

The Post-Abortion Review

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A Time to Grieve, A Time to Heal

Theresa Burke with David C. Reardon

Maura entered therapy for depression and anxiety. At 32 years of age, she had battled cancer for four years. Her eyes, swollen from tears, seemed permanently reddened by the profound ache of her grief and loss.

The chemotherapy and radiation treatments had taken quite a toll. The smooth surface of her bald head shimmered under the lamp adjacent to her chair. Through the translucent skin that covered her skull, I could detect veins and arteries that protruded from her glossy dome. Above her somber eyes lay a vacant space where her brows had once perched above her lids. Her visage appeared like that of an alien creature. I struggled to get beyond the exterior and relate to her as a friend . . . as a woman.

“What were you like before cancer?”

I asked. Maura seemed excited and anxious to share her memories. I learned that she had been a vibrant and active girl who needed little coaxing to get up in front of people and entertain them with jokes, stories, and songs. Before the chemotherapy, long curly locks of black hair had cascaded down her back. She had been popular, and many men had tried to win her heart. Now a caricature of her former self, Maura sat before me and struggled with fears of pain and death.

In therapy her life continued to unravel before me, like an interesting tapestry with brilliant colors followed by shades of somber black and deep hues of blue. Maura recalled turning good men away and engaging in naughty escapades with bad ones. She seemed puzzled by this pattern and anxious to gain self-insight.

She mentioned an abortion, then quickly moved on to the next event. I did not miss her keen surveillance of my response, or the fact that her eyes brimmed once again with tears. My heart filled with sympathy and I acknowledged how difficult such a decision must have been.

“What was the abortion like for you?” I asked.

A barricade of defenses tumbled down as Maura burst into tears. She did not have the luxury of being able to run away from this pain anymore. Her illness had stripped her of any denial or defenses that would normally put the incident out of her mind. Maura told me that I was the first and only one of many therapists to ever ask her that question. She was tremendously relieved

finally to have an opportunity to talk about it.

After the abortion the familiar shame and secrecy experienced by many others like her had victimized Maura. She had always managed to avoid lifting the lid of this Pandora’s box. But now, faced with the threat of death, Maura could no longer keep it shut. Its contents fueled excessive fears, which had become so dreadful that she slept in her parents’ room every night. She bore a hellish fear of being alone in the hour of her passing. Maura was terrified of judgment.

Maura utterly believed that God had given her cancer because of her abortion.

I placed my hand on her shoulder and assured her that she would not be alone. Together we would explore the hidden fabric of her life and bring her secret to the light. With reverence, we gently went back to the abortion, and Maura began to express some of her

long-repressed feelings of anger, shame, abandonment, guilt, and despair.

I Don’t Deserve to Live

That night, Maura confessed the abortion to her mother. She blurted out the entire sequence of events, which had occurred over a decade earlier, as if they had just happened. Her mother felt devastated that her daughter had gone through this pain alone for so many years, and they wept together.

Maura utterly believed that God had given her cancer because of the abortion. She was certain that cancer was her due punishment.

“God does not work that way,” her mother tried to reassure her, but all the guarantees meant nothing to Maura.

“I don’t deserve to live,” she said. “Why should I live when my baby did not?”

Maura demonstrated a type of survivor guilt. She believed that she had done wrong, and despite promises that God understood and could forgive her, she felt despair, grief and hopelessness about a life she didn’t feel she deserved to live.

Certainly forgiveness is at the cornerstone of all Judeo-Christian religions. Despite the fact that the Old Testament patriarchs repeatedly fell into grave errors, the Torah speaks of God’s unending love for his chosen people. The message of God’s mercy

is the very heart of the life and teachings of Jesus and the foundation of all Christian religions. Even the Eastern religions emphasize the need for inner harmony. In a broad sense, all religions teach that the goal of our spiritual journey is to reconcile our pasts and find peace. But Maura's sense of guilt and shame were stronger than any notion of God's mercy and compassion. Her lack of inner tranquillity after the abortion was still quite evident.

The connection between stress and many diseases, such as heart attacks and cancer, has been well-documented. While cancer is not a punishment sent from God, we cannot underestimate the role that stress and some of the acting-out behaviors that followed Maura's abortion played in disrupting her immune system.

After the abortion, Maura began to drink heavily. Her diet was poor at best. Between alcohol and "life in the fast lane," her body began to break down. Most significant in this case, however, was that when Maura first discovered a lesion (which turned out to be cancerous), she waited nearly a year before she consulted a doctor. This clearly revealed a lack of self-care, which can be traced directly to low self-esteem, and quite possibly, to an unconscious desire for punishment.

Maura also believed that if she had given birth to a baby, she would have changed her lifestyle. She would have been forced to take better care of herself because her child would have needed her.

While focusing too much on such ideas could drive someone crazy, these thoughts were very real to Maura. She tortured herself by obsessing about different things she might have done to prevent the cancer from pillaging her life. Since we could not undo the past, we focused on healing the present. For Maura to move toward death peacefully, reconciliation was imperative.

An Angel Named "Joey"

Maura had identified her loss. Now she could begin the grief work she had never been able to face.

The following month, Maura attended a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat for healing after abortion. She was grateful for the experience of meeting others who shared similar feelings of grief. A sisterhood developed among all the participants as they set aside the tedious ideologies of choice, reproductive freedom, and stoicism for a weekend of soul-sharing, devoid of pretense and disguise.

Maura invited her family to attend a memorial service during which she honored her aborted child. Her family did not have the opportunity to support her during the crisis of pregnancy because Maura had kept it a guarded secret. However, she wanted them present as she sought to reconcile the abortion. She was tired of secrets and had neither the time nor the energy to spend on them.

Such memorial services are always emotionally overwhelming. The beauty of Maura's family gathering with her in grief was something I will never forget. Her five siblings attended the ceremony and wept together with their sister. Her mother and father also accompanied her and shared in her pain at the loss of their grandchild. Finally, Maura's isolation was shattered. She was not alone any longer.

That weekend, Maura reconciled her abortion with her Creator and herself.

She named her baby "Joey" and imagined him as a little angel who was now coming to offer her peace and forgiveness.

After the retreat, she no longer felt compelled to sleep with her parents. When she embraced in spirit and love the memory of her little child, she laid to rest a tremendous amount of anxiety.

When I went to visit Maura after she had surgery for yet another tumor, the doctor told me she had only a few weeks to live. Her tumors were growing with a vengeance, and only frequent doses of morphine could alleviate her suffering.

Maura had fought a long and brave fight against cancer. But the knowledge that God loved and forgave her, and that in death she would be united in spirit with her sweet baby Joey, with whom she longed to be reconnected, pacified her fears of death.

The beauty of this reconciliation came back to me when I attended her funeral. At the casket I looked lovingly down at Maura. She looked so beautiful and peaceful. Her hair had grown almost two inches since the cancer treatments had ended. I combed my fingers through her hair and gently touched her cheek. Her lips were sealed tightly, never to speak of the mystery of passing. I felt a great love for Maura. We had surpassed the confines of a therapeutic relationship as her spirit began to soar toward an imminent death.

As I sobbed at Maura's coffin, I remembered holding her hand as she wept at the memorial for her child lost through an abortion. The peace that followed that expression of grief and her ability to share that grief with her family and have it validated with honor and respect was inspiring.

The beauty of Maura's family gathering with her in grief is something I will never forget.

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I bent down to kiss her forehead as a frail attempt to convey my final farewell. Although my heart ached with pangs of grief over such a beautiful life cut short, my faith gave me the hope that she was reunited with her son and joyfully welcomed by a merciful God who loved her. Despite this conviction, I experienced pain.

While in line to extend my condolences, I felt like an intimate member of Maura's family, although I had only known them a few months. The tight and unreserved embraces I received conveyed an unspoken sense of the sacred journey on which I had accompanied their daughter and sister. We would all miss Maura.

Bereavement counseling has taught me not to feel ashamed of my grief. I used to be the type of person who ran from funerals. When I saw someone cry, it triggered my own mourning and fears about losing someone I loved. I was afraid to make my nose red with crying or cause my mascara to smear. I wanted to look neat and pretty and in control. Yet there is something quite liberating about allowing yourself to feel and express the sadness instead of swallowing it and pushing it back down into your gut.

Grief can be healing. It signals our living and feeling in connection with others. It represents our vulnerability, our humanity. When we remember and mourn our losses, we free our souls to move beyond the pain. This is the purpose of funerals. As difficult as they are, they provide a public expression of our grief, a way to say goodbye while surrounded by friends and loved ones, and a place to remember with dignity our lasting connections to one another.

Women who undergo abortions are never permitted this social connection. Abortion is a death. For many, it is as dramatic and poignant as any situation where a mother suffers the loss of a child born years ago. What hurts so much when a baby dies is the awareness of the life un-lived, the lost potential, the existence cut short. There is always a profound ache of grief when death takes someone young from the world. That pang is greatly intensified in a person who feels that the death could have been prevented or who feels responsible for that untimely death.

Maura lived her life running from the grief and guilt she carried in her heart. She actually believed that she did not deserve to live. By grieving her loss, naming her baby, making it real and claiming her pain, she discovered strength and hope. This process enabled her to resolve her guilt and be at peace with what had happened to her. She called Joey her little angel. By acknowledging his life, Maura became connected to peace, love, and ultimately, her Creator.

* * *

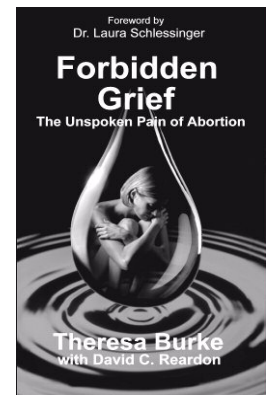
Excerpted from the new book Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion, by Theresa Burke with David C. Reardon. See ordering information at right. Copyright 2002, Theresa Karminski Burke and David C. Reardon.

Dr. Theresa Burke is the founder of Rachel's Vineyard post-abortion ministries. For more information on Rachel's Vineyard post-abortion retreat programs, call 1-888-467-3463 or visit www.afterabortion.org.

Forbidden Grief

The Unspoken Pain of Abortion

Theresa Burke with David C. Reardon



In *Forbidden Grief*, two of the world's leading authorities on post-abortion reactions reveal the secrets that women tell only their therapists, but want everyone to understand.

Discover how to help loved ones who've had abortions—or yourself—take the steps needed to find healing and joy. Learn how to break the cycle of abortion trauma reenacted through substance abuse, broken relationships, eating disorders, repeat pregnancies, parenting problems, and more.

Forbidden Grief has received much praise from leaders in the pro-life movement. Here's a sample of what they are saying:

"This book is filled with profound insights into the mind and emotions of those who have been wounded by abortion. . . . Every counselor, every member of the clergy, and every citizen concerned about how abortion is harming people needs to read this book." —Fr. Frank Pavone, Director, Priests for Life

"Insightful . . . Those of us who have faced this 'forbidden grief' can be thankful for Burke and Reardon's beautifully written book." —Dr. Susan Stanford-Rue, psychologist and author of *Will I Cry Tomorrow?*

"Once in a while a rare book comes along that wrenches every nerve in our bodies and seeks out every crevice in our souls. This is one of those books, and it must be read from cover to cover." —Diane Irving, Ph.D.

I had an abortion when I was 16 and struggled with the aftermath for 19 years. This eye-opening book offers the general public a clear picture of the everyday realities of the post-abortion experience." —Georgette Forney, post-abortion counselor

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Abortion affects every life it touches . . . and for many, it hurts. I know. This is my story.

I was raised in a family that was thoroughly pro-abortion. We didn't just believe in the idea of a woman's "right to choose," except in perfect situations, we believed that abortion was always the best option. I honestly believed growing up that anyone who had a baby without the ways and means to guarantee that child a privileged, nearly perfect, life was a fool. The very idea of buying a child's clothing at thrift stores or yard sales was almost equal in my mind to child abuse.

Here in the state of Washington, abortion was legalized several years before abortion-on-demand became the law of the land. When I was young, my family even took in a cousin of mine from the Midwest so she could claim Washington residency in order to obtain a legal abortion in this state. I was taught, by both word and example, that abortion was the best solution in anything but perfect situations for bringing a life into the world.

Our Story

My wife and I had been married for about two years when we conceived our first child. We had been having some serious difficulties in our marriage (I'd recently had an affair with one of her good friends), and we were attempting to put our shattered marriage back together. But things were still extremely rocky between us.

Then, to top it off, my wife and I both became unemployed. We both lost our jobs within weeks of the conception of our baby. I suddenly got scared and starting looking for an easy way out of the pressure I was feeling. My thoughts immediately turned to abortion. Ours was no longer the perfect situation, so to my thinking, abortion became the preferred option.

When my wife refused my suggestion that she have an abortion, I started to threaten her. I told her that I'd leave her if she didn't have the abortion. Since this was all happening so soon after my infidelity, she had no doubt that I meant business. To say she was confused and frightened would probably be an understatement. The more she pleaded for the life of our baby, the more certain I became that this was the best solution. She would cry and carry on so much that I felt more and more certain she was unstable and couldn't possibly be a good mother anyway.

After weeks of my emotional blackmail, she finally relented and gave into my demands. I thought now our troubles were over. We could find work, get on with our lives, and not have to worry about adding the burden of a baby to our stressful situation.

But our troubles were only just beginning. After the abortion, I

watched my wife sink into a depression that lasted for years. Every day, she would cry and grieve for our baby. She was almost fired from a job for crying in the restroom at work. She was working at a medical laboratory where the local hospitals sent the "products of conception" to be checked before disposal.

Part of my wife's job consisted of visually checking the specimens arriving to the lab. Looking into those jars day after day and seeing tiny body parts—arms, legs, heads—was overwhelming.

The grief from her own abortion was compounded every time she looked into the latest courier delivery. She became suicidal, believing that the only way to atone for the life of our baby was to take her own life.

After the abortion, I felt some relief. At least the arguing over whether or not to have the abortion was over. But I was also

surprised by my own reactions and feelings. I found that I felt guilty, like I'd stepped over a line that shouldn't have been crossed. There was also a feeling of dread, of impending doom. I sensed that some sort of divine punishment was waiting for me, and it was frightening.

I kept trying to find ways to run from that feeling of punishment. I wasn't a Christian at the time, and I had no idea what I was feeling, or why. Our country's lawmakers had made abortion legal, hadn't they? They said everything was fine about it. So, why did I have these feelings? Why was my wife having these problems? During that time I started drinking more. I got more actively involved in sports. I did anything I could to try and cover up the feeling. I just wanted to quench it.

I didn't want to think about the abortion or have anything to do with the subject, but my wife's distress was a constant reminder. I tried to ignore her. If I allowed myself to believe that her problems were the result of the abortion, then I'd have to admit that what I did to her was wrong. I was very stubborn and very prideful. I had a heart like stone.

An Awakening

But one day I had a revelation. It was almost like someone removed scales from my eyes, allowing me to see clearly for the first time what I had done. My heart softened and I saw what abortion really was—not a solution to a problem, but the taking of an innocent life.

This happened after my wife came to realize that she didn't need to take her own life to atone for our baby's death. She discovered that 2,000 years ago, God had sent His Son, Jesus, to the earth for the sole purpose of dying a painful, agonizing death in order to take the punishment that she deserved. My wife discovered the love of God that day, and accepted Jesus' death on the cross as

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payment in full for her own wrongdoing.

A few months later, the recognition of my own guilt before God led me to understand my need for God's forgiveness for my sin, as well. We were now able to stand clean before God. We had forgiveness. We had hope.

Facing Other Christians

But even after becoming a Christian, I still had some trouble in my life related to the abortion. Now that I recognized my wrongdoing, I had to work through the emotional turmoil of grieving for my lost child. I had to deal with the reality of what I'd done to my wife. I didn't know how to deal with all of it. I didn't feel I could share it with a Christian friend. I was afraid I'd be looked down on, or they'd be shocked and say, "How could you have actually done something like this?!" I never shared with anyone what had happened, not even my closest friends.

Several years later, my wife got involved with a post-abortion counseling ministry in the local area. One day they had a men's outreach. I went, but I really didn't want to share anything personal with this group of strangers. I was mainly there because my wife asked me to go. At the meeting, the men talked about why they were there. Most of them were attending the men's outreach because their wives were currently in counseling for dealing with abortions from their past. The men were trying to find ways to help their wives deal with their grief and pain.

As they talked, many of the men expressed feelings of anger towards their wife's former boyfriends, men who had pushed the women into having abortions they didn't want to have. After hearing these stories, I thought I would never be able to share openly with this group of men without them all hating me. But I took a chance. I opened my life to these Christian men and told them what I had done to my wife.

I expected anger . . . but what I found instead was compassion.

I expected judgment and condemnation . . . but what I found instead was forgiveness and acceptance.

I expected hatred . . . but what I found instead was Christ's love being expressed through His people.

Grace and Forgiveness

There is no sin so great that Christ's death can't cover it's stain. There is no hurt so deep that God's love can't heal it's pain. If you've done something similar to what I've done—forced a girlfriend or wife into having an abortion—God can forgive you. If you've been in my wife's shoes and agreed to an abortion you never wanted, God can heal your broken heart.

In the words of old the song, "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

Jesus truly is the only answer to post-abortion guilt.

* * *

The author of this story wanted to share his true, personal

The Marriage Wound

How Abortion Can Impact a Marriage
"Jeanine"

What happens in a marriage after abortion? Is everything all better after the "problem" of pregnancy was solved? No matter what language you speak, what race or nationally you belong to, how old you are, or what religion you believe in, the answer is the same: No!

The answer is "no" because a human life has been taken. The couple's child has died, and as in all cases involving the death of a child, the couple must eventually come to terms with their grief. Abortion grief is very much like any other grief, except that in an abortion situation, a relationship that was "bound together as one," has now been torn in two.

Abortion was a serious wound in my own marriage—one that left a tremendous scar. Before the scarring took place, however, the wound first bled, then it seeped and oozed and bled some more. Infection set in and gangrene soon followed . . .

The wound was ugly and painful, and it got worse before it ever got better. In order for healing to come, the wound had to be opened up and the infection scraped out. This resulted in many fights and arguments between my husband and me.

After an abortion, there first comes a stage of denial: "Go through life and pretend it never happened." This is how the mind and body cope with what has taken place, but the human mind can't forget that the abortion happened. It stuffs the information away into the subconscious. But it must always be dealt with later in some other, often very unpleasant, ways.

There is proven, documented evidence that tells us that women will suffer from post-abortion syndrome. They may be haunted by guilt and extreme sadness that manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including bad dreams and crying spells. These feelings will not just go away on their own. Sweeping them under the rug and having an unscathed marriage is an impossibility.

Eventually the reality of the child's death can no longer be stuffed away in the subconscious. In my own life, I reached a stage where I was consumed by vicious, verbal anger and

Continued next page

experience with abortion. He and his wife recently celebrated their 22nd wedding anniversary—a living testimony to the healing power of the Gospel in the lives of real people. They have three other children now, and have been involved as a couple with various pro-life and post-abortion activities for many years.

The Serious Wound, from page 5

intense blame which I pointed directly at my husband, blaming him for the death of our child. My grief and anger so consumed me that I could only focus on it and on how lousy I felt, rather than trying to save my marriage.

I watched a documentary once about a couple that had aborted their child. The woman confessed that when she walked into the waiting room after the abortion and saw her husband, she immediately hated him. She said that if she had had a gun in her hand, she would have shot him. I never wanted to kill my husband, but I sure had a lot of angry, hateful, hostile feelings toward him.

Abortion goes beyond post-abortion syndrome that affects the woman alone. It carries over into relationships, affecting how couples feel about each other. It even affects how you parent the children you decided to have and are now trying to raise.

Marriage vows are based on the idea of loving, honoring, cherishing and respecting each other. After an abortion, love can turn to hate, honor to dishonor, respect to disrespect, and cherishing to yesterday's newspaper.

What took an abortionist and his staff six hours to undo, took me 18 long years to put back together, both my life and my marriage. Unlike so many other stories, mine has a happy ending. With God's help and the help of other caring Christians, our marriage and lives have been healed from the wound of abortion and it is no longer a negative issue.



Book Review, from page 8

literature reviews—and thorough ones.

For the average reader who simply wants to learn more about post-abortion issues, these chapters offer smoother and more interesting reading than the bibliographic reference book style offered in *Detrimental Effects of Abortion*. In addition, researchers (whether in post-graduate programs or high schools) will also find these chapters an invaluable aid in clarifying their thoughts and questions before they dig into the original sources.

Besides examining the standard topics such as abortion's effects on fertility, subsequent pregnancies, mortality, breast cancer, psychological health, and relationships, *Women's Health After Abortion* also explores the psychological reactions following abortion after diagnosis of fetal anomalies and "multifetal pregnancy reduction" (MFPR). The latter technique has been developed and promoted by "fertility specialists" as a means of eliminating "excess" babies when the use of ovulation drugs or the insertion of four to seven human embryos that were generated *in vitro* results in "too many" babies implanting and thriving. As the authors show, these abortions frequently involve the manipulation of emotionally vulnerable couples who have

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desperately longed to have children and are now threatened with the prospect that refusing MFPR will threaten the survival of all their unborn children.

Following the pattern of the best medical journals, each chapter of *Women's Health After Abortion* begins with a concise one-page abstract summarizing the entire chapter, and ends with a page of bulleted "key points." The authors are also careful to tell readers what the limits of research are in each area and what must yet be done to fill in the gaps.

Women's Health After Abortion is an excellent primer on post-abortion research. Pro-lifers who have been looking for an up-to-date summary of the latest research on abortions risks will find it here.

Along with *Forbidden Grief* and *Detrimental Effects of Abortion*, *Women's Health After Abortion*, completes the trilogy of the newest and most current resources on post-abortion complications. This trio belongs in every pro-life organization's lending library. All three titles would also make an excellent donation to community, high school, and college libraries. These titles are available individually or as a set (with a 20% discount) by calling 888-412-2676.

News Briefs

New York Man Convicted on Abortion Charge

A New York man who pleaded guilty to assaulting his pregnant ex-girlfriend has become the first person convicted of committing abortion in the state since 1971. Prosecutors charged Jeremy Powell, 20, with forcing his way into his ex-girlfriend's apartment through a window and beating her after she refused to have an abortion. The woman, who was about three months pregnant, later suffered a miscarriage.

Georgia Teen Killed for Refusing Abortion

A Georgia teen is dead and her ex-boyfriend has been charged with murder after the girl refused to have an abortion, police say.

Stephanie Nicole Burnett, 16, was beaten with a steel barbell and stabbed repeatedly on April 21, police said. Burnett's brother found her body in a parking lot next to their house the next day. Burnett's ex-boyfriend, Matthew John Wiedeman, 16, and 17-year-old Raymond Anthony Soto were charged with luring Burnett out of her house and then killing her in the parking lot. Both teens will be tried as adults, with additional charges possible if an autopsy reveals Burnett was pregnant. Police said witnesses told them Burnett told Wiedeman she was pregnant and wanted to have the baby, but Wiedeman wanted her to have an abortion.

Supreme Court Upholds Woman's Right to Sue Anonymously in Abortion Case

The U.S. Supreme Court has let stand a lower court ruling allowing a Florida woman to sue an abortion facility anonymously. The woman, known as Jane Roe II, filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Jacksonville, Florida, after suffering a botched abortion. Her attorney, Michael Hirsh, argued she had a right to sue anonymously because of the so-called "right to privacy" surrounding abortion.

Pro-life advocates had been watching the case closely because the Court, in order to find against Jane Roe II, would have had to rule that the "right to privacy" established by *Roe v. Wade* no longer existed.

Woman and Baby Saved

Dear Editor:

I just want to say I am so thankful for your web site. I have a friend who was considering abortion so I sent her to your web site. She called me around two in the morning, crying. Anyhow, it changed her mind. Thanks so much! I'll be praying for your ministry. . . . God bless!

Jenny

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Book Review

Women's Health After Abortion

The Medical and Psychological Evidence

Elizabeth Ring-Cassidy and Ian Gentles

ISBN 0-920453-22-8 (336 pp). Published by The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research, www.deveber.org. Order from the Elliot Institute, PO Box 7348, Springfield, IL 62791. Phone: (888) 412-2676. Fax: (217) 525-8212.

The last fifteen years have witnessed a steady growth in awareness about post-abortion complications for women. Previous concerns about damaged reproductive systems and severe psychological reactions have been multiplied with the addition of evidence surrounding the abortion breast cancer link, the connection between abortion and cerebral palsy in subsequent children, and evidence of lower general health and higher death rates among post-abortive women.

The release of three new books this year makes obtaining up-to-date information on this issue easier than ever before. Two are Elliot Institute titles published under our Acorn Books imprint. The third is a title from our friends at the deVeber Institute in Canada, which we have been anxiously awaiting for the last two years. Each of these titles fills an important role and belongs in every complete library.

The first is *Detrimental Effects of Abortion: An Annotated Bibliography with Commentary*, edited by Tom Strahan. This is presented as a reference book organizing more than 1200 entries in 140 categories. Each entry includes a citation to published studies and literature and a brief summary of the findings for that

citation in regard to that category. This is an invaluable resource for anyone researching abortion complications. It is useful for term papers for both high school and college, speeches, and reports, and is an irreplaceable resource for researchers, physicians, politicians, and lobbyists who want to sort through the medical studies related to abortion.

But let's face it, *Detrimental Effects of Abortion* is a reference book. It's not intended for reading cover to cover. However, our second title, *Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion*, is a fascinating and compelling cover to cover read. It takes an inside look at the psychological effects of abortion from the perspective of Dr. Theresa Burke, a psychotherapist who has treated hundreds of post-abortive women in private practice and thousands through her Rachel's Vineyard retreat program. *Forbidden Grief's* strength lies in its insightful analysis of the great variety of psychological reactions to abortion in the context of individual women's (and men's) stories. While studies related to each type of symptom are cited and briefly discussed, they are not offered in the form of a literature review. Instead, these citations are offered as evidence to show that the individuals treated by Dr. Burke in counseling are similar to those who have been evaluated in published research.

Third, *Women's Health After Abortion: The Medical and Psychological Evidence*, by Elizabeth Ring-Cassidy and Ian Gentles, is a necessary and helpful bridge between the "just the facts" reference-book-style of *Detrimental Effects of Abortion* and the intimate "inside look" of *Forbidden Grief*. Each of the eighteen chapters offers a very readable summary, analysis, and critique of studies published in each of the areas examined. These are indeed

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