The Post-Abortion Review

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Poor-Choice (Abortion) Advocates Exposed

New Rhetoric Erodes "Pro-Choice" Influence David C. Reardon, Ph.D.

They call themselves "pro-choice" advocates. But in fact, as our research over the last twenty years has shown, what they are really selling women is a "poor choice." Women who make the choice to have an abortion subsequently face an elevated risk of death from all causes (especially suicide), more depression, more substance abuse, more delivery problems in later pregnancies, more divorces, more breast cancer . . . and the list goes on and on.

But it is especially important to note that there is no evidence

that abortion is ever a good choice. Specifically, there is not a single known statistically validated study demonstrating that abortion generally makes women's lives better.

The only claims of benefits are anecdotal—and even in these cases, the

women often say that while they don't regret having chosen abortion, they have struggled with it, or at best, have not had any major problems "yet." Given the fact that women who suffer emotional reactions to abortion often suppress these emotions, this anecdotal evidence is very weak indeed.

This is why the professional poor-choice advocates at the National Abortion Federation, Planned Parenthood, NOW, and NARAL "Poor-Choice" America prefer not to talk about how the abortion choice affects the average woman. Instead, they prefer to focus on the *idea* that what is most important is having a choice—even the poor choice of abortion. They seem to believe that the liberty to make any choice (even an uninformed, dangerous, or regrettable choice) is more important than the goal of having a happy and healthy life.

For example, following media interviews with women who have described the horrors their abortions wrought in their lives, I have heard Planned Parenthood representatives smugly say: "But at least she had a choice. While a few women may have a few regrets, what is important is to protect the right of every woman to make her own choice."

Words Make a Difference

When asked what he would do to set the world right, Confucius said, "I would insist on the exact definition of words." He was right. Words matter. That's why most of the professional "poor-

choicers" will *never* say that ugly word for failure—abortion. Instead, they will always substitute the word "choice" for abortion. This is deliberately done in order to distance listeners' minds from the ugly reality of the abortion that is actually being discussed.

Choice, choice, choice. Poor-choicers pound away at this mantra of "choice" in an unrelenting effort to enthrall their listeners with a warm, fuzzy desire to protect the ideal American liberty without ever actually weighing the cost of the choice that is being offered—an ugly, dangerous abortion. Abortion is not a liberating, healthy

choice. In most cases, women who submit to abortions only do so in response to the pressures of circumstance (or other people). Often, they simply feel that they have "no choice" but the poor choice of abortion.

We need to expose the "poor choice" behind the "pro-choice" lie.

The simple truth is that for most women, abortion costs much more than the \$400 collected by their abortionists. Millions of women are paying for their abortions each day in the form of intractable heartache, clinical depression, anxiety, substance abuse, self-destructive behavior, impacted guilt, increased difficulties with marriage and parenting, infertility, miscarriage, and premature births leading to disabilities in their later born children—to name just a few of the many complications commonly linked to abortion.

Use the Poor Choice Mantra

Would you please join me in an effort to erode the power of the "pro-choice" mantra? All you need to remember are two words: poor choice. Just substitute these two words into every place where "choice" or "pro-choice" would be used by poor-choicers.

This simple rhetorical technique will instantly reframe the issue. The question is no longer whether abortion is a choice. The key question is whether abortion is a good choice or a bad choice.

Forget about using the "pro-abortion" label. Save it only for those special occasions when it applies to people who clearly do want to promote abortion, even if it hurts women. Instead, always use the term "poor-choice."

If the phrases "poor-choice," "poor-choice advocates," and "poor-choicers" are repeated constantly, in every arena of the abortion debate, they will soon seep into the subconscious mind of every

American. The similarity in sound to "pro-choice" is especially powerful in linking the two ideas. After hearing the phrase "poorchoice" often enough, even abortionists will begin to struggle with "poor-choice" popping into their heads when they are trying to say pro-choice!

Poor-choice rhetoric is also a good lead-in to the "women deserve better" message. Used together, these slogans emphasize the fact that those of us who are opposed to abortion really do care about

women. We really do believe that abortion is a poor choice and women deserve better

Know Your Audience

Remember, not all poor-choice defenders are the same. It's useful to recognize that

there are three basic reasons people will identify themselves as being "pro-choice."

First, there is the relatively small group of people who actually want to promote abortion for personal gain, regardless of how it affects women. In this group are the abortionists who sell the "abortion helps" lie for the money.

A larger number of people in this first group want to promote abortion as a means of social engineering. These are the population control zealots and bigots who tell the "abortion helps" lie to suppress birth rates, especially among the poor and women of color. For these eugenicists, abortion is an integral part of the strategy that Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger advocated: to reduce poverty, reduce the birth rate of the poor.

Abortionists and population control advocates are truly proabortion. They actually want to see more abortions performed in order to either increase their profit margins or to advance their social-engineering agenda.

Second, there is a much larger group of people who identify themselves as being "pro-choice" because they believe the proabortionists' lies and honestly think abortion can benefit women. A large segment of this group may vocally defend the poor-choice position because they have been personally involved in poorchoice decisions themselves. Their views are shaped by their emotional needs, not by a rigorous scientific investigation of whether or not abortion actually benefits women.

Whether they have had abortions themselves or encouraged or supported someone else's abortion decision, many people in this group want to believe—and many even need to believe: "The abortion didn't hurt anyone. Hopefully it made everyone's lives

better. If not, let's just forget the past and all try to be happy."

Finally, there is the third group of people who will describe themselves as pro-choice simply because they believe that this is the most socially acceptable position to hold. Most of the people in this group naively believe that "abortion helps women" simply because they have never thought deeply enough about the issue to develop an informed opinion. They're busy with other things. What do they know about whether abortion is good

or bad for women?

This complacent group calmly allows their opinions to be shaped by the poorchoice pushers in the major media. As long as they are never challenged to question the claim that abortion is a good solution to problem pregnancies, they

are content to leave the choice up to each individual woman. Notably, when women in this group find themselves facing a problem pregnancy, they will be inclined to follow the lead of the "expert" family planning counselors who are almost always proabortion pushers.

Using the poor-choice rhetoric presents a different challenge to each of these three groups. For pro-abortionists who promote abortion as a means of personal gain or social engineering, the poor-choice rejoinder directly challenges their lie that abortion helps women.

For the second group, the misinformed *defenders* of abortion, the poor-choice rhetoric appeals to their authentic concern for women. It actively challenges them to examine when, if ever, abortion is a good choice. Even if they continue to believe abortion is sometimes a good choice, it focuses their attention on the many cases when women are exploited by the abortion industry and suffer grave emotional and physical complications.

The poor-choice rhetoric will especially resonate with the women who have had abortions, even if they still believe it is sometimes a "necessary evil." These women know, first hand, that abortion is an ugly, regrettable choice. While many may have psychological or ideological reasons to continue to argue that this poor choice must still be kept available to women (to avoid a return to "backalley abortions," for example), they will also be inclined to admit that abortion is a poor choice and women deserve better.

Finally, remember that the third group of complacent *followers* is easily influenced by slogans and cultural norms. While it is difficult

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Poor choice rhetoric will

resonate especially with

post-abortive women.

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Finding Real Answers in the "Hard Cases"

Amy R. Sobie

Assault League, an organization dedicated to ministering to victims of sexual assault. In 1957, Kay herself was raped and became pregnant at the age of 16. She gave birth to her daughter, Robin, and placed her for adoption when she was 18 months old. Nearly 25 years later, mother and daughter were finally reunited.

Life After Assault League takes a Biblical/Christian approach to counseling that is based on Kay's own experience of healing from sexual assault. Kay has counseled thousands of women over the years (she says she lost count at about 2,000) through phone calls, the mail, or one-on-one locally.

According to Kay, about half the women she counsels are pregnant from a sexual assault. "You can't say it doesn't happen," she said.

"I know from my own experience that there are more rape pregnancies than the statistics say. Eighty to ninety percent of the women I have counseled who are pregnant from sexual assault have never reported the rape.

Abortion only prolongs the hurt and trauma of assault.

Most women Kay talks to are pregnant at the time they call her. She urges these women not to dwell on the circumstances of their baby's conception. "People don't normally walk around thinking about how we they were conceived," she said. "Once we're here, what does it matter how we got here?"

Kay shares her experiences in a new book, *The Sorrow of Sexual Assault & the Joy of Healing* (see review on page 4). She was also previously interviewed for the book *Victims and Victors: Speaking Out About Their Pregnancies, Abortions, and Children Resulting from Sexual Assault.* That interview is excerpted here.

Abortion is Not the Answer

According to Kay, she is able to steer most of women away from choosing abortion. She believes abortion "is not compassionate" for the mother and child, even as she recalls her own struggles to accept her pregnancy in the first weeks:

"Abortion was not legal then—I did not know the word 'abortion,' she said. "But I do remember in the first four to six weeks wanting to get rid of the baby, wanting to beat my belly or do something I had heard might cause a miscarriage. I didn't, of course, but I wanted to. I didn't want to be pregnant—I knew I would have to leave school, that people would talk.

"But as the pregnancy progressed, as I could feel my baby begin to kick and move, my thoughts began to change. The baby itself was a part of the healing. I began to like it, even to like being pregnant. I began to know we would get through it. My mom was a single mom (my parents divorced when I was just a baby) and I knew that if she had made it, we would too.

"Everyone's mind changes . . . that's why we want them to wait, to give them time to think, time for a pro-lifer to talk with them—before they do something they can't change. You have to work with them where they are at. You have to let the Lord speak through you. Sometimes He gives you things to say that will change a woman's mind and you don't even know it.

"I tell these women that there is no reason to kill a baby. I give them no loopholes. Every abortion is for someone's convenience. There are no unwanted children—it's just a matter of distribution. There is no reason to have an abortion—it's that simple."

Kay believes that abortion only compounds the anger women feel toward the perpetrators who attacked them. Abortion is simply a form of transferring that anger to an innocent victim.

"The rape crisis centers and secular counselors have it all wrong when they tell the women they need to get angry so they can get over the rape," she said. "You don't need to tell a rape victim to get angry; they already are.

The anger is what they need to get rid of. Otherwise they take on the guilt of the perpetrator and start hating him. Then they end up turning the anger against the baby—against the wrong person. Even if the perpetrator is caught, he is not killed for his crime of rape. Yet why do we kill the baby for the rape?"

Learning to Heal

It is holding on to this anger that prevents women from healing, Kay believes, since without forgiveness for the perpetrator, there can be no true healing from the pain of sexual assault. Kay said many of the women who call her have gone to counseling for years but say they still can't find healing. "They don't have Jesus, so they can't forgive and they can't heal," she said. "They need to realize that the counselor can't heal them."

Kay said that some of the most profound examples of forgiveness and healing that she has witnessed have come from women who were the most violently attacked. "There was one case where a woman's body was so torn up she had to have numerous surgeries and almost could not carry the baby to term," she said. "I've seen this several times. You would think these women would be the most angry, but they are often the most loving people. They are able to forgive and go on.

"I tell each woman that time marches on—as it says in Scripture, 'This too will pass.' I tell them I will be there for them, that I will correspond with them, that they can call me. I'll give them whatever they need to get through it. Someday they will be able to look back at this crisis and know that they got through it.

"Sometimes I get the chance to stay with the woman through

correspondence or through seeing them at church . . . I get the chance to see them get married and have other babies. One of my friends in Australia had a rape pregnancy eleven years ago and placed the child for adoption. We still correspond and she is now married and expecting another child . . . I have the privilege of being able to look back and see where she has come from."

Kay believes that resources—having the necessary financial, physical, emotional, and spiritual support—are one of the keys to helping women chose to give birth to their children rather than give in to an abortion.

"There are more resources now than when I had my baby—more help available today where there was nothing then," she said. "Crisis pregnancy centers provide all kinds of financial and medical assistance, counseling, etc. Pro-lifers can't get weary of helping and being there for the women. We need to help them get on their feet—there aren't enough pro-lifers to mother all these women. We need to help them learn how to help themselves."

Abortion and Despair

"If they have had an abortion, they need to recognize that it was wrong; but that Jesus loves and forgives," Kay said. "She needs to accept Jesus. I always say we are in the restoration business, the business of restoring women's lives and peace. You need to have compassion—to meet these women where they are. Each case is different; you have to deal with each one differently. You can't apply the last case to the one who is coming in the door."

Abortion, Kay says, merely prolongs the hurt and trauma that is caused by sexual assault. Often women feel that they have gone "too far" to be forgiven and they just want to give up. "Women come to me in such despair.," she said. "They feel that they've crossed a line somewhere and that they can never be forgiven. I have to tell them that Jesus always forgive."

Kay believes despair can keep women trapped in the past and unable to accept the forgiveness and healing that is available to them. Abortion following a rape will only push them deeper into a state of despair. She believes from her experience that women who carry the child to term and experience giving life are less likely to despair and more likely to heal more quickly.

In talking about abortion, Kay emphasizes that giving birth to her child was part of her own healing from sexual assault. In her book *The Sorrow of Sexual Assault & the Joy of Healing,* she writes:

In talking with young woman who are considering abortion, I have discovered that my life lends credibility to my words. To you victims of sexual assault who may be experiencing pressure to "take the easy way out" by the destructive means of legal abortion, don't yield to that temptation!

For your child's sake, and for your own peace of mind, give him or her something far more precious than anyone else could ever give, let the child live! You'll be contributing to this world the selfless kind of love and caring we all so **Book Review**

The Sorrow of Sexual Assault & the Joy of Healing

Kay Zibolsky

ISBN 1-931727-10-4 (128 pp). Published by Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1 (800) 631-5802, www.bridgelogos.com. To order, contact your local Christian bookstore.

In talking with people about abortion, pro-lifers often find themselves confronted with the question, "What if a woman has been raped?" To many people—even some who normally consider themselves to be "against abortion"—abortion seems like a compassionate solution for a woman who finds herself facing a pregnancy resulting from sexual assault.

Sexual assault pregnancy has been the "wedge" abortion advocates use to keep the door of legal abortion open. "Would you want your daughter, or sister, or wife to be forced to carry her attacker's child?" they ask. And when people answer "no," it is a short step to winning their support for abortion in other "hard cases," such as when a women is poor, abandoned, young, in poor health, of the "wrong" race, or simply upset about an unplanned pregnancy.

Fortunately, however, the voices of women who have actually experienced a pregnancy resulting from sexual assault — and still say "no" to abortion — are beginning to be heard. One such woman is Kay Zibolsky, who was 16 years old when she was sexually assaulted by a stranger while walking home from a friend's home one night. Raised herself by a single mother, Kay gave birth to a daughter, Robin, whom she later placed for adoption. Twenty-five years would pass before she saw her daughter again.

The Sorrow of Sexual Assault & the Joy of Healing is the story of Kay's journey from scared 16-year-old through single motherhood, adoption, marriages, widowhood, divorce, parenting, Christian conversion, and finally, her reunion with Robin and her ministry to other women. Revised and updated from previous editions (published under the titles How You Can Live Again — After Assault and Healing Hidden Hurts), this book helps readers understand the pain of sexual assault and the healing that can be found in Christ.

Kay's faith runs wide and deep through the pages of this book, especially in the final chapters as she shares how she came to know Christ, her own spiritual healing and growth, and her involvement in the pro-life movement and her ministry to women hurt by sexual assault and abortion. The book includes a three

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Book Review, continued from previous page

step "master plan" that Kay wrote to help readers come to know Christ, learn to forgive those who have hurt them, and become "doers of the word" by seeking to live their faith and reaching out to others in need of healing. Clearly, this is something Kay strives to do every day, and readers will be edified by her example of trust, forgiveness, and willingness to help others.

The Sorrow of Sexual Assault & the Joy of Healing clearly contradicts the argument that abortion is needed for those experiencing a sexual assault pregnancy for "the sake of the woman." Although this story is heartbreaking at times, it is also, as the title suggests, filled with the "joy of healing." Reflecting on her life, Kay writes,

Plainly, all the heartbreak and pain had some purpose after all. It is so easy to forget what life is all about. What I have been through is a high price to pay for gaining maturity and faith in God and in myself. I would never have chosen these experiences, but in terms of my whole future and the future of other victims, I would like to think my life has been worthwhile. Most of us are willing to go through anything if we can see some purpose in it. Everything that happens can shape us—even the bad things.

This book is a wonderful resource for those who have experienced sexual assault, abortion, or losing a child to adoption. It should be on the shelves in every pregnancy center, church, school library, or any other place where people need to experience the healing power of Christ. Whether you've experienced the pain of sexual assault yourself or know someone who has, or simply want to learn more about this issue, *The Sorrow of Sexual Assault & The Joy of Healing* is an important and much-needed resource.

-ARS

Finding Real Answers, continued from previous page

desperately need. And you'll find joy and fulfillment for yourself in doing it. You can take it from me—I've been there.

* * *

This article is excerpted from the book Victims and Victors: Speaking Out About Their Pregnancies, Abortions, and Children Resulting From Sexual Assault. © 2000 David Reardon, Julie Makimaa, and Amy Sobie.

Victims and Victors is based on a survey of 192 women—the largest and most comprehensive study of its kind to date—who experienced a pregnancy resulting from rape and incest. Includes compelling personal testimonies that show why sexual assault victims don't want abortions. To order, call Acorn Books at 1-888-412-2676.

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News Briefs

US Reports on Forced Abortion in China, North Korea

According to the Bush Administration's annual report on human rights, published in April, both China and North Korea are engaging in coercive population control programs.

The report notes that forced abortions and infanticide have been carried out in prisons in North Korea, and that the Chinese government has engaged in "violence against women" through its family planning program, which includes "imposition of a birth limitation policy coercive in nature that resulted in instances of forced abortion and forced sterilization." The report can be viewed at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002.

Population Institute Links Terrorism, Overpopulation

Population Institute president Werner Fornos criticized the Bush Administration for withdrawing \$34 million in funding from the United Nations Population Fund because of its involvement in coercive Chinese population control programs.

Fornos wrote in a fundraising letter, "It's no wonder that we, the richest nation in the world, for whom \$34 million is a relatively small portion of the federal budget, have people who hate us." John Cusey, executive director of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, called the letter "extremely offensive and outrageous."

English Court Allows Creation of "Designer Baby"

The English Court of Appeal has ruled in favor of the creation of a "designer baby" to serve as a tissue donor for a sick sibling.

The parents of 4-year-old Zain Hashmi, who suffers from the blood disorder major thalassemia beta, had petitioned the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to authorize the use of in vitro fertilization and pre-implantation genetic screening to create and choose an embryo who would be a bone marrow donor for the older sibling. Pro-life groups are criticizing the creation of a child to be "a therapeutic commodity," while the UK Thalassemia Society has refuted claims that this blood disorder is terminal.

Teen Goes to Court to Stop Forced Abortion

A 16-year-old Mississippi girl is planning to carry her baby to term after U.S. District Judge William Barbour issued a temporary restraining order blocking her parents from forcing her to abort.

The teen contacted the American Family Association's Center for Law and Policy after her parents scheduled an abortion for her at the Jacksonville Women's Center. Her parents dropped the abortion plans after Barbour ruled that a forced abortion would cause the teen irreparable harm and "violate her constitutional right to privacy and bodily integrity."

"Poor Choice" Exposed, continued from page 2

to motivate this group to carefully investigate the health risks of abortion, consistent use of the poor-choice rhetoric by antiabortion activists and politicians will shape their superficial opinions. By constant repetition of the poor-choice label, we can create mental links that automatically associate abortion with the idea that it is a poor choice.

Becoming Consistent Defenders of Women

It should be the goal of every Christian to defend the authentic rights and dignity of both the born and the unborn. In regard to the women and men who have been involved in abortions, it is especially our duty to be boldly compassionate and persistent in our efforts to spread the good news of God's mercy and healing.

To be effective in reaching out to those scarred by abortion, we must demonstrate, most especially by our acts rather than just our words, that we truly do care about women (far more than the pro-abortionists), both before and after an abortion.

Before an abortion, we will always be there to help them make the best choice, the choice for life. But if they have had an abortion, we will still be there for them, to offer understanding, help, compassion, friendship and the example of Christ's merciful love

This message of mercy is at the heart of the Gospel. By His ready willingness to meet and eat with public sinners, Christ showed us that every soul is worth saving, every person is worth our respect and friendship. So, we who are followers of Christ are also required to spread the good news of God's love and forgiveness by our own acts of understanding, love, and mercy.

Remember that our facts are not as important as our acts. Proclaiming the truth that abortion hurts women will accomplish little unless we use this understanding to guide us in serving women. Our complete message, in word and deed, must be, "Abortion hurts women, and we're the ones who care."

When pro-life Christians believe and act on this message, we will finally expose the "pro-choice" myth for the *poor-choice* reality it truly is. To learn more about the risks of abortion and how it harms far more women than it helps, and to learn how you can help post-abortive women and men find healing, visit www.poorchoice.org.

Reader Survey

We Need Your Input!

The Elliot Institute is looking for ways to ensure that *The Post-Abortion Review* is meeting the needs of our readers. In order to get a better idea of what YOU want from this publication, please take a minute or two to fill out the following short survey and mail it back to us at the address below. Or, if you prefer, you can simply email your comments to amysobie@juno.com.

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Please Support Ou	r Work
Please return this survey to: Elliot Institute, PAR Survey, PO Box 7348, Springfiel	d, IL 62704 . Thank you!
5. What are <i>your</i> suggestions as to how we can improve <i>The Post-Abortion Review</i>	ν?
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4. Below is a list of ideas we have had for changing—and hopefully improving—changes you would like to see implemented (or let us know if you would like it to state the state of the second se	
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Judas and Me

Theresa Bonopartis

Judas and I both thought we

knew better than Jesus.

I can always remember thinking as a kid that I never would have betrayed Jesus like Judas had done. I couldn't understand how he could have made that choice. It all seemed so obvious. Now, years later and hopefully wiser, I see that I am not so different than Judas. We both thought we knew better than Jesus.

Instead of trusting in the love Jesus had for him and believing Jesus had his best interest at heart, Judas took the situation at hand on himself. Jesus was not doing things the way Judas thought He should be and the Scribes

and Pharisees were looking for someone to sell Jesus out. Judas fell right into their hands, betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

After the arrest, Judas felt instant remorse. The light went on and he realized what a grave mistake he had made. He realized he had sinned, "betraying innocent life." Judas returned to the Scribes and Pharisees and gave them back the 30 pieces of silver, but they wanted no part of him anymore. They had accomplished what they had set out to do and now told him in his despair, "What do we care about that? It is your business."

If Judas had gone to Jesus even then, if he had asked forgiveness and trusted in His love and mercy, things would have turned out differently for him. Jesus no doubt would have forgiven him and we probably would be reading the book of Judas in the Bible, speaking about the unfathomable mercy and love Jesus had shown him.

But Judas did not do that; his pride and continued lack of trust held him back. Instead of admitting what he had done and seeking forgiveness he gave in to despair and went and hanged himself.

When I think of my abortion, I realize I too sold Jesus out. I did not trust in the love and mercy of God or His divine providence enough to know He would have taken care of both me and my unborn

child. I decided to give in to pressure, to trust that others knew better than God. I decided to allow my abortion to happen.

The Scribes and Pharisees are not unlike our society today. Once my

abortion was accomplished the chant of society seemed to be, "What is that to us? It is your business," — leaving me feeling once again, as I did before my abortion, that no one cared enough to listen or support my feelings.

I am not alone. There are thousand upon thousands of women out there experiencing the same feelings I had. Very often they have been pressured into abortion by husbands, boyfriends, friends or family, and then are left to grieve alone. Ashamed and despairing, their voices often go unheard in the abortion debate.

In this Lenten season, I invite them not to give in to their despair as Judas did, but to gaze at the cross. On the cross is love and mercy itself—Jesus, who died for our sins. Even the sin of abortion.

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Theresa Bonopartis is the founder and director of Lumina Ministries, a post-abortion ministry in New York City. For a referral to a post abortion ministry, professional therapist, or clergy member, call 1-877-LUMINA1.

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