains, drive trains, be mechanics, when it comes to the family there is still her need to leave or even share strongly this part of her life and decision making with her spouse. Sarah demanded the freedom to abort, yet she then needed someone to blame (her husband) when she could not be at peace with what she thought was her good decision. In this need to blame she became unreasonable.

I asked young Ted to explain to me what he felt after the abortion. Not something about the young woman, or even about the baby, but how did **he** feel about the whole thing? and his reply confirmed the helplessness which men feel in the face of abortion.

Bearing in mind that this is a fairly young man (23yrs) the comment was poignant "I just felt I couldn't do anything protect my baby and I am not sure that I will ever be able to feel that I can protect any of my children again." It is my hope also that his sense of self defeat and hopelessness will also with time diminish. It is my hope that by the time we finish that he will be confident of himself again.

As a conclusion to this topic, an American study by a *Arthur Shostak, Abortion & Men: Losses & Love, N.Y. Praeger, 1984*) found similar to what I am seeing. Shostak in interviewing of 1000 males found

- That males also saw abortion as a death experience and more difficult than they thought that it might be.

- That the most common and spoken about emotion following the abortion is one of helplessness and even futility.
- Men who are not helped to deal with the abortion develop or learn how to be distant so in future parenting, there is an absence of nurturing
- This researcher found also found that post abortion, the relationships floundered and that the majority of relationships actually failed.

• Indeed it is exactly as I have found, though I certainly have not spoken with 1000 men.

The human person, whether male or female has not been designed to kill its child and when this happens, new malignant syndromes develop which change forever, the original design of man/woman.

Thou Shalt Not Judge

In our world today, the biggest sin/crime one may never commit is the sin/crime of "judgement" anything else is permissible but judgement? heaven forbid. Another equally un-permissible and unpardonable sin is discrimination on any grounds but especially on gender grounds. Heaven forbid if this were to happen. Yet, within the abortion industry discrimination and "judgement" are the two most obvious tactics. Let me explain please. The man has no say about the in utero infant. His child. He cannot prevent an abortion, legally or otherwise. If he tries to prevent the abortion then the full hand of the law is brought down on him. He is discriminated against if he does not agree with the precepts of the abortion facility and mentality and so on.

Then, we are told not to judge a person for their abortion. OK I can live with that, I don't judge any person, however, I may judge an action and we must begin to judge

Congratulations

Br. Sebastian ofm (conv)

Recently had the opportunity of working with and assisting a young man with an assignment for his studies.

Br Sebastian, a Franciscan Br chose to present to his colleagues, (other theology students) a talk on Post Abortion trauma and grief.

I was quietly proud of the fact that he chose to present such a topic, and the fact that it was presented to other colleagues who would also be working within area of Church (pastoral) and this recognises that more and more this type of trauma and grief will be seen by those within the pastoral care situation.

Brother Sebastian was able to work and prepare a presentation (brief because of time constraints) which I would say gave the listeners a brief understanding of the reality of this kind of grief, the complicated nature of the grief, and the reality that it really exists, and is not the manufacture of some neurotic women.

Sebastian invited me to be present at his presentation and if I were marking him I would give him 90%. Not 100% because then there would be no where to go, and there is always somewhere to go.

The reason I write this is because I am proud of Br Sebastian, but more importantly, as more and younger people hear about and speak about this grief, we will see the beginnings of a reversal of thought about abortion.

We need the YOUTH both laity and religious to take this on board and fight those anti life middle aged crusaders of women's rights.

We need the young to love and protect the unborn brothers and sisters.

We need people like Br Sebastian and Br Manes and other youth of deep faith to say NO MORE. It won't happen any more.

Well done Br Sebastian you are indeed a champion.

Anne.

"abortion. " As long as we are frightened to be thought of as judging and we therefore not judge, then the babies will continue to die.

I would never ask anyone to judge a human soul. That on my part would be a sin. Jesus told us not to judge and perhaps to let God Himself do the judging of the individual soul. However, we may **never withhold from** judging an evil act, because as long as we don't judge the evil of an action then we are destined to repeat it and repeat and repeat.

So I would like to say to you. Please judge abortion. Please judge the mentality of those who set up abortion facilities, they are not looking after the interests of women. They looking after the interests of their pockets (\$\$) because when the women and the men weep in sorrow these same 'non judging' individuals are no where to be found.

Please also judge the beliefs of your politicians on whether they are pro life or not. Remember your member is voted into office by your vote. They cannot make it alone. When your politicians talk of decriminalisation of baby killing, please judge that decision and vote accordingly.

When your politician is rabidly in favour of saving the river toad, ducks, or some other eco friendly project but sees no value in stopping the slaughter of pre born infants, then please judge that politician's belief system and his/her party and act accordingly.

Since the last several issues of the newsletter where I have spoken about the political situation here in Victoria, I have received a number of phone calls politely requesting that I refrain from political comment, or I would lose support for my work (both financial and otherwise). Well if that has to happen, then I know that I have done enough work and the Lord would like me to take a rest. If I allow one group to silence me then I leave myself wide open for all other matters.

Please!!! I am not asking anyone to judge another's soul; however, I am asking that you

judge on the matter of abortion. Abortion is the killing of another human person. Abortion almost paralyses those who are really sensitive. Abortion and abortion providers do not do anything for women which warrant praise.

Abortion harms us women and men and society. Abortion NEEDS TO BE JUDGED and to be found wanting. Abortion offers misguided pity. It offers a temporary relief from problem, with the promise of worse to come.

Abortion is a hatred of men and women and children. And I say these things from both experiences in my rooms but also from my personal experience of abortion.

I can say this because I have been there and have known what is behind the word abortion. It is not an imageless word, abortion means death of a defenceless one. Abortion needs to be judged.

I am not judging, I am telling it how it is. If it is considered as judging. So be it.

I have written these few words about judging because I hear about judging so much. Girls will invariably always speak about "going through with the abortion because they were afraid of "being judged" as someone who is

loose or who will become an unmarried mother and will be looked down upon. We need to be careful of our comments which can wound deeply.

We need to remember that an off the cuff comment can lead to a death. Yes let's judge abortion. That needs to be judged so that we can show its character as one which is death dealing.

Let's Judge the belief systems of those we put in office to serve us but who then serve another minority. Yes indeed lets judge abortion and confine those who support abortion to a place where no authority is to be found in them.

Please dear readers, especially those who live here in Victoria, when the elections come up in several months, get to know your candidates, ensure that your voice is heard, and if your candidate is anti life, please remember that we get the members we deserve.

Remember, we may not be able to change a person's heart about life matters but we can certainly help them change their jobs. Can't we?

"Abortion needs to be judged and to be found wanting."

Set up

Throughout these months of the RU486 debate, and abortion debate and the Senator Natasha Stott Despoja counselling Bill, I think I have been either set up or someone is trying to set me up. I have received an inordinate number of calls from young women and several male voices, asking me for medical type advice. A typical call might be to tell me that she has just last week had an abortion and could I give her some information about taking the contraceptive Pill and when can she re start her sex life. When I tell her that she should return to the abortion facility and speak to them there,

she hangs up. I have had many of these calls. This is new. I thankfully had spoken to another pro lifer who warned me to be careful about any medical type advice. So now I say nothing over the phone. Thanks Teresa Martin (Qld) for help in this area.

All this seems to say that this anti life war is hotting up and that people like me are in their sights. Please continue to pray for me and this work. It is important work. Because when a young girl/man is healed there is new human being in our community. She/he will bring great joy to those around her because she no longer hates herself.

Letters

Dear Anne,

We haven't seen you for so long! The family are all fit and healthy and loud. We pray daily for you and your clients and we hope this small donation will help fill the biscuit barrel.

God Bless

love from Jen, Tim and family (all 6 of them)

Ps The vegie garden is awash.

Thank you dear friends for your continued care. The radicchio should make the garden colourful too.

Love Anne.

Dear Anne,

Thanks for your latest newsletter. I was especially appreciative of the special emphasis you placed on the priests being seen as JESUS in the forgiveness of our sins. What came to mind was when Jesus stooped down to write in the sand.

Please find enclosed small donation.

God Bless

Dave.

Dear Dave thank you for comments and donation. Whenever, I begin to see that I am judging someone I do remember my own sin of abortion (name written in the sand) and this helps me to see and believe that if He can forgive me such a huge sinner, then He can forgive all others.

love and thanks....Anne

My Dear Sister in Christ, Anne,

Many thanks once again for turning out a wonderful issue of "Broken Branches."

As I pondered its contents I was turning over in my mind the wonderful work you are doing for

the Lord in ministering His healing love to the many wounded souls. Keep up your great work, Anne, for He needs souls like you to do His healing.

I liked the family photo featured in the newsletter. When I saw it I felt your work is really a family affair with the support of your husband and two sons.

Keep up your good work and you are in my prayers each day. With the love of the Lord Jesus

Your brother in Christ

Br. Con.

Thank you Br Con. Yes it at times really is a family affair. Each of the members (including my two boys in Perth) have in some way contributed to the work. I am blessed to have had their support.

Anne

Dear Anne,

I hope this finds you well, I enclose a small cheque towards expenses.

Within the next few weeks I hope to speak about you and your work at our Parish Masses. Could you please send me some of your brochures, especially the one that speaks about the many affects of abortion eg, depression, shame, guilt etc.

Be assured of my prayers.

Fr. Andrew F.

Thank you dear Fr Andrew, brochures on the way and thank you for support. Anne

Thank you darling Denise Den B. for 7 page letter. It was great reading.

Anne

Fatima Conference.

By the time you read this newsletter I will be in Portugal, in fact Fatima itself. I am attending World Pro Life Conference from 4-10 (inclusive) of October. I am so much looking forward to this conference, not only for the conference itself but because I need a little time out. I think I am hovering around the burnout area. This past year has been a difficult one, with a lot of work, the difficulties with Nicholas and our other son Lucas also had a very serious car accident 5 weeks ago. (Luc is the boy in the photo who graduated). He is OK now, his brand new (less than 3 days old and under 200kms) car was written off, and my husband and I attended the second accident of one of our children in 15 months. So I make no apologies for going to Fatima. I need a break. It's been really hard.

I have also been asked to participate in giving some workshops at the conference and have been asked if possible to stay longer after the conference to do some public speaking on post abortion counselling and healing. This I have agreed to do. Hopefully in the next issue of the newsletter I will be able to share with you all the news about the conference.

As I come to the end of this newsletter, I want to thank my dear friend from Armidale NSW for support. You know who you are. And to the several others who responded to the call for funds. Thanks Rafael & Helen. Catherine and anonymous ones.

It's getting much harder in this department; however, we still keep going. So please decide to support. As I said in 11 years I have never written one invoice. So I do need your help.

I don't want to apply for government funds I want to be free to speak about love, mercy, God, forgiveness, without fear. It is the spirit that is wounded with abortions and sexual abuse. And when the spirit is wounded then extraordinary measures have to be taken for healing to occur.

Please continue to pray for my family. Please keep us covered in prayer. When I got the phone call that Lucas was in an accident, I nearly gave it all away. However, I am glad that calm prevailed. It must have been the many prayers and Holy Masses offered for me and this family and work. Thank you dear Priest friends especially Fr John George (NSW).

Please continue to pray for, Melissa, Hamish, Carlie, Marie, Adam, Jodie, Andrea, Tori, Darren, Susie, Jack, Jacinta, Michaela, Jacquie, Maree, Cassie, James, Clare, Elissa, Michelle, Derek, Catherine, Louise, Helen, Sarah, Iris, Eve, Greg, Dianne, Liz, Joanne, Joy, Jenny, Phillipa, Kelly, Sally, Stephanie, Lenyce (new), Ted (new), Tara(new) and Gabby (new).



Anne Lastman

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