



Christ Church of Atlanta
P.O. Box 76320
Atlanta, GA. 30358
Phone: 404.255.5033
Fax: 404.255.5383

Newsletter – January 2012 – Jan Robinson

Embracing and Honoring the Gift of Life

A student who was struggling in one of my husband's math courses at the University of West Georgia came in during his office hours for extra help several weeks ago. In the course of the discussion, she blurted out that she had just had an abortion. She then said, "The funny thing is that I don't even believe in it." Obviously this young woman did not have encouragement to pursue all the different options for her situation. Perhaps she did not know where to turn or whose counsel to seek. Instead, she sought out the "quick fix" and, sadly, our culture's convenient solution to an unwanted pregnancy.

Dave felt sadness for this student and for the loss of her baby. He also thought about the work of a pregnancy center that our congregation has supported for the past few years. If this student had been in Decatur and not Carrollton, perhaps she would have seen and sought counsel and advice from the Pregnancy Center of Decatur, prominently located and clearly marked amidst the vibrant young-professional and college community.

Suzy Brister, the director of the center, tells of a college student in a situation similar to that of my husband's student:

Shelley [not her real name] came to see us about a year ago. She was a senior at a prominent university in Atlanta and planning to go to law school. She was no longer "a couple" with the baby's father and she was determined to abort. She was polite, expressed that she was raised Christian but was VERY fearful of disappointing her mom. Shelley was given a positive pregnancy test result and abortion education (including the abortion info DVD). An appointment was made for an ultrasound. The ultrasound revealed that Shelley was in her second month of pregnancy. The baby-in-utero was active. Upon witnessing the ultrasound, Shelley was quiet but still seemed set on her decision to abort. She still had not told her mom nor the baby's father about the pregnancy. We invited her to return for a second ultrasound with either the baby's father or her mom. We counseled her on how an abortion procedure would be "more involved" now that she was further along. We asked permission to pray with her.

Over a series of months, we periodically followed up and spoke with Shelley on a couple of occasions. Each time, she stated that she was set on her decision but had not told anyone. We expressed our concern and our desire to care for her. Beginning a couple of months after we saw her, she no longer returned our calls, so we backed off.

Several months later, we missed a call from her and returned the call. We found out that she indeed NEVER had the abortion. She graduated from college and gave birth the next day. She had gone home to be with her mom and the baby for a few months. I encouraged her to come by so we could see her and give her a baby basket. She has come for individual education and the parenting class to become a better mom and to earn items for her baby. Praise God!



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Back in 1954, another young unmarried college student discovered that she was pregnant. Her name was Joanne Schiebel. She opted to have the baby and then put the baby up for adoption. That baby was Steve Jobs. It was only upon his recent death that the story of his beginnings came to light to most of the civilized/technological world.

Unplanned pregnancies are often viewed as “problems” or “predicaments.” But a pregnancy is an opportunity to respect life, to welcome life, to recognize the gift of that tiny life—a gift to value and honor and embrace and protect. Is that hard to do sometimes (especially in the situations that the above-mentioned young women found themselves)? Yes! Are there challenges? Yes! Are there people or ideas that discourage choosing life? Yes! But, is choosing life the right thing to do? Is it worth it? Ask Shelley. Ask Joanne Schiebel.

In addition to counseling women who have positive pregnancy results, the Pregnancy Center of Decatur also has a volunteer who meets individually with post-abortive women to do counseling. Other resources are available, both online (such as healinghearts.com) and at area churches, for post-abortion healing from a Biblical perspective. Suzy says that their experience has been that many women are not ready to deal with their abortions until a year or two down the road. Initially, most women seem to avoid anything that reminds them of the pregnancy or the abortion. The center also offers to meet one or two times with post-abortive women simply to let them talk through the experience (trying to meet them where they are spiritually, emotionally, etc.) For those clients whose pregnancy test results are negative, the center provides education about sexually-transmitted diseases and education regarding the choice to be/not to be sexually active outside of marriage.

January is Sanctity of Human Life Month. January is chosen for this emphasis because of the January 22, 1973 US Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision which legalized abortion on demand all nine months of pregnancy. There are two ways that you can stand for and support life. We will once again be having the Baby Bottle Boomerang Drive to support the critical, life-changing and life-affirming work of the Pregnancy Center of Decatur. Last year, the center was able to move to an enhanced and more central site, increasing its visibility, availability and presence in the Decatur community. Take home a baby bottle and fill it with change. Another opportunity is to attend the 2012 Together for Life Memorial Service on the steps of the State Capitol on Monday, January 23. Special music begins at 11:30 a.m. and the memorial service begins at noon. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Freda Bush, M.D. from Mississippi's Yes on 26! campaign. She has been an outspoken supporter of Mississippi's Personhood Amendment. After the service (around 1:00 p.m.) there will be a one-mile silent, peaceful and reverent walk through downtown Atlanta to remember and mourn the loss of 3,000 unborn children per day and more than 50 million unborn children since 1973 in the United States because of abortion.

You can be a part of changing the culture. Embrace and honor the gift of life.

- Jan Robinson, Director of Children's Ministries