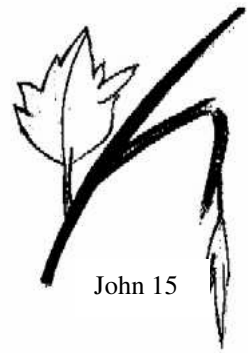


BROKEN BRANCHES



John 15

A newsletter of *Victims of Abortion*

Issue 2

October, 1999

Welcome to Anne's Page!

After last month's issue of Broken Branches, I was asked many times "Why that title?" Perhaps I'll spend a little time explaining the title and why.

Over the last three months, as I thought, mused, pondered whether or not to start a new initiative which would deal with post abortion trauma, I began first by answering the question "do I do it?" and following that (which took some time) what name? Again this took many hours of pondering and scribbling. Eventually one day as I sat under my native plum tree I remember thinking about the Gospel story (John 15) about vine and branches. I also remember that I couldn't move from the imagery, which was presenting. As I continued to meditate on this imagery I could almost see Jesus as the strong, vibrant, life giving vine and the branches surrounding Him.

The branches were not all green and healthy, indeed there were some that had withered and fallen to the ground. There were some that were vibrantly green and solidly attached, and there were others still that had broken and were barely hanging on. But these were stubbornly hanging on. There was something tenacious about these particular branches. Indeed they were almost fighting to remain attached to the vine. As I continued to think about these "Broken Branches" and their desire to hold on, I began to see that these branches were like "some" of the aborted men and women I had counselled over the past two and half years. Hence the name "Broken Branches"

Today, we know that Post Abortion Trauma affects a large number of men and women who have consented to an abortion (at times multiple abortions). Studies seem to indicate that up to 87% will be in some way affected by this procedure and out of these 87% there will be 15% who will suffer severe trauma and require long term mental health care.

In my counselling room I have encountered women who have become so paralyzed by their guilt that they are barely able to function on a normal day to day basis. So overpowered are they by guilt and horror over their action that they almost will themselves to psychologically, spiritually and physically shut down. To shut down in this manner then requires that all reserves of energy is utilized simply to keep going. It is no wonder then that there is a sense of malaise, depression, weeping, suicidal thinking and other self destructive and malignant behaviours. The horror of Post Abortion Syndrome is real.

Today the pro choice pro abortion lobby and its adherents speak about abortion in terms of "rights," and are quick to malign anyone who does not speak, think and feel like they do. These I would call the "withered branches" the branches that have completely separated themselves from the vine and have fallen to the ground. They are lifeless "for cut off from me you can do nothing" (Jn.15:5) These withered branches then seek to make peace with themselves by callous disregard for those who are in pain.

Whilst post abortion trauma and grief is monstrous, I believe that *maybe*, in the long term it can be converted into a blessing. And before anyone hurries to correct me or worse still throttle me please let me explain. Those men and women who experience trauma at the death (through abortion) of their child, and who come to the realization of the enormity and their responsibility for this action, are like the broken branches tenaciously holding on to the vine. These men and women through their pain come to understand that what they did was wrong, very wrong. In their sorrow they cling to the Vine. In their pain they seek help and

where help is available and God centred they are able to be slowly and at times painfully be reset or re grafted back onto the healthy life-giving vine. Back into the life and arms of Jesus.

This process of healing and re integration is slow and at times most difficult but those who persevere are rewarded with such Mercy that it could only have come from Him Who Is. Post Abortion Syndrome will always be monstrous because there is much suffering for the individual and those close to him/her but perhaps this is good because it can be the spirit's cry for help. Post Abortion Syndrome causes pain, but we know that pain is a warning sign that something is amiss. If we are careful to investigate any pain felt by the physical body to ensure that nothing is amiss, surely the pain of PAS can be seen as a serious warning that something is amiss with the Spirit. "I have written my law on your hearts" (Jer.31: 34) Perhaps Post Abortion Trauma is the cry of the Spirit calling for attention to the break inflicted on its design. Maybe this is a sign that the radar to God has not been completely lost and that the sense of good and evil is still present. Perhaps in the despair that is felt by those experiencing post abortion grief God's forgiveness is more readily visible and experienced. Perhaps post abortion grief is the call of God for His child to return. He extends His love and Mercy and perhaps in the midst of pain and confusion the sinner is better able to hear the call and return to the Father. Perhaps like the story of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) it is only in total despair that the son/daughter is able to turn towards the Father who has been looking for him/her and goes to meet him/her while they are still far (not necessarily in kilometres). Perhaps Post Abortion Syndrome is the bumpy road back home into the Father's arms. Perhaps.....

I take this opportunity to thank those who responded to my call for help in meeting current office expenses. I *really* appreciate your prompt response, however, I still have expenses, which could not be covered, and any help in this area will be truly appreciated. Also your prayers and spiritual support is needed because there are times when I am sure that the enemy is prowling nearby.

May the Lord Bless and Keep you.

Anne Lastman,
Founder- Victims of Abortion.

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Victims of Abortion
National Office
PO Box 6094, Vermont Sth, Vic, 3133.
Ph/Fax: (03) 9887 7669 Mobile: 0408 175 033

