

A newsletter of *Victims of Abortion*

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

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BROKEN BRANCHES

A happy and holy year I wish to all my readers. I have missed you!!

Welcome to this New Year and lets hope that the Lord blesses each of us in our endeavours, whatever they may be, and that together we can work towards a new civilisation of life and love. It is probably a really hard task, and one, which will keep challenging us, however, it is one that demands a response because unless we do respond then surely the civilisation as we know it cannot continue. More and more we witness that newer and more subtle forms of violence permeate our society. A violence, which renders us almost defenceless and from which spring our terrible fears.

There are many fears, which beset us today. The fear of terrorism, the fear of violence against ourselves or those we love. The fear of joblessness. The fear of failure. The fear of uselessness. Even the fears of becoming so vulnerable that our very lives are threatened. We live in a state of fear. However I also contend that we (collectively) experience an unnamed fear. A fear which cannot even be enunciated yet its effects assail our very beings. That is a fear of silence because in our silence then we would need to hear an echo of what we have lost. Silence brings with it a time of reflection and introspection, and this is something which is assiduously avoided. The young have a need to always be plugged into "noise." the TV has to be switched on for companionship (noise). The music has to be incomprehensible "noise" with its ear splitting monotonous "thump thump." I am always reminded that noise surrounds us on all sides and this noise is needed so that "we" do not have to think too much about what is happening. I have a sneaking suspicion that the "noise" which surrounds us does violence to our spirit by alienating us from our Source of Peace. God. Lets pray for the gift of silence so that we can hear what lips do not speak. We can hear beyond the "thumped" noise called music. And above all we can hear the call of those who weep and mourn. Let us pray this year for a huge inflow of grace and peace. *Some hesed would be nice.*

Recent Article.

In a recent article, which I read, emanating from America, it said that after a decade of research evaluating abortion's effects is still difficult. As I read this article I was horrified at the ease with which certain figures were uttered and printed. This article said that figures coming form the A. Guttmacher survey carried out in America elicited results that 1.31 million woman had



John 15

had abortions in the year 2000, which, according to this report, is lower than the 1.6 million abortions YEARLY in the early 1990's. Further, it reported that at this rate 35% American women will have had an abortion by the time that they reach the age of 45. It further reported (according to a certain Dr Coleman) that people who decide to have an abortion are comfortable with it, and generally do not have a problem with it. The most interesting comment by her in this piece of literature was that "at this point in the understanding of the literature...are not harmed psychologically." However this Doctor Coleman does concede that "studies show that 10% of women who have abortions do have problems." So here we have researchers still saying (as they did 20 years ago and more) that a certain percentage, (I would dispute the percentage) will suffer psychological sequelae following their procedure.

OK. So let's work with the 10%, which seems to be readily accepted figure of women who will be affected by their procedure. 10% of approximately 50 Million abortions per year (globally) leaves in my reckoning 5 million women ANNUALLY who will be left traumatised by their experience of abortion. Now let's multiply this by 20 years and we will have quite a substantial number (100 Million) of debilitated women. But I suppose that so long as the abortion lobby is satisfied that women have a "right" to free abortion when and how many times they desire it, then the fact that a large number of their "sisters" are wounded does not matter. What matters is all manner of "reproductive rights"

It is amazing that women will accept anything offered to them so long as it comes from someone who is "loud and insistent" and possibly of the same gender. I wonder if male physicians et. al. would recommend to their peers a self-harming procedure just so that it is enshrined in law. I don't think they would be foolish enough and I don't think males would be foolish enough to listen to something, which innately they know to be harmful to themselves and their design.

Further on in this article Dr Nancy Russo well known so called abortion and other women's issues researcher makes a startling comment. Indeed this comment confirms what I have just said above, she says "as far as I am concerned, whether or not an abortion creates psychological difficulties is not relevant...it means you give proper informed consent and you deal with it."

As far as I can see there are many problems with the comment. First, as far as she is concerned she doesn't care whether abortions create psychological difficulties either short term or long term and this seems to be the norm of the pro-choice brigade. **They don't care.** As far as these people are concerned abortion per se is not the agenda because if it was, seeing 10% of their sisters remain life long wounded by their experience, would ultimately say to them that there is something intrinsically wrong with a procedure.

A second point to the above comment by Ms Russo "it means you give proper informed consent and you deal with it." Obviously Ms Russo does

her research from her ivory tower of chrome and glass because if she saw some of the women that I see and speak to, then she would know that it is impossible to give informed consent to an abortion. It's a crisis time and the demand for informed consent is to be made during the crisis. Many a call I receive on a weekly basis requesting an appointment for an abortion. Now this is interesting because In the Yellow Pages I am listed as *Victims of Abortion Trauma Counselling & Info. Services* This in itself should tell the person ringing for an appointment that I deal with "victims" of abortion. Yet I know, especially as I talk to them, that they have not seen the name, they have just seen a number and rang. (they are in crisis). Further, as I speak to them and engage them in dialogue as to why the need for an abortion, the feeling is that they do not know what an abortion is, what happens and what developmental stage their child is at. They are calling because they are made to and are requesting a procedure. During the crisis it must remain a "procedure" rather than a "baby" because procedures are acceptable surgery.

By this stage the person usually hangs up on me, which means that they do not want to know what stage their child is at. There is a barrier placed there so that no more information can filter through., at least for now. Now I know that this person, even if she were to sign an informed consent form, would not know what informed consent was/is and certainly cannot make informed decision and therefore give informed consent. Most often these people that I speak to who request an appointment for an abortion are forced, urged, by someone else (surprisingly husbands play a large part as do boyfriends and mothers-fathers are never mentioned) therefore with this pressure how can an informed decision be made and therefore informed consent be given when there is so much "matter" in the background. Informed consent to my way of thinking is having the freedom and time and peace to weigh a decision. Look at all possibilities available and then deciding the best option. An abortion decision is never made under these conditions. It is made at a time when the woman/girl is most distraught. Most anxious and most fearful. Abortion is not considered otherwise.

Possibly one of the biggest "jokes" coming out of the research on after effects of abortion must be the conclusion reached by a Dr Major following her study. She concluded that "72% were satisfied with their decision to abort and 69% said that they would make the same decision if they had to do it over again. In addition 72% said ***THE ABORTION WAS OF MORE BENEFIT THAN HARM AND 80% REPORT NO DEPRESSION. IN ADDITION SELF ESTEEM MEASURES ROSE FOR MANY WOMEN POST ABORTION---***(My italics). Indeed, to even suggest an increase in self esteem measures post abortion appears hollow and laughable.

Self-esteem is the measure by which a self (individual) understands its own worth, and whilst it is developed over lifetime, the blue print for an individual's self esteem is laid down beginning in early life. Life events and decisions then either increase or decrease the measure. Whilst the belief is

that self-esteem does not fluctuate and remains stable, it is my contention that it can and does increase or decrease according to decisions and evaluations made. In a life filled with suffering and bad decisions the self-esteem diminishes.

An abortion decision is always a decision which abruptly terminates something begun. Whether by choice or forced choice it is a decision which falls outside of the realm of normal day to day decision making and experiences, and as such outside of the realm of esteem enhancing choices. Enough of these esteem diminishing “choices” in a woman’s life and its no wonder that the self-esteem of someone suffering severe post abortion grief is much depleted. It is disadvantageous, I think, for a researcher to suggest that a woman will have her self-esteem increase by her decision to terminate the life of her baby. I would speculate on why the response was given. My suspicion is that if the survey was conducted immediately following the abortion, then if this is the situation, what the response referred to was possibly the relief felt (which can last for some time) that the difficulties present in the person’s life (if the pregnancy was to continue) were gone. Relief is very much different than an enhanced self-esteem. Relief is temporary. If someone who had an abortion said that their self-esteem had markedly increased because they made that decision I would be deeply worried for that person. The next thing I would begin to look out for is self-wounding.

I can also argue with the above researcher who says that time does diminish the grief of an abortion. Absolutely not. What time does do is to space the grief more sparingly. The depth of the grief remains, but the remembering is given rest periods. How do I know? I have observed the grief of a 67-year-old woman as she remembered her abortion 38 years earlier. The grief of a 59 year old woman as she remembered her abortion 43 years earlier. The grief of a 57 year old woman as she remembered her abortion 20 years earlier. The grief of a 68 year old woman as she remembers the exact words she used to justify her need for the abortion and how these words now “mock” her (her words).

Perhaps the researchers speak to only those who respond to their call for subjects. However, to then suggest that the responses of these willing subjects are an indicator of overall thoughts and satisfaction is to mislead. We cannot know what long term psychological response will be, though from those older women that I have seen (limited number) it does not look good.

One of the many real deep fears that are spoken of by the older type of woman who has aborted her child is the fear of her own death. It is a fear that at times is gripping and in the many sessions speaking about this fear it transpires that the fear is related to “what I did” “What if my baby/babies

hate me” “I know God hates me and I am afraid to come face to face with Him” “He could never possibly forgive my kind of sin”

The researchers who blithely pronounce findings of “raised self esteem” following an abortion decision, surely are not looking to self esteem of the woman whose thought is now turned towards the end rather than the beginning or middle of life. The beginning and middle have passed, now there is more important work to be done...Reflection, and it is in the doing of this work (a particularly human work) that the memories and grief and fear are found. Ideas about having made “good” decisions about an abortion are changed to ideas “did I make a right decision at that time. What if I had had that baby? Where might I have been now? “What would he/she be like?” What might my life have been like?” “I have missed her/him everyday since then” These are some of the questions of the older woman who has aborted. Perhaps researchers do not believe that these women are important, but these are the ones who can speak about the true nature of an abortion decision because they have lived with the decision for a long time and have not found it entirely liberating or self-enhancing or satisfying.

CHILD ABUSE IN AUSTRALIA

In a recent (January 24, 2004-*The Age*) Federal Govt. Report on child abuse in Australia it was found that child abuse in the general community has “surged by more than 60,000 in the past year to just under 200,000.” Why am I not surprised? Why would anyone be surprised at such figures? This is the violence that I spoke about at the beginning of the newsletter. Violence is on the increase. The children abused are getting younger and younger and the abuse against them is more intense. Why so?

Perhaps its important to first remember that child abuse, as with spousal abuse has always existed, we have invented nothing new. However what we have invented are more sophisticated methods of abuse. Or perhaps more brutality.

Sexual abuse has been known to be in existence since the year dot. Children have always been vulnerable and dependent upon others for their welfare. Of course the “significant others” have not always been everything they should have been. When parents abuse their children whether sexually or physically or mentally or emotionally, more than the abuse happens. Great losses are also sustained. The loss of trust, of love, of protection, of sense of being valued (loss of self esteem) loss and confusion of what it means to love and loss of learning and knowledge of “who I am” Where specifically there is sexual abuse the natural order has been violently disturbed, so there is an added loss of “someone who is my role model, my strength. Someone who taught me how to behave with someone of the opposite gender. Someone who loved me strongly” (Jennie, 42) A child growing up with such sorrow and confusion cannot achieve or know fullness of life.

More and more as I speak to abortive women I am encountering those who have been abused in all manner and the similarity amongst them all is that the abuse in their lives had changed all possibility of ever knowing what it means to be loved. Really loved. Always the love that they have known, and know, is conditioned to provisos.

Sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse of children occurs when the abuser cannot or has not the skills to cope with life and resorts to primitive responses in order to achieve a desired effect. And we should not be surprised at the enormous increase in abuse because abuse of children begins with the abuse of women who bear the children. Abuse of children begins when other children are dispatched whilst still in the womb. Abuse of children begins when children hear that in utero children if unwanted can easily be disposed of. Abuse of children begins when mothers and fathers cannot cope with the tensions and angers in their lives. The guilt, the shame, the lack of familial support contributes to stretched limits and the children are scapegoats. Abuse of children occurs because the ever-present babysitter (television) continually feeds them a diet of bad offerings.

Sexual abuse of children need not necessarily begin with a familiar person but what is offered visually to violate the child's innocence. Today we have unprecedented rampant sexuality amongst the young ones. Abortions at such young ages as 13 years. Active sexual activity at younger still. This is also abuse of children. They have been deprived of what naturally is their right to life, laughter, peace, tranquillity to negotiate their developmental stages in a state of peace and at their own pace. A constant diet of visual violence distorts an understanding of what it means to be human. A steady stream of adult sexual imagery ingested by children (television/videos/films) leads to their own confusion about the nature of things. **This is violence done to their innocence.** Inappropriate Sex Education programs delivered to children who should not be participants in these cause further damage. The type of violence to children is growing ever wider and more disturbing and sinister.

Child abuse in Australia is increasing. So is drug abuse by children. Alcohol abuse by children (look at the images coming from telecast images of schoolies week) is increasing. Abortions are done on young bodies. Abandonment of children is increasing. This in itself is a terrible form of abuse because every child needs to know that it is wanted and needed and cared for. Substance abuse in the very young. Yes it could be peer pressure. Its easy to hide behind buzz words, like peer pressure, however, my suspicion is that children feel a sense of abandonment and unwanted ness and a sense that parents are busy elsewhere and so its better to be oblivious than to acknowledge that "I, their kid am not important." That is child abuse.

Child abuse is the robbing of a child of its childhood irrespective of how this is done, whether by sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, abandonment or unwanted ness and a large number of the children who wander the streets are just that, uncared for and abused.

A Special Letter received.

Dear Anne,

I am writing to thank you for your continued support over the past few months. I have just finished year eleven and recently I was doing an assignment for Religious Education, it was concerning life issues. One of the tasks we had to complete was an article on Abortion. The girl I was working with and myself decided we would search the net for information, the first web site we found, confronted us with very graphic, shocking images, that have remained with me and probably always will. They depicted many images of aborted children at various stages in their development, from two weeks old all the way up to thirty-three weeks old.

I had always understood the word 'abortion' but I never understood the brutality of the action. I understood that foetuses were discarded, but now I know that it is an act of fierce and violent murder against a human life, a child.

At the same time of this incident, my school was holding a Pilgrimage to India in which I was selected to be a part of. This is a country riddled with what the Westerner sees as injustices to the Human Life. Each year many thousands of children are aborted particularly females. If the family is too poor to abort they either do backyard abortions or wait till the child is born and then abandon it. I come from a family of nine children. I thought that when I went to India this would be relatively normal. I was shocked to find that it was extremely abnormal. India at the moment is trying to phase in the same one-child policy that is found in China. The size of my family was not the only thing that was different to the Indian ideals, I am the third of six girls, with the last three children, boys. Everyone kept asking me why my parents had so many female children, I kept on trying to explain to them that there is never a conscious decision the parents make on the sex of the child. What I later found out and was quite disturbed by, was they were actually asking why my parents had not aborted all of the female children.

I saw many things I didn't agree with, and many injustices against human life. But in the chaos of India, and through the people I met who were doing wonders to keep life sacred, I found myself. These people, as did you Anne, showed me that my contribution to life as little as it may be, is a contribution, and does make a difference. If each person made a small contribution to life in some way, maybe we would see that these web sites showing aborted children, would not be needed to educate people about the sanctity of life, maybe their action would illustrate this.

Thankyou once again Anne,

Ellen (17 years)

A big 'thank you' to you Ellen for your words and insight. And I am glad for young people like you and the rest of your siblings.....Anne

As I conclude this first issue of *Broken Branches* 2004 I need to say that I look forward to being with you this coming year. There is humungous load of work to be done to save the children, protect the children and heal the children. However, this cannot be done to the exclusion of their mothers and fathers. Contrary to opinion abortive mothers and fathers do not make better parents because the children they have are "wanted" but studies appear to show that the wantedness or unwantedness factor actually causes greater losses.

Men and women who have an unresolved abortion history take this history into their marriages and their child bearing. Unresolved abortion history causes rememberances and guilt and shame and tears and depression and debilitating syndromes. Men and women who take an abortion history into their marriage begin with a huge handicap. With the number of abortions carried out in Australia and world wide on an annual basis, it is not surprising the marriage breakdown. Its not surprising the substance abuse. Its not surprising the child abuses and its not surprising the unknown fear which we live with.

I appreciate that you may think that this has been a heavy issue but during the very small break that I had this year I met and spoke to several girls who really showed me that abuse of the very young is bigger problem than we care to believe and that an abortion really is just something else that happened "to me Anne. Its just one more thing"

Please support this work that I do. Its difficult at times but as one of my current girls said recently "you have cared for us. It's a lot you've done." I need your support, the biscuit tin is sitting very lonely.

Please pray for Amy (new) Stephanie (new) Donna, Kerrie, Ann, Jason, Sally, Susan, Melissa, Samantha, Marie, Margaret, Judy, Sarah, Emily, Joanne, Vanessa, Angela, Julia (NSW) Darrin, Helen (not abort-ill).

May the Lord Bless and keep you.



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