

A Memorial Service for Aborted Children: The Idea Explained

After delivering Sunday-morning presentations about abortion during the worship services of various Christian churches, an idea has come to mind that I believe the Lord has laid on my heart, which I'd like to propose for pastors to consider:

What? The vision: For some time now I've thought it would be powerful for **churches to hold memorial services** to a) remember and honor pre-born children who have been lost to abortion, and b) help those living with that loss find closure and healing.

Why? Having recently been given the 40-minute sermon time at Chilliwack Baptist Church to share a message about the sanctity of life, I was reminded of how many people are living, directly or indirectly, with the pain of abortion:

****A woman, in her seventies, came up to me at the table and said she had an experience with abortion decades ago. I asked her if she would be open to post-abortion counselling and she said, "Do you think it would be good?" and I said yes, that closure was important even if it was decades later. Speaking with her reminded me of a woman in her eighties who once heard me speak about abortion at a women's conference. She pulled me aside and whispered something she had never told another soul—that decades earlier she had had an abortion.**

****A man said he was interested in reading my book to get ideas for how to help his daughter who had an abortion 8 years ago. As he shared, he said he was struck in particular by a line I'd said in my talk when I spoke about some being silent when we should have spoken up. He got choked up when he mentioned that, convicted of his own silence at a pivotal moment, and walked away weeping.**

****I spoke with a married couple who have a blended family, and the husband's daughter, years ago, had an abortion without his knowledge at the time (the girl's mom, the man's ex-wife, didn't want him to know because she knew he wouldn't support the abortion). Another daughter of theirs (of the newly married couple) got pregnant as a teenager and this couple adopted their grandchild who is now an adult and married with her own kids. As the mom said, "I won't help my daughter kill but I will help my daughter live."**

****One woman said to me, "I don't think anyone I know has had an abortion." I told her that statistically she likely *did* know people, but that they simply haven't told her. Another woman in our conversation, who is a maternity nurse, echoed my sentiment, talking about how she sees women's medical records and how a surprising number of them show "TA" for therapeutic abortion. She remembers one patient history which indicated a TA and then in big letters underneath it said, "HUSBAND DOES NOT KNOW."**

These few encounters have reinforced what I've observed for some time, which is that there are so many walking wounded in our midst. That shouldn't be surprising given 100,000 pre-born children are killed annually in our own backyard of Canada.

So, in brief, why a memorial?

***Because the aborted pre-born were abandoned, killed, and their bodies thrown out—they deserve to be honored and remembered.**

*Because mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, medical professionals, and others in our churches have lost pre-born children to abortion and **need forgiveness, healing, and closure**. Memorials often help with closure at the loss of the born, so why not at the loss of the pre-born?

*Because it would be a powerful response from the Christian community whose faith is grounded in **Christ's merciful message of salvation for sinners**.

How? A church which has just addressed the abortion topic with a presentation (especially during a Sunday service) would be ideal to hold such an event because the message is on the forefront of peoples' minds.

I envision something that is simple to organize so that it happens sooner rather than later, and is filled with *meaning* and *mercy*—an environment filled with *symbolism* and *peace*. The ideas that came to my mind are as follows:

*Held on a Friday night to reinforce mercy: The day Jesus suffered and died for us was on a Friday.

*Held at night and with the lights dim but the sanctuary filled with lots of tea-lite candles to reinforce John 1:5: *"The light shines in the darkness"* and Acts 26:18: "to open their eyes so that they may *turn from darkness to light* and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

*To start and end with a worship team leading songs about mercy and forgiveness.

*Then the main message of reflection would be preached by the church's pastor.

*A testimony would be shared by a post-abortive woman (I can connect people to the church who have walked far enough on their healing journey to be able to speak publicly).

*A prayer team/counselors would be available to talk with and pray with people after the service.

*As the music plays, the distribution of pen and paper to allow people to light a candle(s) and write a letter to the aborted child(ren) they are there for.

*An announcement about local post-abortion counselling so attendees can get further closure and healing.

My idea is to make this as simple as possible to execute, following the general layout of a Sunday service that churches are already used to, but with this specific theme, and drawing on the already-established resources (worship team, pastor) of the church it is held at, with just a few extra people/resources coming in to help.

For more information and a step-by-step guide for making this happen, contact Stephanie Gray: www.stephaniegray.info or sgray@stephaniegray.info