Jerry L. Propst

Victim or Co-conspirator?

by Jerry L. Propst

A young woman enters an abortion mill and has the life of her unborn child terminated. It happens 4,500 times or more every day in America. Some abortion mills are even giving women an opportunity to spend time with the aborted child in order to say good bye to him or her. This is supposedly "therapeutic."

It is another way of brainwashing the young woman into believing that the abortion was unfortunate but necessary. Abortionists are seeking to assuage the woman's conscience of any sense of remorse or guilt. Great customer relations! Great for repeat business!

Fortunately, at least a portion of the Christian community is heartbroken and outraged, but some would caution us that we must not appear too harsh or condemning. After all, the young woman is a victim, too. We must be careful not to traumatize her any further.

It is true that we must be careful of becoming arrogant and unnecessarily judgmental. But perhaps we have been guilty of the same thing as the pro-abortion community. We have helped support the notion that the woman is merely a victim and therefore absolved of any culpability for what has happened. Some over-sexed man seduced her into an unholy union and now insists that she get an abortion. The enterprising abortionist took advantage of her vulnerability. She is just the unwitting victim of a vicious system.

It is true that men do seek to persuade women to surrender their virtue. And it is true that they often insist the girl get an abortion when she gets pregnant. Doctors do take advantage of vulnerable women in order to make a profit. But does the girl bear no responsibility for what has taken place?

For nearly a full generation now it has been popular to define people as victims, and in so doing remove from them responsibility for their actions.

Criminals are referred to as "busted" not "arrested." They are defined as victims because of their race, their economic status, their gender, or their age, etc. Alan Rothenberg, a Los Angeles trial lawyer who serves on the American Bar Association's Forum on Entertainment and Sports Industries said, "It is a major defense strategy you saw in the Lorena Bobbitt and Menendez brothers cases. More and more defendants who clearly committed the act claim they are the victims." (Reuters News Service)

Such labeling of the criminal as a victim is an irresponsible attempt to stimulate sympathy for the perpetrator and in so doing rob the real victims of the sympathy they rightfully deserve. The real victims, those who have been assaulted, murdered, robbed, raped, abused are wondering if there is any sympathy left in the system for them.

If you are a victim, you are not responsible for what happened to you or for what you did. So, criminals are the victims of the ghettos or of abuse. In other words, society must excuse criminals from responsibility because society has not properly provided for them. Chronic welfare clients are victims of a society that didn't adequately provide a job for them. Illiterate high school graduates can sue the school because it didn't give them a proper education; never mind that the student didn't do the home work or show up for class. Society is to blame, not the criminal. Society is to blame, not the student.

And likewise, by pointing the finger at some man, at coercive or narrow-minded parents, or at the system, society has helped the mother wash her hands of responsibility for the death of her child.

The death of millions of helpless babies is being glossed over by painting one of the conspirators as a victim herself, but a large number of women who seek abortion counseling are neither poor nor preyed upon. Alice Gray of Portland Crisis Pregnancy Centers, at an annual fundraising dinner, stated that the majority of women who come to them are considering abortion because the birth would interfere with the plans of their life at this time. They have placed a higher priority on their personal convenience and/or pleasure than they have on a human life.

Some hide behind the defense that the woman was seduced into an immoral act. Somehow seduction magically obviates responsibility. But seduction only works if the party being seduced believes that they are going to get something they want in exchange for what they give. The woman is looking for something out of the relationship that motivates her to give up her virtue. It may be affection or acceptance. It may be the sense of being a woman. But something she wants is more important than the retention of her virtue.

If she is a victim, she is really victim of her own sin nature. James says, "When tempted, no one should say 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." James 1:13-15

The underlying purpose of this passage is to squelch the idea that the sinner is an unwitting victim and is therefore to be considered innocent by God even though he or she has broken the laws of God.

There was then as now a subtle attempt to shift the blame for our sin to someone else. Since God is the judge, make Him to blame. In our society we do the same thing. Since society puts sanctions on us, let's blame society. Make society feel guilty. Make anyone other than us look or feel guilty.

But God says, "each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."

When Adam sinned he tried to lay the blame on Eve. "the woman. . . ." Then he tried to lay the blame on God. "Which you gave me. . . ." (Genesis 3:12) But it didn't wash then and it shouldn't wash now. The root problem is inside us, not outside us.

Eve tried to put the blame on the serpent, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:13). Was she then freed from responsibility? No. She became a sinner along with her husband. She died, just as did her husband.

Some have suggested that James' discussion of sin only refers to Christians. That is a vacant argument. God's law is meant for all God's creation. It is a reflection of His character and of His will for humanity. Romans 2 specifically indicts those who do not have the law of God written down on paper or stone. "When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them." (Romans 2:14-15) God has placed the law in the hearts of His creation. And He judges all mankind by that law.

In fact, the writer of Romans cries out that all are without excuse. ". . . Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." (CITE)

Even ignorance is not an excuse. The person who is truly seeking to discover God's will searches for the truth. He or she won't accept answers simply because they are convenient or popular.

The woman who is seeking truth will ask questions, hard questions, about morality and virtue. She will not blindly buy into the current trend in values. She will be more interested in doing what is right than in doing what is convenient or popular.

The point in all of this is simply to say that, the only truly innocent party in an abortion is the baby. Even in the case of rape or incest the aborting mother is not necessarily innocent in that, being a victim of a heinous act does not justify the commission of another heinous act.

If the motivation is to remove the evidence or results of an act or to live in denial that anything has taken place, then the person is culpable.

Only the woman whose life is in obvious immediate danger because of her pregnancy (such as a tubal pregnancy on the verge of bursting and causing hemmoraging) or who is physically forced to have an abortion is relieved from responsibility for the death of her child.

But where is the compassion in this position? Where is the love? Telling the truth is not always convenient or comfortable. But it is much kinder than letting people live under the shadow of a lie. Confrontation with the truth is the only way out of a delusion.

Telling the truth in love, painful as it may be at the start is the only way to head off the consequences of continuing denial. The truth is, to the degree that a woman gives consent to the destruction of her child, she is a conspirator in that child's death. All the mental gymnastics in the world cannot erase that fact. Do I condemn her? No, I plead for her soul. ■

Pastor Propst is Senior Pastor of the Hillsboro First Baptist Church. He is a graduate of both Multnomah School of the Bible and Western Conservative Baptist Seminary.

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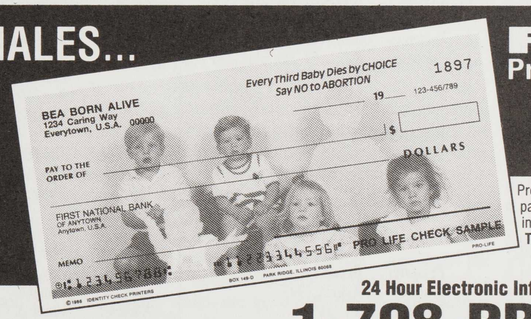

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