

The Post-Abortion Review

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Spring 1998

An Unfinished Fable

Ever since the dragon was released, the kingdom was split into angry factions. The king's high counselors, who had released the dragon, continued to defend their decision.

"The dragon has a right to be free," they argued. "Indeed, it is ridding the land of excess children."

"And of course," added the royal treasurer, "the dragon is saving these peasant children from lives of poverty. In this way the dragon actually contributes to the kingdom's stability and peace."

Some who defended the dragon's release even went so far as to insist that it should be worshiped as a god "for the dragon rules over life."

"Nonsense," retorted the Righteous. "It is an evil scourge! It is killing innocent children and must be stopped!" What more needed to be said?

But much more was said, over and over again, for many years. To the rejoicing of some and the dismay of many, the dragon roamed free during the reigns of six kings.

A few of the kings defended the dragon's freedom. Others embraced the cause of the Righteous and cried out in sorrow for the children killed by the dragon. But while these latter kings were willing to shed their tears, none ever risked shedding his blood in the war against the dragon.

Yes, there was a war. The passion of the Righteous could not be totally suppressed, so they waged their own war against the dragon, even without the king's armies.

But each year, as the dragon grew larger on the blood of children, more of the kingdom was brought under the dragon's spell of fear. Even among the Righteous, many began to despair that the dragon could ever be defeated.

Fear was the dragon's greatest power. In its cunning, it would seek out the mothers and fathers who were least prepared and most easily surprised. Then it would burst upon them with a

countenance most terrible, and they would freeze in terror beneath its dreadful gaze.

That one moment of despair was all the beast needed to consume their children.

In the wake of the dragon's attacks, the spirits of these parents were broken. Many of these Broken wailed and gnashed their teeth in sorrow and shame, for they had failed to protect their children.

Others could not bear to live with the horror of their grief. So they lied to themselves and to others, saying, "There was

no child. The dragon came upon me, but I was alone. There is no need to fear the dragon."

Some even joined the sect of dragon worshipers.

Such was the dragon's power that only the most unwavering could resist the dragon-fear and save their children. These examples of bravery, however, filled some parents with a false sense of courage and pride.

"We would never let the dragon take our children," they boasted. But when the testing came, many of these boasters were struck down by dragon-fear, and the dragon grew fat upon their children.

So it was that with each passing year the number of those among the Broken grew. Indeed, many who had once been in the armies of the Righteous were now counted among the Broken.

As time passed, however, a few of the Broken began to gather together. They began to share their tears, their loss, and their understanding of the dragon's evil. They learned how to comfort each other and to put aside their fears. They found in the message of God's mercy and forgiveness a renewed sense of hope and healing. So it was that they became the Renewed.

The Renewed began to go out into the fields to spread their Renewal. Everywhere they found other victims of the dragon—their Broken brothers and sisters—who needed understanding

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and hope. Some refused their aid, but many others embraced it. In this way, the Renewal began to spread.

Among the Righteous, there were a few who began to see in the Renewal portents of the dragon's fall.

"The Renewed will become a great army," they predicted. "They have already looked upon the dragon's face and suffered his wrath. They know the dragon well and can no longer be cowed by his gaze."

Emissaries were sent to share this good news with the generals of the Righteous army.

"Come," they called to the Righteous generals, "let us assist in this task to bring healing and strength to the Broken. When they are Renewed, we will build a force against the dragon tenfold greater than we have ever raised before."

"Not now," said one general. "Our plans are already laid. Our best hope lies in this next foray—or perhaps the one to follow."

"May God speed your good efforts," said another, "but we have no provisions to spare. We must concentrate our efforts on winning the favor of the young prince. When he is king, surely he will appoint new counselors who will put an end to this dragon."

"Bah!" said a third. "These Broken are cowards who have called their own fate down upon their heads. God will only use the pure and Righteous to destroy this evil beast. It is ordained that the victory will be ours, not theirs."

"Here, take this token," offered a fourth. "It is a sign of my blessing on all that you do."

So the emissaries returned with a

blessing but nothing more. But even without the Righteous generals' treasures or the aid of their armies, the Renewal continued to spread.

For fifteen years, the Renewal made converts of the Broken. And in that time, more and more of the Righteous began to lose faith in their generals and to believe in the Renewal instead.

"Who but these Renewed can slay the dragon?" they asked. "Each new foray by the generals is rebuffed like the last. Each new prince they groom to be our savior offers our cause his tears, but never his blood."

"Who but these Renewed can slay the dragon? Who but those humbled by the dragon can truly know his ways?"

"Who but those humbled by the dragon can truly know his ways?" they said. "Who but those whose children have been consumed by the dragon can fight with the furor of avenging parents?"

"Yes, who can stop an army of the Renewed? Even the king's high counselors will be silenced by their voice, for the Renewed, more than any, know the truth about the dragon."

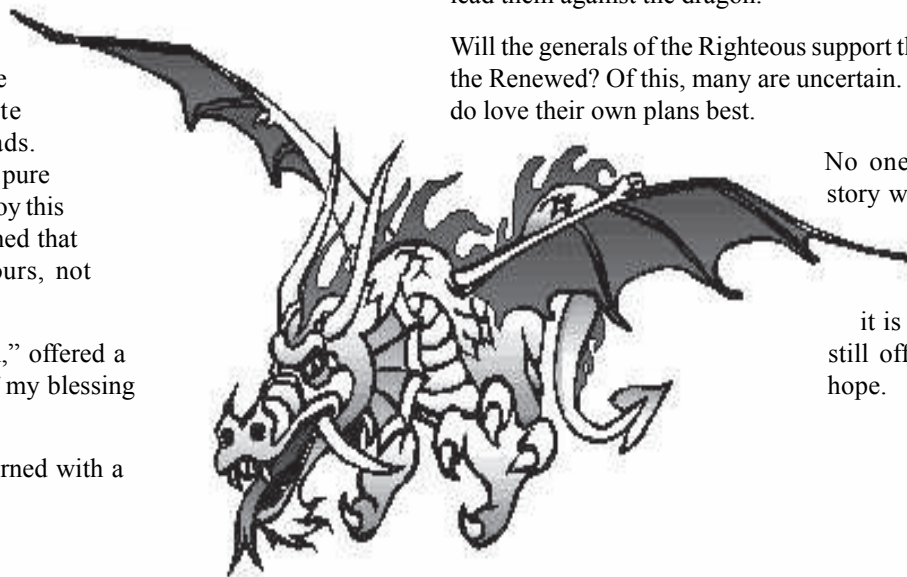
And so, the Renewal has continued to thrive and the Renewed now populate the land.

Now there are rumors that they are forming their own army. They are choosing generals from among their own who will lead them against the dragon.

Will the generals of the Righteous support the coming battle of the Renewed? Of this, many are uncertain. After all, generals do love their own plans best.

No one knows how this story will end, for it is an unfinished fable. But even though it is unfinished, it may still offer us our greatest hope.

— DCR



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This issue has been edited by David C. Reardon, Ph.D., Director of the Elliot Institute. Assistant Editor: Amy R. Sobie. Relevant submissions will be considered for publication but cannot be returned unless accompanied by a SASE. Direct requests for permission to reprint to: Elliot Institute, PO Box 7348, Springfield, IL 62791. © 1998 Elliot Institute, unless otherwise noted.

First National Conference of Women at Risk Slated

Women at Risk, a national coalition of women and their family members who have been hurt by past abortions, will be holding its first national conference in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 7th and 8th, 1998.

“The goal of this national conference is to create state and local chapters which will advocate for laws to safeguard women from unwanted and dangerous abortions,” said Miriam Dapra, conference coordinator.

What is Women at Risk?

Women at Risk is made up of women who have had abortions and were either: (1) pressured into unwanted abortions by others; (2) mistreated by abortion practitioners or counselors; (3) denied information relevant to making an informed decision about abortion; (4) injured physically, psychologically, and/or emotionally by abortion; (5) denied legal recourse to seek compensation for abortion-related injuries; and/or (6) ignored by the media, legislators, or others who would presume to speak for them.

The organization also welcomes men who have lost children to abortion and family members of women who have been hurt by abortion.

As a new public advocacy organization, Women at Risk is seeking to protect the health and safety of women by making abortion practitioners properly liable for abortion-related injuries. The group will lobby for laws expanding women’s rights to full disclosure of abortion risks and their legal right to seek damages for physical, psychological, and emotional injuries.

Dapra said a major concern is that “as many as 30 to 50 percent of women are submitting to unwanted abortions because of the demands of their parents, boyfriends, or husbands. Abortionists should be required to protect these women from being forced into a violation of their consciences that will result in severe self-reproach, grief, and other psychological problems.”

As a public voice for women who have had abortions, Women at Risk will also strive to promote a more sensitive and healing environment for women and families who struggle with a past abortion. The national, state and local chapters will provide referrals to appropriate counseling services for those suffering from a negative abortion experience.

Women at Risk is in need of both public spokespersons and “behind the scenes” supporters. This is an excellent way for those who are not comfortable speaking publicly about their

abortion experience to make a difference in the abortion debate.

Conference Information

The national conference is open to anyone who is interested in joining or working with Women at Risk. Post-abortion ministries are especially encouraged to have at least one representative at this conference. The focus of the conference will be on strategic planning and development of state and local chapters.

The conference will be held at the Renaissance Hotel, which is located near the Lambert-St. Louis airport. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, August 7, and end at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 8.

Early registration (before July 10) is \$25. Registrations postmarked between July 10 and August 1 will be \$35. The registration fee includes lunch on Saturday.

Attendees will also receive a special room rate of \$79 (for one to four occupants) if they book their hotel room before July 10. Call (800) 228-9290 to reserve a room. Be sure to mention the Women at Risk conference when you call.

Space is limited, so those wishing to attend the conference should send in their registration and fees as soon as possible.

For more information on Women at Risk or the conference, write to: Women at Risk, PO Box 7375, Springfield, IL 62791-7375. You can also contact Miriam Dapra by phone at (217) 525-5879, or by e-mail at womenatrisk@juno.com.

Information is also available on the Women at Risk web site at <http://members.tripod.com/~womenatrisk>.

Web Site Survey Studies Men & Abortion

Data regarding the effects of abortion on men is being collected at a web site survey located at:

[http://www.angelfire.com/wi/menandabortion/
index.html](http://www.angelfire.com/wi/menandabortion/index.html)

Respondents may choose to remain anonymous and will be making a significant contribution to the understanding of the male abortion experience.

New Laws Will Provide More Protection for Women

Every day in America, women undergo abortions without receiving adequate counseling, being properly screened for known risk factors, or even being told that they could be at risk for physical or psychological trauma.

Traditionally, the courts have allowed states very little control over the abortion industry. When injuries do occur, many women find themselves without legal recourse because of the short statute of limitations on most medical malpractice claims. The emotional shame associated with abortion often keeps women from taking legal action until it is too late.

However, there is increasing concern among some state legislators about the growing number of post-aborted women suffering from physical and emotional trauma. Lawmakers in a few states are taking a hard look at existing abortion laws and looking for new ways to protect women.

Louisiana — Expanding Right to Redress

In Louisiana, state representative Tom Thornhill says that the state's existing informed consent law is flawed. In effect, it allows abortionists to hide behind the consent forms by claiming that since the woman signed the forms, the abortionist can't be held responsible for her physical or psychological injuries. Thornhill says that this is a major problem because the informed consent process provides only "limited disclosure" and doesn't reveal the full range of possible injuries.

To rectify these problems, the Louisiana state legislature passed a bill last year expanding women's rights to seek civil retribution for physical or psychological injuries caused by abortion.

The law, which was sponsored by Thornhill, bases the amount of damages the plaintiff can recover on how much information she receives before the abortion. If full disclosure of the risks was not given, then the abortionist would be held responsible for what he or she failed to tell the woman.

"The amount of disclosure may limit a woman's right to recover damages, but it would not negate the cause of action," said Robert Barbor, an attorney for the Louisiana Department of Justice. "The real underlying issue is the clinics' failure to inform women of the risks."

Simply signing a consent form would not prevent a woman from suing if she did not understand what she was signing or if

the abortionist was clearly negligent. Thornhill says that the law allows the courts "to weigh all the facts in the case."

"This law sets the same standard for abortionists as it does for other physicians," Thornhill said. "This will hold them to the same level of accountability as everyone else."

While pro-abortionists argue that the state malpractice law already provides an avenue for injured women, Thornhill says that "the state's position is that failure to disclose information about the risks of abortion is an ethical issue, not a medical one."

"The real underlying issue is the clinics' failure to inform women of the risks."

-Attorney Robert Barbor

Medical malpractice law in Louisiana currently gives a woman only three years to bring charges against an abortionist. The new law gives her ten years—and it also removes a \$50,000 cap on the amount of damages she can recover.

Predictably, the law is already facing stiff opposition from abortionists who claim that they would be forced to shut down, placing an "undue burden" on women by making it harder and more expensive to obtain abortions.

In January, U.S. District Judge Thomas Porteous sided with the abortionists and issued an injunction preventing the law from taking effect until it has been reviewed by an appellate court.

Mississippi — Protecting Women at Risk

Meanwhile, legislators in other states are looking at passing tougher versions of right to know and right to redress laws. Pro-life lawmakers in Mississippi have introduced a bill called "The Protection from High Risk and Coerced Abortion Act," based on a model developed by Elliot Institute director Dr. David Reardon.

The model bill would expand women's rights to full disclosure of abortion risks, expand their right to seek retribution for abortion-related injuries, and also require doctors to screen patients for known risk factors.

By examining the publications of abortion providers and researchers who support abortion, including researchers with Planned Parenthood, Reardon has documented dozens of risk factors that have been identified and confirmed by abortion providers. These risk factors reliably predict which women are most likely to experience severe psychological or physical

complications after abortion.

In practice, however, abortionists seldom attempt to identify these risk factors or to counsel their “at risk” patients appropriately in light of their heightened risks. Although this failure to properly screen abortion patients is contrary to all good medical practice, it is routine in the abortion industry.

Reardon estimates that as many as 80 percent or more of abortion patients fall within one or more of the known “high risk” categories. A partial list of these risk factors includes feeling pressured to have the abortion, strong maternal tendencies, a desired pregnancy, feelings of attachment to the unborn child, a history of psychological illness or emotional instability, lack of support from their parents or their male partner, adolescence, prior beliefs that abortion is immoral, a history of prior abortion(s), or abortion in the second or third-trimester.

Real Help for Women

Expanding women’s rights to seek compensation for post-abortion trauma and injury will make physicians more aware

of the dangers abortion poses to both the well-being of their patients and the doctors’ own personal fortunes. Proper liability will ensure proper screening, which will in turn encourage the medical community to look for better ways to address problem pregnancies.

In the end, this means that social workers, churches, charitable organizations, and others will have to do more to provide real alternatives for women in crisis pregnancies. Contrary to moving back into the “dark ages,” as so many pro-abortionists predict, we will be moving forward—toward a truly pro-woman, pro-life society.

For women, this is a win-win situation. It is one that truly respects their ability to make informed decisions, not blind “choices” based on pressure and false information. It allows women to hold abortionists properly accountable for abortion-related physical and emotional injuries. Hopefully, it will cause more women to stop, weigh their options, and make a choice for life.

-ARS

Books in Review

The Atonement Child, Francine Rivers

Tyndale House Publishers, 351 Executive Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188. Orders: (630) 668-8300

The Atonement Child explores the emotional and spiritual aspects of abortion through the fictional story of a young woman experiencing a crisis pregnancy. Author Francine Rivers drew on her own abortion experience and the stories of women she met at post-abortion support groups and crisis pregnancy centers while researching her subject. In a sense, *The Atonement Child* is their story. It mirrors the experiences of the many women who struggle daily with the trauma of past abortions.

As the novel opens, readers meet Dynah Carey, a bright, attractive young woman whose near-perfect world collapses when she is raped by a stranger in a park. When Dynah finds herself pregnant, she faces the agonizing question of whether or not to choose abortion.

Rivers skillfully portrays how even the most committed pro-life Christians can sometimes fail to support a woman in a crisis pregnancy. Everyone around Dynah thinks that abortion is the *only* solution to her situation. As the pressure to abort mounts, Dynah finds herself abandoned by the very people who are supposed to love her most.

The Atonement Child deals with several complex issues: the

question of evil, the pressures of a crisis pregnancy, abortion for the “hard cases,” and the aftermath of abortion.

A major theme in the book is the effect that abortion has had on Dynah’s family. Both her mother and grandmother have abortions in their pasts. Even years later, their abortions are still affecting their relationships.

The Atonement Child is well written, presenting the truth about abortion in a compassionate, nonjudgmental way. Except for one chapter where the characters engage in a lengthy discussion about the fallout from abortion, Rivers successfully avoids the “preachy” tone which can otherwise intrude into the natural flow of a story. She simply presents her story and allows readers to draw the natural conclusions.

Rivers says she wrote the novel not only for other women who struggle with the aftermath of abortion, but also for pro-life activists.

She says she wanted to help pro-lifers “understand the sorrow [post-aborted] women feel every day and to have compassion” for them. She believes that thousands of women and men in our nation’s churches grieve secretly over past abortions, afraid to share their feelings with others for fear of condemnation.

Rivers has won numerous awards for her writing, including two Rita Awards for Best Inspirational Romance from Romance Writers of America. *The Atonement Child* is her fifth novel.

-ARS

Better Than Lifeline Better For You

We have all seen long-distance telephone fund-raising programs that promise to support the pro-life group of your choice.

It's a great idea, but often the rates are really not that great. We, for one, have been unwilling to ask our donors to pay 16.9 cents a minute (such as charged by Life Line*) when far better rates are available elsewhere.

We simply don't want our donors to be paying 20, 30 or even 40 percent more just so we can receive a few cents from their phone bill.

The Elliot Institute has found a better program with Comanity. The name Comanity reflects the company's commitment to both community and humanity.

Comanity provides this program to a wide variety of legitimate charities, not just pro-life groups and churches. But we can assure you that its Christian president and owners have an established policy to not accept pro-abortion or similar controversial groups into the Comanity fund raising program. And unlike AT&T and other big phone companies, they will certainly never make an outright gift of money to such groups.

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Organizations seeking to join Comanity should call us at (217) 525-8202 for more details.

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All I Can Give

If I knew then
What I know now
You never would have died.
I'd have held you close
And nurtured you
And kept you by my side.

I'd have sung you songs
And treasured you
More than silver,
More than gold;
But this song is all I can give
To the Babe I'll never hold.

I've never written poetry
That hasn't been a praise
To the Lord Who wept with me
And held me through those days.
Jesus, now I'm asking
I know you hear my plea,
Please take that child in Your Hands,
And hold my Babe for me.

-Terri Lynne Hurst

Continued from page 8

That night was the longest night of my life. My stomach was cramping and I could feel strange movement in my stomach. I wished at this time that I had never decided to do this.

The next day was terrible. My stomach really began to feel bad. I could still feel the strange movement in my stomach. I didn't realize that this was my baby fighting for her life.

Finally the time came for my baby to be born. I could feel her coming through the birth canal and I kept telling the intern the baby was coming. All she did was say OK and left the room. She could have cared less.

My baby was born right there in my bed with me. She looked just like a normal child except that her skin was all red from being burned by the saline solution.

The intern came back in and said sarcastically that I had been right about the baby coming. My baby laid between my legs for fifteen minutes before the intern picked her up and placed her in a basin.

I couldn't believe that my doctor hadn't told me that my baby was eight inches long and looked like a little human being. He had kept important information from me, and I was really upset about that.

Little did I know that day marked the beginning of eight long years of living in hell. I began to have nightmares all the time; the picture of my dead child wouldn't leave my mind.

I began to drink a lot, and also did a lot of drugs. I started blaming my parents for allowing me to go through the abortion. I withdrew from my friends and family.

After about a year I started having severe pain in my cervix area. The doctor found four spots on my cervix. They removed the spots and called it a mild case of cervical cancer.

Two years after my abortion, I met my future husband, Frank. Frank knew from the start about me having the abortion and was very kind about the whole thing. I really wanted to have a baby by this time, and five months after our marriage I did get pregnant.

Everything was normal for three months, and then I began to bleed. Right away I thought God was doing this to me and that I was going to miscarry for sure.

The bleeding stopped after two weeks, and on the day before Mother's Day, I delivered a little girl. It was the most exciting time of my life. Even though I wasn't a Christian, I could see God's hand in this miracle of birth.

When our daughter was ten months old, I became pregnant again. I carried this child for about three months, then lost it. I became pregnant again, had a normal pregnancy, and delivered a healthy baby boy.

But even after having two children, I couldn't get the abortion off my mind. My marriage was falling apart and I really didn't care. My mother threatened to take my children from me but I still didn't care.

One day, though, I was riding a friend's horse, and it threw me off and knocked me unconscious. I began to think about how fast one leaves this life to enter heaven or hell. I had always thought I had a lot of time to get saved before I would die.

The Lord really began to speak to me then. Finally, I knew what I had to do. I wanted to give my life to Jesus Christ, and I wanted to walk the aisle at church so everyone would know. I made my profession of faith and was baptized.

My lifestyle and my whole attitude changed. I've been a volunteer in my church's Save-A-Baby Ministry since then. I've seen miracles happen so many times in this ministry, and I thank God for using me this way.

Please Support Our Work

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In April of 1974, I became pregnant. I was seventeen, unmarried, and scared to death. My boyfriend, Bill, had wanted to marry me for some time, so when I found out I was pregnant, I said okay.

I couldn't bear the thought of having to tell my parents because I knew it would hurt them really badly. I was raised in a Christian home; I knew I was wrong and that I had failed them again. So I decided not to tell them yet.

My mother planned an enormous wedding; four hundred and fifty people showed up. I was so ashamed. I couldn't believe this was happening to me. But deep down inside me I was really happy about my baby. Nothing else seemed right, but I was happy about having a baby.

As the days went by, I thought it would be easier to tell my parents now. When I told my mom, it was like placing a knife in her heart. I felt so guilty for having hurt my Mom and Dad that way. But after two days, Mom accepted my pregnancy and knew she had to make the best of it. I became really excited about the baby, and began to think of boys' and girls' names.

But in the meantime, Bill had started pushing me around. I was scared for the baby. We were separated one month after we were married.

When I had learned I was pregnant, the doctor had suggested an abortion, and I had said NO. When I told the doctor I was separated, he asked me if I had thought anymore about having an abortion. Again I said no.

But it was then that I first began to consider it. All I could

remember was one of my girlfriends telling me that hers was a breeze. In fact, she had recommended that if I ever got pregnant, abortion was the answer.

I started questioning my parents about abortion. They really didn't understand anything about it, but they told me they would help me in any decision that I made. I wanted them to tell me exactly what happens when one has an abortion, but no one talked too much about that sort of thing openly back then.

I really didn't know where to go from this point, so I finally asked my doctor. He told me that since I was 14 to 16 weeks pregnant, I would have to have a saline abortion. He said it wasn't that bad, but that I would have to be admitted to the hospital.

He never told me how big my baby was or any of the complications that could happen, and he certainly didn't tell me about the aftereffects. I trusted him because he had the title of "doctor."

Somewhere in the back of my mind I could hear a scripture being quoted, "Thou shalt not kill...." But I just ignored it, because everyone else said that this was the easiest way out.

I called my doctor and went into the hospital the next day. They put a needle into my stomach; even though my stomach was supposed to be numbed, it hurt really badly. I could feel the needle going into my womb, and I got real scared.

After this they took me up to a room on the maternity ward. I could hear babies crying, and new mothers laughing about their babies. I was so confused that I started crying.

I trusted him because he had the title of "doctor."

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