

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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Abortion Hurts Women

By Cecelia Cody

Recently I had the opportunity to attend a talk by Dr. David C. Reardon PhD Director of the Elliot Institute speak on current research relating to how "Abortion Hurts Women." His organization, Elliot Institute (<http://afterabortion.org/>) centers on post-abortion research and healing.

Dr. Reardon began his talk by sharing that, according to the Supreme Court Roe V. Wade decision, if it can be proven that abortion is more harmful than childbirth, then the state has a responsibility to legislate to protect the woman. It would then be necessary for the physician to show that the benefits outweigh the risks of an abortion, as for any other medical procedure or pharmaceutical prescription.

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He went on to define **four general types of people:**

- **Pro-life** – focus is on the baby, often using fetal development as their primary focus in the effort to eliminate abortion.
- **Anti-Abortion** – focus is on the safety of the woman. I was reminded of the signs at the Walk for Life West Coast "Abortion Hurts Women"
- **Pro-Choice** – focus on the right of a woman to decide, their primary objective is to "help women"
- **Pro-abortion** – Dr. Reardon defines this group as the "Utopian - Perfect World Theorists" whose goals include population control, including eugenics and other "social engineering" practices.

What leads women to consider having an abortion?

Dr. Reardon provided an interesting statistic: 70% of women having an abortion feel it is morally wrong.

One of the main factors leading women to consider abortion is the feeling of lack of support; figuratively the woman herself is "socially aborted" by others leading to her decision to physically abort her baby. From her family, and the so called "abortion counselor" she hears the "Litany of Despair." She hears how it will ruin her future, limit her educational

opportunities, and make it hard for her to ever meet a man, lead her into poverty. Even if her CHOICE to have the baby. The "abortion counselor" may appear to not hear the women when she says, "I want to have this baby, but my parents/boyfriend... is pressuring me into having an abortion." The counselor will often join the chorus of whoever is recommending abortion.

Another common thought process is the "**turn back the clock**" as if abortion will "get rid of the problem" and life will go on as if nothing has happened. Of course we know that once the baby is conceived, the woman is already a "mother" (thus the term "expectant mother" is a bit of a misnomer) the only outcomes possible are for the woman to be the mother of a live or a dead baby.... The choice is whether one day she will hold the baby growing under her heart next to heart...either way the baby will forever tug at her heart.

Another avenue that leads women to have abortion is the "crisis factor." The woman is often unable to "think straight" and will either leave the decision to another person whom she trusts, or will be unavoidably swayed by the comments of others. This makes our job so important; if we can get her counseling the outcome often ends up very different from if her only "counseling" is by an employee of the abortionist.

Impact of Abortion

The woman's body physically protects the baby in the womb, so the attempt to open the cervix to insert the "instruments of extinction" causes micro-tears as the cervix is expanded This can lead to future pregnancies sometimes ending in miscarriages, due to the damaged cervix, unable to protect the developing baby in the womb.

**Do you know someone who might be
considering abortion?
Make sure they get the facts first!
A LIFE depends on it...
1-800-712-HELP (4357)**

Abortion can lead to sexual dysfunction, either abhorrence of all sexual encounters or promiscuous behaviors. Another common occurrence is the “replacement pregnancy” the women almost immediately becomes pregnant again, in an attempt to “replace” the life she has extinguished.

Even in the early stages of pregnancy, long before there is “the baby bulge” a pregnant woman will hold her hand over her tummy. The emotional bonding has begun, and it has been proven that even mothers whose pregnancy ends in miscarriage, when asked “How many children do you have” will answer with the number of live births, while counting in her mind every conception. Numerous studies have been done on the psychological impact of abortion. One of the most recent, the mortality studies in Finland found a three-fold increased risk of suicide in the first year following an abortion compared to the general population and a six-fold higher risk compared to women who gave birth. The highest suicide rate was within two months of the abortion.

<http://www.lifenews.com/2012/09/05/study-shows-women-more-likely-to-die-after-abortion-not-childbirth/>

Far Reaching Ripples

Those affected by the abortion decision reach far and wide. It is not just the woman who physically undergoes the abortion who is impacted, there is a father of the child often involved, either by lobbying for the abortion, or lamenting that he didn't have a CHOICE regarding his child, the parents of young pregnant girls, siblings, and even friends who may have been provided input into the decision making process including those who experience “clay feet” lament – having become the person we never thought we would be. We can philosophize all day about how “I would never have an abortion, or suggest a women have an abortion” and yet until we are in the situation (and please God let's hope that never happens) we can't be sure how we will react. (Remember the bravado if the apostle Peter and his lament when the “cock crowed.”)

This leads to an important caution in all our conversations... consider the impact an innocent comment might have on someone struggling with an

abortion decision, including someone who has already made or been party to a “poor choice” and may be looking for someone to talk to about the decision. Something as innocent as a lunchroom comment, “I don't know how anyone could have an abortion” might close off an opportunity to offer compassionate counsel to someone considering abortion or regretting a past decision. What was spoken as a simple factual statement may be interpreted as a judgment that closes a door. The speaker is no longer seen as someone to approach about an abortion decision, an opportunity has been lost to be the voice that could have saved a baby. A more compassionate comment would be affirming the difficult issue of an unplanned pregnancy and sharing about resources available and our willingness to assist anyone in a pre or post-abortion situation to find the needed assistance. We must continually proclaim the message of life and be willing to be there for anyone needing assistance. “Pro-Life” is not a part time It doesn't even take a holiday! Thanksgiving dinner may bring forth the topic... how will I respond?

We have all heard the stories of a woman who avoids a certain route because it takes her by the building where she had the abortion. “Anniversary remembrances” are also common: of the day she aborted, or the day her child would have started school, even the day her offspring would have graduated from high school. The memories live on even if the child doesn't.

**Our goal is to not only
make abortion illegal;
we aim to make it
unthinkable.**

Seemingly unrelated things can also “trigger” memories, albeit subconsciously; women who can't run a vacuum cleaner because the sound reminds her of the suction abortion machine. Dr. Reardon snapped his credit card down on the lectern and recounted how one woman would think “What a jerk” whenever her date did that at a restaurant. Then one day she realized that the father of her aborted child had snapped the credit card down on the counter to pay for the abortion. Or the woman who takes her dog to the vet, and the vet explains there is nothing more that can be done, and as she is signing the papers to have the dog put to sleep she has a flashback to signing the forms to have her abortion. (Or the person who spends extra-ordinary amounts of money to keep the dog alive, because subconsciously she can't be responsible for another death she has already killed - her baby.)

Need for Healing / Ambassadors of Hope

What are we called to do? The short answer is “Wear our compassion on our sleeve.” We are called to be there both before and after the abortion, supporting the women and her ripple of contacts. Dr. Reardon cautioned being especially careful that our attempts to be supportive aren’t actually dismissive. The women who comes to us lamenting the abortion doesn’t want to hear “Oh well you can have another baby” anymore than she want to hear the “Wrath of God.” We are called to acknowledge her grief and share the compassion of God. Dr. Reardon shared a wonderful comment, “God has forgiven each and every one of us for killing His child, and God will also forgive us for killing our child.” Now some will say that verges on the “sin of presumption” that we are presuming on God’s mercy and minimizing God’s justice. Having counseled post-abortive women I find they have already been their own judge and jury, and the self imposed sentence needs to be “commuted” using God’s compassionate love. Women often feel “God can forgive any sin but my having killed my child.” Somehow we need to proclaim that even that is forgiven by the blood of the cross.

“God has forgiven each and every one of us for killing His child, and God will also forgive us for killing our child.”

“How do priests and ministers speak out on abortion?”

A comment at almost every forum of this sort I’ve attended is the lack of clergy addressing this important issue. Dr. Reardon spent a few minutes on “How do priests and ministers speak out on abortion?” There is a deep concern among the clergy to not add to the hurt the women who have had abortions through their preaching, while also yearning to get the message out on the horror of abortion. Dr. Reardon recommended approaching the topic of abortion by addressing the comments to the “pro-lifers” Perhaps begin and repeat throughout the sermon how we are all guilty of killing the child of God, and the need to show compassion towards those who have had abortions, and that God can forgive even the shedding of innocent blood of which we are ALL guilty. The people who have been touched by abortion will hear the message not of judgment and condemnation that they so fear, but rather a merciful and forgiving message leading towards an opportunity to experience compassion and healing.

Every experience is a learning experience, perhaps share in the sermon the fact that life begins at fertilization, and balances it with the fact that it is through our grief that we find our need for mercy. Dr. Reardon has written a book [The Jericho Project Breaking Down the Walls Which Prevent Post-Abortion Healing](#) especially directed towards those in ministry to help in preaching on abortion in a compassionate and unifying way, including sample sermons and an extensive directory of resources.

Dr. Reardon ended with the Prayer of St. Francis and recommended it for reflection in our ministry, as a sort of recipe and guide to our efforts. As I reflected on the prayer I had to agree with David Reardon; it is a wise guide to help us focus our efforts towards fulfilling the “Great Commission” of “preaching the good news.”

Our goal is to not only make abortion illegal; we aim to make it unthinkable. Much like today we consider it unthinkable to even consider “buying a slave” we want to make it unthinkable to even consider having an abortion. Let us work for the day when abortion will not only be illegal, but more importantly unthinkable!

David C. Reardon, Ph.D., is director of the Elliot Institute, and is widely recognized as one of the leading experts on the aftereffects of abortion on women, a field in which he has specialized since 1983. He is the author of numerous books and popular and scholarly articles on this topic. For further information on this important work visit the website <http://afterabortion.org/>

Your Donations at Work

With the start of the school year we are receiving requests for supplies, both from returning student groups, whom we have helped in prior years and just need a little boost to get started again, and also a few new schools interested in starting a Respect Life Club in their school. Each new school start-up kit of supplies costs several hundred dollars for brochures, silicon bracelets, precious feet pins, buttons, and the ever popular “precious preborn models.”

Fall also brings numerous opportunities to go into workplaces, especially as part of the Combined Federal Campaign and United Way payroll charity deduction drives. We set up information tables, much like those at shopping malls and student school quad club events, and invite employees not only to consider designating some of their payroll deduction to California Right to Life Educational Fund but more importantly we use the opportunity to talk to adults on the various life issues, from fetal development and stem cell research, to end of life issues like "brain death" and "Physician Assisted Suicide" and also share the resources of our Abstinence program. We are remembered from previous years as "the people with the babies" (our "precious preborns") and at several of these events people came up and shared stories of where the "precious preborn" we gave them last year has journeyed. The babies have been to various high schools, "out with the girls" in after school gatherings, and two have even "spent time with the guys!" (i.e. shown off by teenagers to their friends) One went to a "private elementary school." One little guy even has visited a health class in Alameda County! (The gentleman's wife is a teacher.)

Please consider California Right to Life Educational Fund when the payroll charity donation pledge card comes around this fall. If you need any assistance, feel free to contact our office at callife@calright2life.org or by calling 925-944-5351. (CFC #49743)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.calendarforlife.org for the most up-to-date information on activities and events happening in your

40 Days for Life: Sept 26 - Nov 4

For further information, and to sign up for a time slot at a vigil location near you visit:

<http://www.40daysforlife.com/>

WHO IS CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE?

This is the newsletter of **California Right to Life Education Fund**, a 501-c-3 organization established to educate the public about pro-life issues. Donations to the EDUCATION FUND are **tax-deductible** and can be sent to P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-0343.

California Right to Life **Committee, Inc.** is a 501-c-4 organization providing information on legislative issues affecting the right to life, and pro-life political advocacy. **CRLC, Inc. is not permitted**, under IRS regulations, to offer a tax deduction for donations. \$24.99 annually is requested for a subscription to the CRLC legislative email updates list and can be sent to 1920 Monument Blvd #309, Concord, CA 94520.

Both are affiliates of American Life League, headed by Judie Brown, and share the same "no-exceptions, no excuses" beliefs and the same dedication to promoting the Culture of Life, respecting all innocent human life from the single-cell stage to natural death.

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