THE MANY VICTIMS OF ABORTION

Unborn babies aren't the only losers through abortion. Their mothers, fathers, siblings and society at large are hurt as well.

By Dr. Jean Garton

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A little after midnight a few years ago, a section of Interstate 95 in Connecticut fell into the river below. At that moment, two vehicles were on the bridge—a large trailer truck and, a short distance behind it, a passenger car.

When the truck suddenly started fishtailing, the man in the car slammed on the brakes as he and his wife braced for the inevitable crash. Instead, the truck disappeared into a black hole, and the car came to a screeching halt just 10 feet short of the chasm.

The shaken driver suddenly noticed the lights of a car approaching the bridge, so he ran back along the divider, shouting and waving his arms to signal danger to the oncoming vehicle.

But the car—carrying two young males—never slowed. Instead, the driver, making an obscene hand-gesture, sped by the lonely figure trying desperately to warn him. It was his last action before he and his friend plunged to their deaths.

We will never know for certain what, if anything, would have stopped that young driver, but this we do know: He and his passenger were not the only victims of his "choice." Other victims included their parents, siblings, friends, schools and communities.

The lesson of that fatal drama has become apparent in the matter of abortion "choice" as well. After 20 years of legalization, and after the destruction of 30 million unborn American children, attention is turning to the other victims of "a woman's choice."

When abortion is seen as a solution to social, economic and personal problems, and when it is viewed through the prism of a private morality mindset (my body, my right, my choice), many fail to ask the question: What is happening to us as a people? Now, after two decades, the answer is becoming evident. As if the millions upon millions of aborted babies weren't enough, abortion's other victims are legion as well.

The *medical profession* became a victim when it accepted killing in the name of healing. We now have physicians who engage in destroying unborn children in staggering numbers—not fanatically, neglectfully or politically—but coldly, detachedly and very, very lucratively.

Western medicine, the most compassionate, humane medicine in the history of the world, has reverted to pagan practice in which the doctor becomes both healer and exterminator at the same time.

Children already born have become victims because abortion engenders a view of children as property. As a result, abortion is emerging as a significant factor in the

escalating epidemic of child abuse. As abortions have increased, so, too, has violence to children who are allowed to be born.

Families become victims when children are aware that their mother has had an abortion. Researchers report that a deep, subtle but permanent fracture in the trusting relationship between child and parent forms when a child is forced to struggle with two unspoken questions: First, "If I had been unwanted (or imperfect, inconvenient, etc.), would Mother have done that to me, too?" Then, second, "If I become unwanted (or imperfect, etc.) will Mother do that to me?"

Men also have become abortion victims. Having in theory the right to beget children, no man (married or otherwise) has any legal way to secure that right. Support groups have emerged to help men deal with the guilt and grief they suffer when they are unable to prevent the death of their child.

However, it is *women themselves* who, apart from the babies they abort, are victims of the most adverse consequences of induced abortion. Emotional and psychological distress are common, often requiring counseling and therapy to uncover the guilt, pain and loss that may not come to light until years after the abortion.

When a pregnancy loss is not mourned, it results in depression. If depression is not treated, it can interfere with the immune system. If the immune system is weakened, it can make the woman more vulnerable to infection and cancer.

Recent scientific evidence reveals a connection between induced abortion and the sharp increase of breast cancer in the past 20 years. Studies indicate that women who abort their first pregnancy have a higher risk of developing breast cancer. It appears that the outcome of a first pregnancy is important in determining not only the outcome of subsequent pregnancies but also can serve as a factor in maintaining a woman's well-being.

Mother Teresa had it right recently when, after discovering that impostors were using her name to bilk people of money, she issued them a warning. She didn't point to how their fraud was hurting the poor and the needy. Instead, she said to the impostors, "You are really hurting yourselves."

In other words, what is bad for the recipient is bad for the rest of us, and what is good for our neighbor is good for us, especially when that neighbor is the littlest and "least" in the human family. God will not be mocked. He calls us to be "keepers" of our brothers and sisters. As the long-range consequences of abortion come to light, it's obvious that the final bill is being paid not only by aborted babies but also by their mothers, fathers, siblings and society at large.

The average cost of an abortion may be about \$350, but after 20 years, it's clear that the price is much higher than that.

Dr. Jean Garton is president of Lutherans For Life.