

BROKEN BRANCHES



John 15

A newsletter of *Victims of Abortion*

Issue 1

September, 1999.

Welcome to Anne's Page!

In this, my first attempt at a newsletter, I would like to introduce myself and the organisation "Victims of Abortion."

Victims of Abortion was born out of my involvement in prolife activities for the past three years. Most specifically my involvement in a counselling capacity of post aborted men and women.

Victims of Abortion is the result of the hundreds of calls and over 70 (mostly women but men are also beginning to call) individuals counselled, one on one, in most cases over long term. Whilst for a long time it was mainly believed that only women were traumatized by their abortion experience, I am beginning to suspect that we as a society are harbouring still unacknowledged groups of individuals wounded by the holocaust called "abortion". Indeed, to my own knowledge and in my own experience as a post abortion grief counsellor, fathers of aborted infants, siblings of aborted infants and grandparents of aborted infants are also victims of the abortion experience

From my understanding, the Post Abortion Syndrome experienced by some women who have aborted their infants is only beginning to be taken seriously, and this after twenty-five years of research! So it would be ambitious to think and then suggest that abortion trauma may be experienced by others especially those with a familial connection. Perhaps it will take another twenty-five years before the

acknowledgement is made that there are other hidden victims whose life has been depleted, saddened and changed due to that one decision to abort an unexpected pregnancy.

It is my hope that this newsletter will be well supported so that future ones will be of a more respectable size and bringing you news on Post Abortion Syndrome, studies as they are published, other general news in this area and most especially some personal stories from women who have been helped.

Abortion grief is unique. What makes this type of grief unique is twofold. First, the perceptions that abortion is a "minor procedure" and that there will be no ramifications attached to the abortion experience. Therefore, when a deep sadness, a general malaise, depression, weeping, withdrawal etc. occurs, the individual thinks and believes that these reactions are peculiar to themselves and that something must be wrong with them. "After all if a lot of people are having abortions, then it must be OK, so it must be me!" Is an oft-heard comment. This is unacknowledged grief.

Secondly, even though abortion is considered "minor" and a socially accepted procedure, any negative feelings about this procedure is frowned upon and therefore the woman (or male) is unable to process the experience as one of loss and be supported and accompanied through a journey filled with pain regret and sorrow.

Indeed what most people who abort a baby feel they have to do is behave as if nothing has happened. This is an absolute fallacy. Again unacknowledged grief. Women were and are not designed to harm their children they are designed to protect, to nurture and to love their baby. Had this not been the case humanity would have ceased to exist a long time ago. Harming the baby through abortion always leaves an indelible mark on the being of the man, woman and society. Irrespective of modern post civilised thinking, abortion always leaves behind irreparable damage. Indeed abortion always, and without exception, demands a reckoning. It is only the timing, which changes.

Denial of the reality of their feelings leads to behavioral changes in order to accommodate this unacknowledged grief. The once carefree individual becomes morose. Loses her (their) joy in life. Becomes preoccupied with self and self-pleasure in order to alleviate the nagging, persistent ache. Mother Teresa has said that “abortion is the greatest destroyer of peace” and indeed it is. The persistent heartache will not allow the woman or male, to enjoy life to the full. It places an invisible mourning barrier between the individual and all that should be pleasing to the heart and mind.

I have over the last two years spoken to hundreds of women, and counselled many men and women, and the single most repeated comment is “I couldn’t speak about my abortion to my family, boyfriend, girlfriend. They kept telling me to forget about it and get on with life. I can’t forget it. I can’t forget my baby. I can’t forget that I caused my baby’s death.” And perhaps the saddest comment of all “you’re the first person who has listened to my whole story.”

Post abortion grief is real. The grief may begin to be experienced prior to the abortion as the decision to abort is being made. It appears that a pervasive sadness can at times overcome the woman as she tries to force

herself not to think about her baby because of the difficulties in continuing this pregnancy. It may begin in the surgery or clinic as the woman waits her turn and finds she is reflecting on what she is about to do and perhaps even what might have been. I have counselled women who waited, hoped and prayed that their husband, boyfriend, friend, parent, would take them by the hand and tell them not to have the abortion. It may begin immediately following the abortion and her realisation of what she has done or it may begin as a result of some other crisis in her life. Grief following an abortion is real and like any type of grief it must be dealt with before progression to next stage of living is made. Without dealing with the grief accompanying that loss, the woman (and it appears, men also), cannot and will not give themselves permission to move on. This has become very obvious by the punishing lifestyles engaged in following the abortion.

It is my hope that as I continue to produce this newsletter, I can help to educate the readers to the reality of post abortion syndrome and to the reality of the suffering, which is attendant to the abortion. It is also my hope that as I, and we, continue on this journey we will not only help those wounded by their abortion experience but also in helping them that they might become the strongest voices against the scourge called abortion. Indeed the voices of the men and the women traumatized by abortion should be heard, so that the lie that abortion is “nothing” may be dispelled.

To be able to achieve some of our aims, that is, community education, one on one counselling, speaking wherever it is requested, writing for whoever will print it, I will need your help and support. Help in the form of donations to help offset the running costs of the office, stationery, travelling to and from, telephones, yellow pages, advertising and million little other expenses, and prayerful support for me and the people who seek help. There have been some

wonderful successes. *Moments of such Mercy that they can only have come from God.*

Over the ensuing issues I hope to speak about healing. I hope to share with you, extracts from “thank you” letters received and other relevant information.

I invite letters from readers and of course constructive comments will be gratefully appreciated. Remember that I am new at this newsletter business so no doubt I will make mistakes but I hope that with time even the mistakes will become polished silver.

An extract from Hanna’s story (with her permission): Hanna is married, has 4 children and is 46 years of age.

‘Thank you for your patience, your kindness, your persistence, your love. Thank you for helping me to see that I am not hated by God and by my baby. Thank you for helping me to believe that one day I will be able to see my baby and hold her. Thank you helping me to meet my daughter and to make her part of my life. It hasn’t been easy and there were times, as you know when I didn’t want to go on, but now I am glad I did because in many

ways you have given me permission to go on living. I don’t think it will ever be fully over or that I will ever forget but that is a good thing because I wouldn’t want to ever forget My beloved daughter Mary.’

Hanna’s story is one of many. I would like to suggest that it was me who healed her but of course this would not be true. The Lord God in His infinite Mercy did the healing I simply acted as an instrument. At times all that is needed is a listening heart and a hearing ear so as to be able to hear what is too painful to vocalize. It is in the depths of that which remains unsaid that the pain will be stubbornly fused. This is the point where Jesus enters and helps the individual to be freed from the tyranny of fear. Indeed He waits to be called. No sin is so great that He will refuse His Mercy.

God bless one and all, and thank you for your support.

Anne Lastman.

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Yes/no I would/would not like to be on your mailing list.

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