

## True Service to Post-Abortive Women – and Others Involved

We are faced with a choice. Do we continue with worsening chronic pain and immobility or accept the more severe, acute pain of surgery in order to achieve long term healing and relief? Most of us would accept the necessity to undergo acute pain in order to gain long term healing. Isn't that what we all do when we accept the painful fact of our own sin, in order to repent and find forgiveness and salvation? Eternal salvation is, after all, the ultimate in long-term good, for which we should be willing to undergo the pain of humbling ourselves to accept his forgiveness.

Roughly 30 million women in the United States have had abortions – more than one of every four women age 15-70.\* Each of those women had a male partner, and those who aborted as teens or at college age may well have had parents or others close to them who were involved in the decision. These others may have allowed, encouraged, or even coerced the abortion. While denial may work for a time, the truth that God writes on every heart will eventually bring guilt and shame. Many knew at the time of the abortion that it was wrong but couldn't seem to find the strength to withstand the pressure to go through with it. They are too ashamed to tell anyone their secret.

Does your church fail to speak out about abortion for fear of appearing judgmental and causing pain to those in the congregation who have been involved in abortion? **Those people are likely already in pain**, and need encouragement to find healing and peace. If they are in denial, that false protection will not last. While helping them to get past their denial may cause immediate pain, it is a necessary step to find forgiveness and comfort in the merciful arms of Christ. But how can they find forgiveness, healing and peace without repentance? How can they repent of a sin they do not acknowledge? Post-abortive women, as well as anyone involved in an abortion decision, need to hear that the church understands their pain and seeks to offer them healing and peace, not by denying the sin, but by helping them to acknowledge it honestly and find complete forgiveness in Jesus for whatever part they played.

The Elliot Institute, at [www.Afterabortion.org](http://www.Afterabortion.org), has a wealth of information about abortion and its consequences. Among many other resources, there is a small booklet entitled "How to Help Others After Abortion", which includes ways to break down obstacles to discussion and open the door to healing. There is also a pastor letter to encourage pastors to speak to common ground issues of the injustice of unwanted or coerced abortion, working to offer women real alternatives to abortion, and reaching out with compassion to those suffering after abortion. The Church Awareness Project offers free downloadable resources.

\*There are 110 million women age 15-70 in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Because 47% of women having abortions in 2005 had already had at least one abortion<sup>2</sup>, it is difficult to estimate exactly how many women have aborted, but with an estimated 53 million abortions since 1973, 30 million women is a reasonable estimate, which is roughly one in 4 of all women age 15-70.

1. Age Groups and Sex: 2010, U.S. Census Bureau, retrieved 6/24/12 from [factfinder2.census.gov](http://factfinder2.census.gov).

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Abortion Surveillance – United States, 2005, Surveillance Summaries, Nov 28, 2008. MMWR 2008; 57(No SS-13).