years as we enjoyed life with family and friends, never realizing there was a vital ingredient missing; a true and deep relationship between God and myself.

One afternoon, at my mother-in-law's urging, I participated in a picket downtown. It was to protest the unfair (and unlawful) treatment of a rescuer I was acquainted with.

When the picket was finished, my mother-in-law and I had a conversation about rescuing and the pro-life movement in general. Then the discussion moved into a more personal area.

She knew the very sketchy details of my first abortion and the baby I placed for adoption. With my testimony (non-believer has abortion, new believer repents and gives baby a chance at life) she felt I could be used by God in the pro-life movement.

Half-heartedly, I agreed to do some thinking about it. I might be able to reach out and help some poor girl contemplating the same tough choices I had. *I would definitely try to talk someone out of one of those awful late trimester abortions,* I thought to myself.

I had reached the absolute height of hypocrisy. Because I had buried my sin so far and so deep, I couldn't even see it anymore.

Later that same day, I inexplicably felt a growing intense awareness of the holy presence of the Lord. I felt as if the very eyes of the universe had concentrated on me. I felt chosen, special, cherished, acknowledged, important and loved. I was overcome by the genuine knowledge that the Creator loved me.

I was loved not for what I had done, or not done, but only because it was His pleasure to do so, and it was the purest love in the world.

I was so humbled and yet so joyous. My body did not feel as if it could hold it all in. I wanted to sing, dance and cry with the sheer happiness of my new found knowledge of His love for me, and for the first time, I fell in love with my God.

At the end of the week, I was in my bedroom folding laundry and praying. I said, "*Father, I accepted You into my life a long time ago and You were there for me. I love you so much now. I finally understand about wanting to give something back to You. Anything. I am willing to die for You.*" No sooner had the words left my lips than my awful sin with all its ugliness came rushing up in front of me. A strangled cry straight from the depths of my soul escaped my throat as the clothes I had been folding fell from my limp fingers.

I fell to the ground in front of the Lord as the enormity of what I had done crashed over me. I wept bitterly as the truth paraded before me; the years of hiding, deceiving, acting better than others, believing my own lies, not trusting anyone and cradling my secret sin close to my heart. No one had ever really known me at all. They had believed the "good Christian" facade I had erected.

I had believed it myself. Treating my sin like a beloved friend, I had held it close, hidden from view and protected from everyone, including myself. Everyone but God. He knew me well. He loved me into submission until I was willing to give it up to Him.

Sobs wracked through me and I shook with the physical force of them. Broken hearted and sick in spirit, I begged the Lord to forgive me. He heard the cry of my heart and I was filled with a peace and relief such as I had never known.

With my face still on the carpet, I then asked Him to please take my life now, because I could never go to my husband and tell him what I had done.

But God, who had opened my heart to His love, soothed me as I shakily stood up. I wanted to be obedient.

That night I lay sleepless, wrestling with my thoughts. Upon awakening the next morning, I approached Rod with nervous trembling. I told him I had something important to talk about. Turning, he saw the sick look on my face and immediately began making himself busy in the kitchen. He knew it was something bad and he was scared. Tears were burning in my eyes and there was knot the size of Seattle in my throat. I began by saying how sorry I was, over and over. I needed him to know that first because I was positive he would leave when I told him about the abortion. He wouldn't stick around to find out how truly sorry I was. Knowing how he had reacted to tough (not this tough) situations in the past, I figured he would leave and not want to see me for a few days. I knew he loved me, and hoped he would come back soon, but I had no idea what this would do to our relationship. Ruin it, I supposed.

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Pacing, Rod was really getting agitated by this time, and he said "I don't want to know. Don't tell me anything." He was as scared as I was, and I felt even worse.

Not being able to force myself to say the actual words, I told him

I had done the worst thing he could think of. He looked at me with dawning awareness, and I knew he knew the truth. He shook his head as if to clear it and groaned. "Did you have an abortion before?" he asked. I nodded, miserable.

"No, no, not that," he said, eyes staring blankly, seeing nothing. Slowly he pulled a chair out from the kitchen table and carefully sank into it. Laying his head down in his arms on the table, he tried to come to grips with what he had just learned. He had had another child. Josiah and Amy were not his only children, as he had always believed. The woman he loved had taken the life of his baby without consulting him at all. Sitting across the table, my arms wrapped around myself trying to control my violent shaking, I watched him suffer. I wanted so badly to reach over and touch him, comfort him, but I couldn't. I was the one who had done this terrible thing, the last one he would want solace from. Never had I felt so helpless and so unclean.

Time passed. Tears continued streaming down my face when he finally lifted his eyes to mine. He smiled sadly and reached out to take my hand. I jerked it away. I couldn't stand for him to touch me; I didn't deserve it. Determined, he grabbed it again and pulled it to him. "Will you forgive me?" he asked quietly. No words could have brought a more startled reaction from me. When I didn't answer he asked again, "Will you forgive me, please Diane?" Stunned, I could only stare as my husband, who by the grace of God, humbly accepted his share of the responsibility in what I had done.

Holding tightly to each other, we prayed, asking for forgiveness from the Father and from each other.

Undeservedly and unexpectedly, I received grace and forgiveness from both my husband and God. I also received these gifts from my father-in-law and mother-in-law when we told them about the abortion. They embraced me warmly, reassured me of their unconditional love and tried not to make me feel ashamed. Although struggling with the discovered loss of a loved grandchild, their compassionate response will always be a supreme example of unmerited grace in my mind. The entire family's reaction brought healing to me.

There has been much in the past to work through. Even though God has forgiven me for my sins, there are still real and very painful consequences that have to be dealt with periodically.

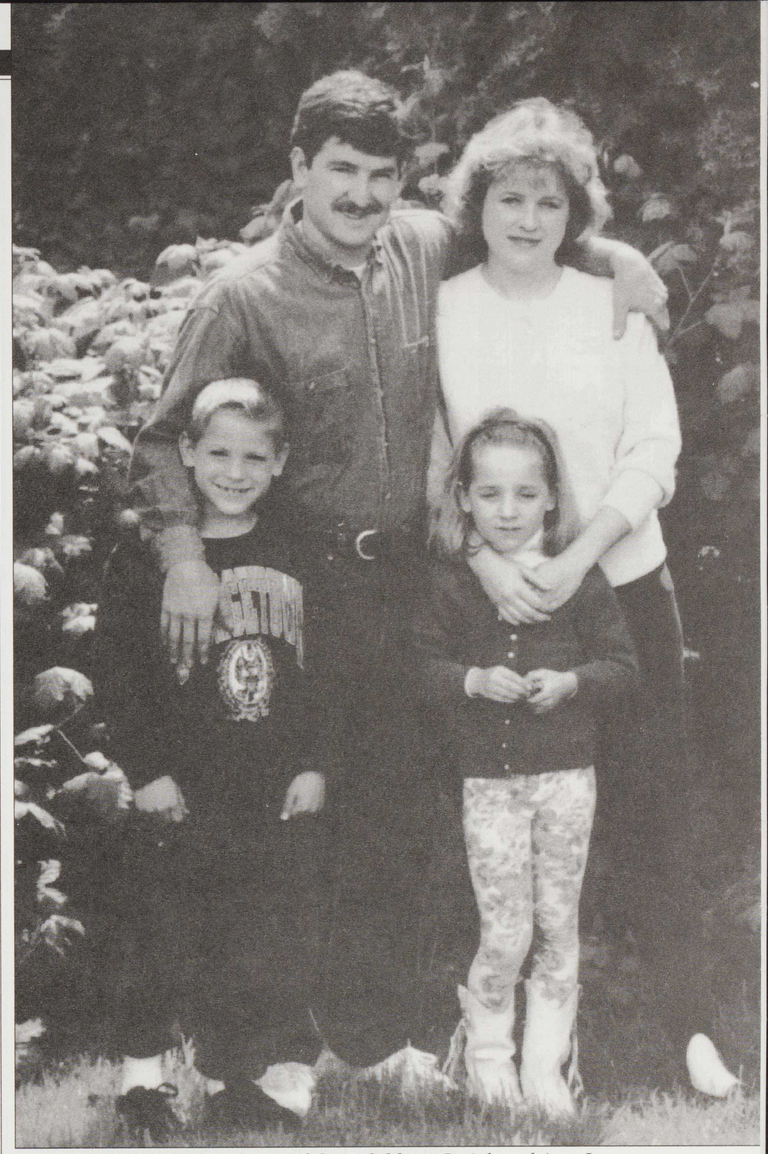
Grief from having lost two children to death by "choice" haunts me still and I suppose it always will. Questions about who they are, their personalities, their appearance go quietly unanswered for now. Yearning, I can almost smell that sweet baby smell, see wispy blond baby hair on a tender head and imagine chubby dimpled hands reaching for me, though faces teasingly elude my daydreams. Spring will always be a time of deep remorse when I can't help but ponder the useless "if only's" and "what if's".

Traces of children's laughter float to me on the fresh air and I think about what might have been, had I not chosen abortion. Wasted years as I successfully stunted my growth as a believer by refusing to confess my buried wrong-doing and wasted precious human lives.

I wonder still about those girls who shared my misery one morning in that cement block room. It seems like a lifetime ago. Do they now share my feelings of loss? Do they remember that day and shudder also, or do they consider it of no consequence? I'd like to know.

There are definitely periods of lingering sorrow, but overcoming it all is the hope that I now have in Jesus Christ. Psalm 51 speaks clearly to me as it never did before. Psalm 51:9-12 states "Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me."

Gone is my deep fear of someone seeing me as I really am. God has seen me and I have discovered that I am deeply loved, completely forgiven, fully pleasing and totally accepted by Him, an awesome thought! I have been set free from the power I allowed the hidden abortion to have over me. Love and truth have fully replaced the fear and shame inside me and I am free to love openly and wholeheartedly and to serve God with an all-consuming joy. No fear, no shame. By the grace of God, I am free. ■



Ron and Diane Meyer with two of their children, Josiah and Amy Lynn.