



Men and Abortion: Comforting Those Who Cry Alone

by Ryan C. MacPherson



Abortion is a men's issue. Yes, abortion is also a women's issue. And it certainly is a child's issue—a child's life is at stake. But abortion is a men's issue—a fact too readily overlooked these days.

In 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court took men out of the picture by declaring in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* that no state may guarantee a man the right to share in the decision of whether his wife or girlfriend would preserve or abort their child. Every woman would have the “right” to make that choice alone. Even minor girls would, in some instances, be permitted to abort a child without informing their own fathers or mothers.

No matter what the courts say, abortion genuinely remains a men's issue. Human nature can have it no other way—every baby has a dad. God has designed men to care for women and to protect children. When men fail to do so, they suffer guilt. When men are prohibited from doing so, they suffer a loss of masculinity. But so long as abortion is framed as a “woman's right” or as a “women's health issue,” the men who suffer do so largely in silence—struggling with great inner turmoil.

Each man has a unique story, but some basic patterns connect their stories with one another. Men whose children have been aborted need healing, they need redemption, and until they experience these they cry alone. Men whose fatherhood has been cut short struggle over their identities. They feel inadequate as leaders. They have difficulty with commitment. Abortion drives a wedge between mom and dad, whether married or not. Past abortions also have ongoing significance, as when a man whose child was aborted by his girlfriend later marries and attempts to become a responsible husband and father while memories from the past haunt him.

Some men pressure their girlfriends to have an abortion. Other men hope for their child's life, but feel powerless against the “it's a woman's body” argument that leaves the mother of the child calling all the shots. Guilt and sorrow are universal.

When Michel Sauret (author of *Child, Hold Me*) learned that his girlfriend, Heather, was pregnant, his initial impulse was to seek an abortion—despite his Christian faith. That's how society had programmed him to escape from an “inconvenient” situation. In one breath, Michel “hated the idea of abortion even being available and tempting,” but simultaneously that temptation warped his mind into thinking “it was a choice ... no more threatening than the color of wall paint.”

When Heather miscarried, a whole new set of emotions surfaced. After they married, Michel and Heather struggled against infertility for years. These experiences taught them that God's gift of children is not something to be toyed with. In time, God blessed them with a child; moreover, God's forgiveness in Christ enabled them to come to terms with their past.

Men who have been entangled by the snare of abortion often experience **guilt, remorse, hopelessness,** and—if Christ is proclaimed—**redemption** (Kevin Burke, et al., *Redeeming A Father's Heart: Men Share Powerful Stories of Abortion Loss and Recovery*):

Guilt: “I murdered a child. Not just any child. My child. This baby did nothing wrong except come to be as a result of my reckless lifestyle. The most innocent of the innocent. No semantics, no excuses, no lies, can define it or describe it as anything other than that. I murdered my son or daughter, then ran.”

Remorse: “She had the abortion. Now her grief was unplanned. Her sadness inconvenient. Her anger at her husband unwanted by both, and a heap more inconvenient to him than another child might have been.”

Hopelessness: “Time may heal some wounds, but I can tell you now from experience, an abortion wound is not one of them.”

Redemption: “God’s love, forgiveness, and mercy are the only things that can truly heal a heart broken by abortion.”

Just as God forgave Saul, the great persecutor of the early church, transforming him into Saint Paul, the great evangelist to the Gentiles, so also God redeems men who have been entangled by the sin of abortion. Some of these men have become, like Saint Paul, powerful spokespersons who proclaim, “**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**” (Romans 8:1). Other men are still waiting to hear comforting words like these—might you be the one to tell them?

*Dr. Ryan C. MacPherson, the author of *The Culture of Life: Ten Essential Principles for Christian Bioethics* and the president of the Hausvater Project (www.hausvater.org), is a member of the LFL Speakers Bureau.*