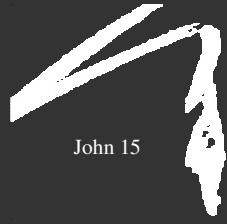


BROKEN BRANCHES

Issue 71

Aug/Sept 2009



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

Teddy Love Club

One morning recently, as I was preparing breakfast, I saw an article on television which caught my interest and brought me to a standstill.

It was an interview about the “The Teddy Love Club” an organisation developed to support parents who have lost an infant before birth. An infant whom they had expected to take home but who died unexpectedly and the parents were left grieved at the loss. This organisation provides support in the loss and a “Teddy Bear” (given the infants name) so that the parents can walk out of the hospital carrying “something” rather than nothing or with empty arms. They went in pregnant with a baby or their son or daughter and came out empty so in order to overcome the empty arms feeling which never goes away, they carry a Teddy Bear.

This story brightened my heart, yet at the same time I couldn't help thinking how different these bereaved parents are treated. Their grief is acknowledged and ways devised in order to help them begin to express their grief. Something is done to acknowledge their loss and how very important **is** that loss. Yet for the post abortive man or woman? Silence....

For the post abortive man/woman the denial begins with “it wasn't a real baby” (real baby? What was it for goodness sake?) “it was on a “bunch of cells melded together” “ It was not identifiably a baby”

What was it when at less than three weeks there is a heartbeat? All the genetic material to make this little boy or girl the wonderful human being that it is now and will always be? What is it if not a fully human being, created and designed unlike another?

Whilst I was left in tears listening to the story of the Teddy

Love Club, I wept more for those millions of babies who will remain unacknowledged at least on this earth. I wept for the “gifts” God has given to this humanity but were returned “unopened” I wept for the “Teddies” which will never be named or given.

Heather's Story

Continued....

The flood of negative feedback to Heather's story has left me stunned and sad and it reminded me of several of my past girls, (Michelle, Catherine, Hanna, Jane, Chris, Lisa, Sophia and others) who I saw for quite a time several years ago and who were also sexually abused as a children and whose story also resulted in lots of cancellations of newsletter and threatened closure of my office because support dwindled to almost nil.

Sexual abuse especially of the incest variety always touches people in a place of unease and pain. It is the last remaining taboo. Yet it must be visited because the suffering is real and lifelong and this abuse sets up the groundwork for other self destructive life events including abortion and multiple abortions (up to 11 abortions one of the women), prostitution, addictions, multiple relationships, serial broken relationships, and substance abuse et al.

The suffering of the abused woman/girl/male must be spoken about because she otherwise remains alone both at the time of the experiences and throughout life.

Over a period of counselling much is delicately, gently, and with deep humanity explored. Many losses discussed and wept over (together). Because sexual abuse means multiple losses which include the Loss of father and fathering,

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mother and mothering, loss of near relatives whom the person loves/ loved and to whom she couldn't turn to for help.

It means loss of family life "like everyone else has." Loss of right to happiness. Loss of security. Loss of normal and happy, secure unencumbered childhood, loss of trust, which is inherent and learned by a child as the child learns to believe and love those who nurture and protect him/her. Loss of boundaries, (one of the biggest losses leading to adult life self abuse). The loss of boundaries is difficult to explain but it means that no part of his/her life was treated as private and or sacred including his/her body and this loss of boundaries leads to later lack of knowledge of right and wrong. A deep ontological loneliness leading to self isolation. At times multiple personality disorder, where the only people to be trusted are those "created" in his/her mind. The losses are manifold. All in all it's a terrible *assault on and loss of innocence which can never be recovered.*

Sexual abuse also contributes to girl/woman walking around with an invisible sign saying "beat me". "Abuse me." "Use me." Because you can. "Beat me;" I have no one to care for me. Not even me.

"Beat me" because everyone else has done so. It is this invisible sign which contributes to personal disregard for safety and protection and in placing oneself in provocative and dangerous situations.

Many losses are suffered by those sexually abused and slowly *one loss needs* to be recovered in order for a healing to begin, and that loss is the looking for and finding and then beginning to like and love that little girl/boy within the inner being who survived through all the pain, humiliation, abandonment and losses.

Finding this hurt child can be difficult because most often she sits hunched up in a dark corner in the recesses of her mind. She/he sits in terror.

But most importantly what helps in the recovery and what I am slowly working towards with Heather, is to help her and the others to fall in love with their own inner little girl, the child who was abused and hurt and with no one to comfort and protect her. To love this little child who is a brave

survivor and not a worthless being (which is the self belief of the sexually abused).

This little girl who could not process the events and when she did so processed them as a frightened confused child, and which would be later accessed and interpreted by the adult in a manner not conducive to healthy emotional life. It is in the loving of this inner child, in the loving of that little courageous girl that we return to her, her rightful needs to fulfil her mandate to grow.

There can be no movement forward whilst the emotional life remains stuck at the abuse age (childhood age). The emotional life of a child in the body of an adult.

This adult then needs to make sense of the awful things that have happened to him/her because without meaning making or sense making for him/her suffering it is difficult for her to "mature".

The love and work needed to reach the "meaning making" is intense but important, otherwise what happened to him/her is accepted because it has happened, but not why it happened. There is a sense of terrible injustice when no meaning can be found for a cruelty. Coming to a point of some sense and be able to live with that meaning enables him/her to begin to look forward rather than backwards.

Among other things it was in the depriving of the child's inner being of love, security, trust and honouring of his/her innocence which wounds most deeply and which is felt most deeply, and leaves the individual with a sense of being emotionless, divided and alone. Always still looking for that sense of being loved and wanted and protected. Having come to this understanding of the nature of the losses, we begin our work of "going home" (rebuilding where there are losses).

The rest of the journey home is very very slow but positive and beautiful and filled with eagerness.

Heather, Lisa, Janna, Michelle, Cathy, et al. are not victims though they can be seen and treated as such, and even their experiences and sufferings not believed and or validated. But they are the hidden heroes of our day. They continue, where it would have been easier to end it all.

They are the amazing witnesses to the indomitable human spirit. To not believe their story, or to despise their story or to even refuse to hear what they are saying, because it is too unpleasant and too “dirty” and too “disgusting” is to abuse that inner child and so too the woman (or man) of today.

I have been called “gullible” for believing Heather’s horror story and “disgusting” for having printed the story but I thank God for this grace because this time the person who comes to me is believed and not like the first time where she wasn’t believed, protected or supported through the pain.

Through my own sinfulness (abortions) and then forgiveness, God has given me the grace to be present to someone who is hurting whether the hurt is abortion or sexual abuse or other abuse related. I consider it an honour to share the much pained life of these lovely but wounded and hurting people even if it means that many more readers will cancel their support of me, as they have done so again this time.

Louise’s Story

July 25th 1968!

Do any readers remember the event? Pope Paul VI encyclical *Humane Vitae* on God’s wise design, for man and woman’s conjugal love in marriage and the regulation of birth control made headlines around the world.

I was in my twenties and ignorant and lacking in knowledge about Church teachings, as well as being immature. This led to confusion for me about contraception.

Conflicting views, opinions, media hype, confused clergy, dissent and common talk inevitably influenced my decision to use the “pill” and later an IUD. Ignorance is not bliss!

Approximately 2 years later I did read *Humane Vitae* and was horrified to learn that the pill and IUD could act as an abortifacient. After having the IUD removed and going to confession, I felt the urge to educate myself about the Church teachings on such issues. Over the years I have frequently wondered/worried if I had inadvertently aborted a baby by contracepting.

A couple of weeks before this past Easter (2009), I found myself in a position, with other people, of having to defend

God’s unfathomable love and Mercy with regard to where babies (who have been aborted or miscarried) go after death. I believe what the Catholic Church teaches about unbaptised babies but always pray with faith and hope in God’s love; because whilst God has bound our salvation to the Sacrament of Baptism, He Himself is not bound by this Sacrament (see CCC 1261).

On Good Friday of this past Easter (2009) for a short time I was on counselling work. I received a phone call from a lady whose voice was very shaky. She was asking for medical advice because she had just had an abortion 3 weeks earlier. After advising her to consult her doctor, I enquired how she was coping since the abortion. Her shaky voice turned to sobbing, saying she felt like a murderer and could hear her dead baby crying ever since the abortion. Still sobbing she continued “and last night I fell on my knees and begged my baby’s forgiveness”

Carefully taking in what she had relayed to me, I realised this was no coincidence that she’d rung on Good Friday and I made a point of mentioning this to her. She told me she was of the Anglican faith.

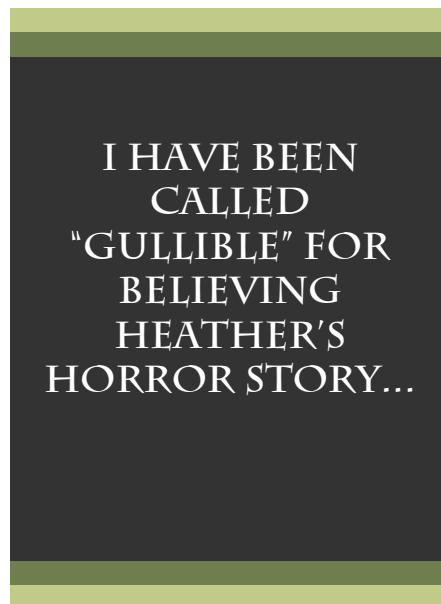
Trying to console her, I felt compelled to say to her that as a Catholic I believed that her innocent baby was in the loving arms of Jesus. She felt a great relief knowing this was possible, and said it gave her hope and calmed her down. She also desired to see a priest/pastor. We talked for a long time.

That morning of Good Friday I had begun what is known in the Catholic Church a Divine Mercy Novena which consists of praying for all sinners for 9 days followed by confession on the 9th day which is the official feast day “Divine Mercy Sunday” I did go to confession and mentioned again my sin of contraception (many years earlier) and also adding that due to my contraception I may have inadvertently aborted a baby.

“The Dream”

Three days later, I had a dream in colour. I found myself arising from my bed and suddenly I miscarried a baby who looked damaged or not fully formed but still attached to the umbilical cord. At the same time a distressed voice called from within me “mother, mother, mother”

As I turned, the miscarriage disappeared and my arms were stretched out in front of me with my hands cupped together



palms upwards. Suddenly a little baby boy with lots of black hair, wrapped in a rug and sleeping very peacefully appeared in my extended arms, his beautiful head resting in my cupped hands. I felt very peaceful. This only lasted an instant. When I woke up I began to think maybe I should stop doing this type of work (pro life counselling) "it's getting to me"

The next two days I clearly remembered the dream and wondered what it meant. The third night I awoke in the early hours of the morning feeling an interior peace; still thinking about the dream, I fell asleep for one more hour. On awakening the interior peace was stronger and permeated my bedroom as well. Then I remembered the phone call on Good Friday; how I'd felt compelled to console the caller and say "I believe your innocent baby is in the loving arms of Jesus", as well as my words to the priest in confession on Divine Mercy Sunday "Father I may have inadvertently aborted a baby"

I believe that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, enlightened me with the knowledge that the miscarried baby in my dream and the baby I held was my own. That I had indeed "aborted through contracepting" all those many years ago, but my baby was whole and peaceful.

The interior peace God gave me, made me aware this was His loving way of showing me He had heard my lamenting for many years about "not knowing." The Holy Spirit gently gave me knowledge of the truth as He bathed me in His unfathomable Love and Mercy
What a Loving Father we have in heaven. All praise glory and honour to the loving Father, Merciful Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Louise

Yes I have named my baby boy Joseph Michael.

Thank you Louise, indeed it is a beautiful story and there are many elements which I have heard spoken of by my "girls".

I have printed this story because it is uplifting and Louise is closely known to me and her experience of seeing her child is an experience which I have also had and many of my girls have also.

God is Merciful and we do have a loving Father in heaven, if only we would accept His gift of love and forgiveness.

It is the acceptance of this that some women find difficult and at times refuse to accept it. It is their understanding that they are unworthy to be forgiven and cannot be forgiven, and their sin is too big to be forgiven. I love being able to say to them that Jesus' sacrifice was greater than any sin they could commit, but simply to accept the love and forgiveness.

Here is the part of my counselling work which I love most being able to help them understand and believe that they are loved by God and their baby and that one day they will

be able to hold and "mother" that infant who is very much loved and valued. Anne

Equality – Please explain.

Women want something called 'equality' with men.
That intangible word – equality!

What does it mean?

Apparently, we've 'fought' for this 'equality'.

We now have powerful careers.

Wow – now some men even do the dishes!

Is that equality?

Have we now achieved equality?

Are we now satisfied? No.

We compete with men over our 'rights'

We fight for and echo the chant of some historical notion.

"We want equality!"

But I don't know what it means

Do you?

I beg to ask - what is equality?

For, I'm confused.

Do we want to think and act like men?

Do we want to be men?

Are we so jealous of men that we want to be them?

God help us if we do!

Do we actually know what we are 'fighting for'?

I beg to ask

In our 'enlightened state' of equality.

Where are the mothers?

Where are the children?

Where are those precious people on earth?

Where are they in the equation of equality?

Where is the respect for us?

Equality is now fighting for our right to be a mother

Not fighting for the right to be like man!

We never can be!

We were never meant to be.

And why would we ever want to be?

We were meant to be mothers to our children.

Can you tell me? And please explain in detail.

What is it that you mean when you say - you want - equality?

I really need to know. I'd love to hear what you say.

But sadly, I don't think you can tell me.

What is it that you mean? When you say you want and even 'demand' equality?

"Jenny"

Breast Cancer

This week I had the task of speaking gently to a young woman (19 years, Janet) and telling her that she must be ever vigilant in her breast self examination now that she has had her second abortion.

As I watched her eyes her pain was very obvious.

I explained how these two abortions have now placed her in higher risk group for breast cancer and this is always so painful to note because it is something which they had not even considered. In this particular case I am more concerned because there already exists breast cancer in her immediate family.

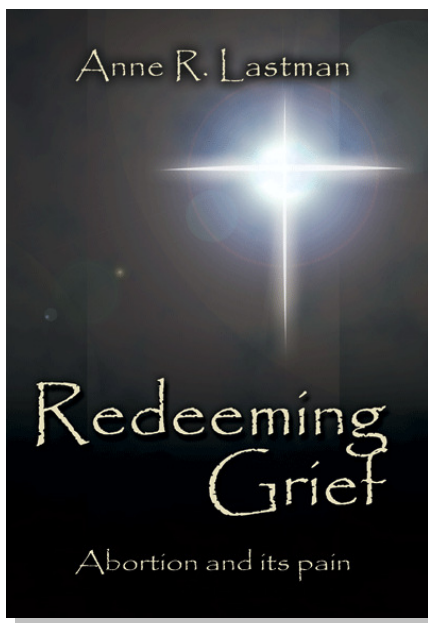
Today we are seeing so much breast cancer in very young women. We have seen a marked rise in breast cancers, uterine cancers, and ovarian cancers and yet the warnings about the dangers of abortion have not been sounded loud and clear. What does it take!!!

If all the research into the abortion/breast cancer connection is right then this is a cancer which need not have candidates especially if the cancer councils and media forewarned of the dangers.

Prof. Joel Brind, Dr Angela Lanfranchi, Dr H. Howe, Dr Janet Daling, Dr M Pike and many more studies have clearly indicated a abortion/breast cancer connection. These writings can be available from internet and even libraries, yet again these studies are not heralded as important. What is wrong with society that grieves the loss of young women dying of breast cancer and yet not wishes to look at all the possibilities of why this is happening?

What is the lunacy? Except perhaps the reason being that abortion is touted as a "rights" issue and as a "right" and "legal" then it must be something good.

I have been asked "Anne is it the



Redeeming Grief is a reflection of and study of abortion grief, which is experienced by some women who choose to undergo this elective procedure. These reflections are the result of listening to over 1000 personal stories and listening to the expressions used by the women as they spoke about their decision to abort the life of their child. These reflections then attempt to reconstruct the meaning that this procedure has had for the aborting woman and how this one procedure has been the catalyst for life changes.

Redeeming Grief looks at abortion trauma and grief from the spiritual and the psychological perspective. Its influences on the individuals involved and society. It is hoped that the language used is reader friendly and the concepts (both spiritual and psychological) are also reader friendly.

AUD\$29.95 (inc GST)

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To order your copy of Redeeming Grief, please complete this order form, detach, and send with Cash, Cheque or Money Order to:

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same result with a miscarriage?" It appears not.

This is my understanding of the connection.

It is believed that pregnancy changes the structure of a woman's breast in preparation for making milk for the baby. Prior to pregnancy the cells are immature, but the influx of oestrogen and other hormones changes the breasts.

Abortion actually interrupts the changing process leaving the breast vulnerable to carcinogens.

It is thought that when there is a miscarriage the body actually takes care of the breast (low oestradiol levels) whilst an abortion interferes with the processes (differentiation) during high levels of oestradiol.

It is interesting that even Planned Parenthood Federation of America (1994) – the largest abortion provider in the world has said "interruption during the first trimester of a first pregnancy causes a cessation of cell differentiation, which may result in subsequent increase in the risk of cancerous growth in these tissues."

Today there are a multitude of studies showing the link between abortion and breast cancer, yet those entering the abortuary are not told (in their supposed pre abortion counselling) that this procedure which they are to undergo will increase their risk of breast cancer.

This I believe is negligent. This information should be made available to those who have a known familial breast cancer link. It should be made known and the possibility stressed.

Of course this does not mean that all breast cancer sufferers have had abortions, and perhaps this is the fear of the "right people" making "right noises" about the breast cancer/abortion connection. However, this fear could be overcome by stressing that this is not a judgement but a precaution or protection for all women. These minor fears could be easily overcome and the possibility of giving the woman facing an abortion the option not to proceed, especially with her known history of cancer in her immediate family.

We need to make more loud noises in this area. We need to make available the information to all women of childbearing age. We need to say to them "please be aware that not only is your baby dying but you are placing yourself at an increased risk of developing breast cancer. It is serious."

As I watched Janet's eyes cloud with pain and fear I had to quietly pray and hope that this would not be so with her. Please keep her and all who have abortions and especially

multiple abortions covered in prayer. Remember every day there are thousands upon thousands babies aborted and mothers acceding to this terrible experience.

Please pray daily for the Lord to be merciful to those who have aborted on this day and for Him to receive into heavenly home the beautiful gift that He had sent to this mother and father and who refused the "gift".

Please pray also that He will guide the steps of these aborting parents and lead them to understand exactly what it is that they have done and when this has been understood to seek reconciliation with Him and the baby/babies which they have rejected.

In the words of one of my girls "no one really forgets do they Anne" With help the pain can be lessened, but the memory always remains. This is one event which is never quite forgotten no matter the length of time or even the many other experiences of life, this event is recorded with indelible ink on the psyche of the woman/mother.

Talk 1

Recently I had an opportunity to speak to a group of Victorian Counsellors. It was a great pleasure to speak to these professionals and to see their interest in the topic of post abortion grief and healing.

It gives me much hope that many more professionals will become involved and will pick up the baton and run with it. Hopefully in the near future I will put on a workshop for the same people and help them (though they can help me in other ways) help their own clients in this area of really difficult grief. Especially perhaps help them to ask the right questions in the gentlest of ways and perhaps help the woman (or man) in front of them who is grieving a past abortion, to be able to grieve openly and with support.

Perhaps I can help with the issue of ritual which is very important for this kind of grief. The building and then the closing of an aborted infant's story is very important to a woman who is now grieving her past decision to and the loss of her baby.

The more people become interested in this issue the more we will be able to help heal our culture. It will be a slow work but a work of love and of healing and of blessings for the individuals and for society.

Letters

Dear Anne

.....I just finished reading Heather's story and found it very sad. Every past corner of her life was very dark, but thanks to Grace she is now having light in her life.....

Love & Blessings
Mary J.

Dear Anne,

This is the first issue I have read of Broken Branches. I was overwhelmed with the story of Heather. Somehow those of us who have had a happy life do not understand the terrible impact of abuse on a life - even though we know with our brain!

As the mother of nine children I cannot understand a mother who forces her child to have an abortion with threats.

I so much applaud your work and ask God to give you the courage and stamina to keep counselling these poor women.

My prayers are with you and those who are thinking of and have had an abortion.

Kind Regards

Mrs. J,K.

Anne

Please remove me from your bulletin list. You are disgusting person for printing such a piece about sexual abuse. Stick to abortion!

Karen S.

Done.....Anne

Anne Heather's story is very confronting. How is it possible that so many bad things happen to one person? Are you perhaps a little too believing and too gullible?

Vera L.

I don't think I am gullible. The person I have in front of me has suffered much. Anne

Dear Anne,

I have been a little surprised that you have not raised the issue/connection earlier between child sexual abuse and abortion, in the newsletters. It is yet another sad issue of life that needs addressing in its context- because **it is there!** Not at all nice, but reality has to be faced!!

Here in Adelaide (as a family/lay member of our Catholic community) can I quote just **one** of several cases that I know of?

The girl in question was sexually and repeatedly abused by her step father at an early age. Grew up with almost zero self esteem or values for the dignity of human life, and proceeded to have three abortions before the age of 21 years.

Thankfully she eventually found a lovely understanding man to marry and eventually experienced the healing of God's grace in her life.

Also I noted a (perhaps irrelevant) statistic in another Christian Church bulletin which said that up to 90% of homosexual/lesbian people are now thought to be that way because of early childhood sexual abuse.

Poor Anne!! The ongoing challenges that she faces in her God given ministry is more reliant on our prayers than ever. And if our generous donations stop-so does her irreplaceable help to those in need.

Errol Duke

S.A.

Encl. don.

Errol thank you for your letter and your care for me over the years. I have in past issues lightly touched on the connection between sexual abuse and abortion but sadly every time I do so there is "rebellion" with my readers and there are multiple cancellations and little \$\$\$ support which then makes running the office difficult, as indeed it has happened this time also.

I believe the Lord is asking me to work with this area also (not stopping post abortion counselling) but to tell the truth I am afraid because I depend entirely on the generosity of my readers and when this generosity is withdrawn it's difficult to continue with the office and expenses of the office. So we will see what the Lord has in store for all of us.

Anne

Talk 2

On a recent Tuesday morning I was invited by the marvellous Loving for Life people to be present during their Life presentation to a Catholic secondary College and for me to speak to the students about the effects of abortion and post abortion grief and pain

Indeed it was a great pleasure to see an auditorium half filled with attentive students. As I looked out at them and saw these young faces I prayed that not one of them would have to experience the pain of abortion. I prayed that even if one young person could be spared the pain that I encounter daily then all efforts should be made to do so.

Thank you Lynne, Lisa and Nicole (REC) for the opportunity to speak to the young people. It was a joy for me to be with young happy people. Thank you and I hope we can do it again.

Dear friends as I come to the end of this new issue of the newsletter I would like to especially thank Mrs. Sandra Laird for purchasing several copies of my book to put in her local library. What a fantastic idea. Perhaps others might consider the idea. Thank you Sandra you are a genius.

I would also like to thank those several readers who supported me this past issue of the newsletter. It was perhaps the worst received since I began many years ago.

You, dear readers, know that I rely entirely on your generosity. As I have said in past newsletters in 14 years I have never written an invoice as I don't believe my ministry lends itself to that. Because it is a ministry and not a job.

It has been disappointing that so many withdrew their support but then again I have had a serious discussion with the "Boss" (Jesus) and have left everything in His care. I do this work because I love Him and my babies and the babies of others and their mothers, otherwise I could immediately go into teaching and earn lots and lots of money.

I place this ministry in your care and hope you can continue your support.

Dear friends please remember when you move or change address, please let me know. Every issue of the newsletter brings with it at least half a dozen returns from people who have left their address and not advised me. This just means wastage of stamps and newsletters and I delete your name from the list.

So please if you wish to continue receiving this just remember to let me know of change of details.

Also please be advised that my fax machine is at a "fax machine hospital" and will be unavailable for duty for several weeks so please any faxes have to wait, or be emailed through.

Please continue to keep this work in your heart and prayers and continue to pray for Amanda T, Julie, Suzie, Heather, John, Jenny, Maria (Rome) Mel, Rula, Stephanie, Caroline, Gloria, Gabby, Ronnie Sophie, Paul, Michael, Antoine, Andrea (new) Gayle, Maddie Paula, Derek, Anna, Erica, Amanda (2) Margaret (new) Janet (new)

God Bless your life



Anne Lastman

BA (Psy) BA Rel. Stds, Dip Ed. MA Theol, MA Rel Edu. MACA. FVC.

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BROKEN BRANCHES · BY EMAIL!



Dear Friends,

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