Secret Sin...

One woman's journey through healing after abortion

by Diane Meyer

"Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." Psalm 51:2

Isolated, ashamed, fearful, alone... These emotions fought for a dominating position inside me as I sat in a hospital lobby early one warm spring morning. At 17 years old, I was there waiting to have a saline abortion done.

There were more than a dozen young girls waiting as well and everyone was gathered with mothers or friends in small groups throughout the lobby, murmuring softly among themselves.

We were all bound together by this "choice" we had made and yet, there was an insurmountable wall of privacy that separated us and stopped us from communicating our fears or doubts to each other.

Soon a nurse came to gather us together, give us last-minute instructions and assure us, as though from a memorized script, that the doctor and nurses who would be involved with the procedure bore us no animosity for the *courageous choice* we were making. I had no idea why someone would hold this abortion decision against me. I just didn't realize it was wrong.

The nurse then led our group down a ramp into the basement of the hospital. And a basement is what it looked like. Cement block walls painted a drab color enclosed us as we were shown into a large room lined along the two long walls with portable cots.

She then directed us to get undressed and climb onto one of the cots. Noticing immediately the lack of privacy--there were no curtains or dividers of any kind between the beds--I felt trepidation creeping in. Hurriedly, keeping my eyes lowered, I did as I was told.

The emotionless nurse returned shortly with two others who were equally as animated and they began to wheel us one by one out the door to where the doctor waited.

They moved so quickly and efficiently that it seemed to resemble an assembly line. The nurses neither smiled nor spoke when they came for me. By this time my fear had grown so I was almost gagging and breathing was difficult. Childishly, I wished for my mother, but she was thousands of miles away, moving into her new home with the rest of my family. *This is my own choice to be here*, I sternly reminded myself, hoping to gain control over my fears.

As the nurses hurried my cot along the hall, wheels clattering noisily, I recalled the counselor at the abortion clinic. She had seemed so kind and sympathetic as she helped me decide to have this saline abortion done here at the hospital. At 24 weeks of pregnancy, I was too far along to have a regular clinical abortion done and she squeezed my shoulders gently as she explained her plan to help me out of the dilemma I was in, but nobody here seemed caring or sympathetic. They didn't even smile like nurses are supposed to do. I felt so alone.

The doctor behind the green curtain was no exception. These people seemed to just want to get the job done. I didn't blame them. Without looking up at my face, the doctor numbed a small area on my stomach and injected the saline solution directly into my womb. The beginning of the end was at hand.Afterwards I was wheeled back into my place near the end of the room and curtly told to wait for the "uncomfortable menstrual-like cramping" to begin.

My heart was pounding so loudly in my ears I thought it might explode. "What is going to happen? Why am I here? I am so scared and I want to go home. I am so alone. Someone please help me!" Panicked thoughts whirled madly through my head.

All too soon the "menstrual-like cramping" began and what little self control I had began to slip away.

At 17, I had never taken Lamaze, or any other birthing classes and all I knew about labor was that it hurt enough to make women scream. I wanted to avoid it at all cost. That was, in fact, the main reason I had chosen abortion, to avoid the pain of labor. Ironically, all of the girls in the room and I were going through just that experience in order to expel dead or possibly dying babies. It hurt so bad. Tossing and turning from side to side, trying in vain to escape, I would open my eyes to see another girl a few feet away, her face twisted with pain mirroring my own. I cried, and the girl next to me, one with her mother sitting by her side, snapped at me to be quiet.

I tried, but *when would this be over*? I felt trapped in a timeless hell from which there was no escape.

Hours passed. The cries from everyone became louder and more intense. I heard the mothers quietly trying to comfort their daughters.

Lost in my own agony, I dimly became aware of a subtle change taking place. The nurses had begun scurrying from one patient to the next, seemingly to help them with something.

Suddenly, the girl next to me began screaming for the nurses to *"Get that away from me! Get it away!"* As I watched she began scrambling up to the top of her bed, trying desperately to get away from a small bloody mass lying in the middle of the bed.

Sometime later, I heard one girl ask in a tearful voice if hers was a boy or a girl. I didn't want to know anything. I didn't want to be there.

Abruptly, I felt a lurching sensation in my body and the nurses swiftly appeared and removed the baby I had lost and placed him in a plastic container near the head of my bed.

Wordlessly, they cleaned me up as I lay unmoving, staring at the ceiling. I didn't question anything. I did not want to know what I had done. I could not think about it at all or I would lose my mind. To deal with the emotional trauma I left questions unasked and blocked it out completely.

I have no clear memories of the hospital after the abortion was completed.

At this time, I was still living with my boyfriend, the father of the baby I had aborted. I was floating along with the current, day by day. Our relationship, never strong, was now almost nonexistent.

Grief from having lost two children to death by "choice" haunts me still and I suppose it always will. Questions about who they are, their personalities, their appearance go quietly unanswered now.

Because of my precarious living situation and my complete disinterest in my future, a good friend of mine introduced me to Randy, the pastor of her church, with the hope that he could somehow "fix" my problems.

After meeting with him, then praying and talking with his wife, Nanci, this kind-hearted pastor invited me into his home to live. While there, seeing their joyful lifestyle and their obvious love for the Lord, I began to recognize my own desperate need for a savior and I accepted the gift of salvation from Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, I was already pregnant again. The father was the same man, whom I was no longer seeing. Because of my stoic denial of my deep feelings concerning the abortion, I ignored the symptoms of pregnancy and wore baggy clothes.

The only thing I had learned was that I would never endure a late term abortion again. I took that stand not because of the life I had taken, but because it was a tremendously painful and humiliating experience. Well into the pregnancy, by the time it was discovered, I decided, with the total support and love from Randy and Nanci, to give the baby up for adoption. I had never had any desire to be a mother and this seemed like a logical decision. Nothing, however, could prepare me for the feelings of wonder and a great sense of accomplishment when the doctor placed the slippery, wriggling baby boy on my stomach moments after his birth. With awe, I contemplated this perfect little human person who had come out of me. Totally amazed, I looked up at Nanci who was with me and said "Look what I did."

But still I was content with my decision to give him up to a childless Christian couple. Eagerly, I left the hospital excited to start fresh.

Soon I moved out of the pastor's house. They wisely realized that they had helped me as much as possible, and although I knew they would always be available for Godly counsel, it was time to move on.

Participating in all the college Bible studies and many social events, I also continued attending Sunday morning worship services at a growing Bible teaching church.

By now, I was seriously dating a young man who attended the same church I did. In spite of all the solid teaching made available to me, my heart had not changed and I continued to live a sinful lifestyle.

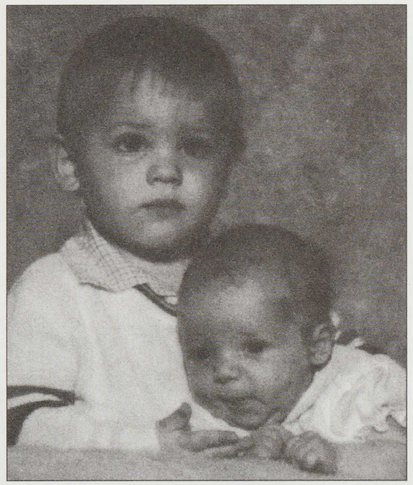
I became pregnant a third time. This time the circumstances were vastly different. Before, a great fear of physical pain helped motivate me to opt for abortion. This time, I was terrified someone would find out.

Here I was, a new Christian who should know right from wrong and I had failed yet again. My boyfriend, Rod, had been a Christian all his life and his parents were in a position of top leadership in our church. *What would everyone say*? I knew Rod would marry me if I told him, but I feared being the cause of an unbreachable rift in his family, and I dreaded everyone finding out what a complete failure I really was. And everyone would find out, unless I had an abortion and quickly! I went to a local clinic and had it done. *No one in the world knew, except me. I would never tell a soul. I would live as though this short episode had never occurred and die with the secret untold. This was the best for all concerned,* I told myself. But I never gave a thought to our baby.

The years passed, and Rod eventually became my husband. We became the parents to two children, a boy and a girl, bought a house and settled down. Life looked good. It was full, and yet I was so empty inside. Everything was superficial, but I didn't recognize that fact.

My unconfessed sin held God off at arms length. I couldn't allow Him near me for fear he would see me as I really was, sinful and ugly. I never realized I couldn't hide from Him.

My facade held up for eight



Two of Diane's three surviving children