

40 DAYS FOR LIFE
PRESENTS



ENDING ABORTION

THE ONLINE TRAINING SERIES

TRANSCRIPT 7: HOPE AND HEALING FOR POST- ABORTIVE WOMEN AND MEN



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David: Hello! This is David Bereit, National Director of 40 Days for Life, and I'm serving today as the moderator for this Ending Abortion Mega Webcast Event. We have covered an amazing amount of ground in the pro-life movement and how people can save lives right where they live.

We started this morning with The Case for Life, then went into The Crisis of Abortion. We've talked about Planned Parenthood's Abortion Empire and The Power of Prayer. We then discussed Pregnancy Care Centers and how that is Compassion in Action. The last session we just wrapped up was Saving Lives Outside Abortion Facilities.

We're more than halfway through this Ending Abortion Event. The time has flown by. It has been an absolute whirlwind. For those who have not been with us on all the sessions previously, I would really encourage you, even in areas you think, "ah, that doesn't really fit me," there has been so much wisdom, so much great information, so much hope that has been shared in these previous six sessions.

I would encourage you to go and listen to the recording of every single one of these. Be sure to avail yourself of that. Also, go back and listen to the sessions that maybe you did listen to and you want to be re-inspired or take some notes from.

As mentioned, my name is David Bereit. I am calling in today from just outside of Washington, D.C., our nation's capitol. On this session I have a co-host with me. He is the campaign director of 40 Days for Life, worked side-by-side with me. That is Mr. Shawn Carney. Shawn, how are you doing?

Shawn: I'm doing great. We're hanging in there today.

David: Unbelievable. I'm amazed, you just got done speaking as a presenter on our last panel and here you are co-hosting on this one. What's been the most exciting for you about this day so far?

Shawn: I think it's seeing all of the different angles of the pro-life message come together on a one-day call and just have such an impact. It really shows our movement is united. It shows we're working together and we all have the same cause. I learned a ton today. It's been wonderful to see. I really think it shows our unity.

David: Absolutely. What a beautiful unity we have in the pro-life movement. What collaboration with over three dozen groups that are involved in this specific event, joining forces with 35+ speakers, and many, many

more people we just couldn't fit due to time limitations. We'll just have to do some other event like this, although I'm not sure I'm ready to do another 10 hour marathon session any time in the next few weeks.

The whole purpose of this event is very simple. It's to help you know how to save lives right where you live. How to impact those who are at risk for abortion, both the child and the mother. Also how to bring healing to those who have been wounded by abortion, which is the focus of this specific topic that we'll be delving into.

I think it's important that we start the most important way we can in a topic like this, and that is with a word of opening prayer. Shawn, would you mind leading us in an opening prayer?

Shawn: Yes. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of life. We thank you for the opportunity to serve you in the pro-life movement. We would like to pray for all women who have had abortions. Continue to offer them your love, your mercy, and empower them with the courage to share their message which can penetrate the hardest of hearts. Bless them.

We pray for all women today who are considering abortion. We pray for all women today who are finding out that they are pregnant and do not want to be. May your love and your grace be the first thing to penetrate their hearts so that they may choose life. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

David: Amen. Thank you Shawn.

The good news is if you can't be with us through all 10 of these sessions you can listen to all of the recordings after the fact. Download them to your computer, put them on your mp3 player, burn them to a CD. The other thing I would encourage is to share this event with others.

Every speaker, every single speaker on this event today is doing this absolutely free of charge. They are sharing this information out of the love of their hearts, taking time out of a Saturday. Many of them are on vacations, in other places or in airports and they're calling in to be a part of this event. They're giving this freely to you, and I would ask that you give it freely to others.

If you are blessed by the participation in this Ending Abortion Webcast Event, let people know they can listen to all of the recordings of every one of these dynamic sessions here from the who's who of pro-life leaders across the movement. They can access all those recordings free of charge at www.endingabortion.com.

Let's be sure that every pro-lifer across America and around the world has the opportunity to participate. We have over 10,000 people participating in this event throughout the day. That is not just in the United States of America. Internationally I've gotten emails from people in India, Australia, Canada, all over the world that are participating in this event. It's absolutely amazing.

Now we're going to talk about Shawn in just a second, maybe you can reference the importance of healing for post-abortive women and men to set the stage. We're going to be hearing from the top experts in this topic Theresa and Kevin Burke from Rachel's Vineyard, Georgette Forney from Silent No More Awareness, Alan Parker from Operation Outcry and the Justice Foundation, and Carmen Pate who is on our 40 Days for Life team. You're going to hear a lot of great information.

Shawn, could you just relate why is this topic important in our work to end abortion?

Shawn: Well I think this is one of the most important topics of the entire day. For me personally, I mean I was in college and I heard the testimonials from women who had abortions. It hit me like nothing else. Yes, I had gone out to pray at the clinic. I had gone out and sidewalk counseled. I had such compassion for women who had abortions. But the women I saw were just leaving the clinic. I had no follow up with them. I didn't know whatever happened to them in 5, 10, 20 years.

It wasn't until I heard five women pour their hearts out and share their testimonies at an event when I was in college and I really thought, this is not something I just need to volunteer weekly. I need to dedicate my life to this. I need this to be something we raise our kids on, because those women who have the courage to share their stories can touch hearts that many of us can't.

It's very powerful. We forget about what happens to these women when they leave the clinics. I can't think of a better panel than Theresa, Kevin, Georgette and Alan Parker and Carmen to share that message

with so many people who are on live with us today and listening to the recording. Take notes, open your hearts. They will definitely help you save lives in your community.

David: That's right. This is a big topic. We won't be able to cover every aspect of Hope and Healing. But we are going to do our best to give the basic fundamentals. Each of the speakers will be asked to share an additional resource or places people can go to get more information or to get more help. Hopefully you'll take advantage of that or share that with people that you know.

Also, a lot of the questions that have come in, we have so many that we could not answer every single one of them in this live session. But what we've tried to do is pick out the most frequently asked themes that came in and make sure those were a part of the questions that our presenters will be addressing during this session.

So let's go ahead and dive right in with the couple who will serve as our first presenters, Theresa and Kevin Burke. Theresa and Kevin are the co-founders of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries. They serve as pastoral associates of Priests for Life. They are both published authors.

The Rachel's Vineyard support group and retreat models are offered all over the place. I think they're up to 48 states now. Then the international outreach of Rachel's Vineyard has grown to 25 countries. Translations are in progress as we speak for Japan and Korea. More than 650 retreats are held annually world wide for hope and healing for post-abortive women and men.

Theresa and Kevin, how are you doing today?

Theresa: Oh good. Nice to be with you David.

Kevin: Very good David.

David: Well thank you so much for being here. Maybe just to give us a quick synopsis, how did you first get involved in pro-life work, but specifically in the part of the ministry, the hope and healing for post-abortive women and men?

Kevin: Theresa, you want to take that?

Theresa: I thought you were going to talk, Kevin. Anyway...

Kevin: We both were involved in adoption and home study work. We were involved with single moms, pregnant women with our work in Catholic Charities. Later we both ran a pregnancy shelter for women who were pregnant and then later gave birth. It was in that very place, very large former convent we were helping moms who were facing unplanned pregnancies and their babies, that Theresa held her first Rachel's Vineyard retreat. Is that right, Theresa?

Theresa: That's right. I got into the pro-life movement as a teenager actually. I was working at a local crisis pregnancy center. I later went on to work with adoption as Kevin said.

In graduate school is when I came upon the whole post-abortion trauma issue when I was working with women who had eating disorders. Most of the women in my group had also suffered the loss of a baby through abortion. I came to see very quickly that it was sort of a forbidden grief. I was instructed I wasn't allowed to talk about it in our support group.

As they say with any addiction, or food addiction, it's not what you're eating. It's what's eating you. Then I went on to study in a very focused way the impact, the psychological, emotional and spiritual impact on women following abortion.

David: Theresa, can you speak to that for just a moment. What kind of impact does abortion have on women?

Theresa: David, there's such a large, huge extensive continuum of reactions following abortion that may range from grief and mourning to complete and total psychosis. There's just a large continuum.

Some women are assaulted by their symptoms immediately. Other women can go on 10, 15, 20, even 30 or more years claiming that their abortion had no impact on them whatsoever and then some life event triggers open all these deeply repressed memory and feeling.

It's very confusing and bewildering to them because there's very little out there that helps connect the symptoms of anxiety and depression and all the other problems that we know exist to having its roots in a

traumatic abortion experience that might have happened a long time ago.

So we do see a lot of people who suffer pretty profound symptoms of post-abortive stress disorder where they're not aware of any impact until later. But those friends and loved ones who know them can see that something's just not right. They see them in the repeated sort of relationships where they keep experiencing painful problems. But they don't connect the symptoms they suffer to their abortion experience.

David: Kevin, as a man I'm so glad you are here on this panel, because frequently this issue is framed by abortion advocates as a women's issue, and even many times in the pro-life movement the focus is on the baby and sometimes the mother. But from your experiences with Rachel's Vineyard, how does abortion effect men? What unique challenges are there in calling men to healing?

Kevin: The longer that I'm involved in this work and the more that we see men, again from different economic classes, different races, different countries, the common denominator is they are deeply wounded by their participation in abortion. They often don't know that. Sometimes they're very connected to that reality and they're hurting. But they are deeply wounded.

One of the common themes that I see with men, particularly if their role in the abortion was anywhere from ambivalence to really pushing it, is shame. This is very deeply rooted in them. My understanding of that shame is that it's tied in closely with that instinct in men to protect the unborn, which I think is a natural thing that is written in their hearts. You have to deny that when you're involved in an abortion.

So what happens a lot of times is a man hears the news of, it's often an unplanned pregnancy. The fears take over, and anger. He wants to take control and he wants to make the problem go away. He's not listening to the other part of him that's saying, "This is my child. I need to protect it." So there's a kind of lie that enters there. That lie is, I'm not a father. I don't have to protect this child. They begin to unfortunately live that lie in many different ways in their life.

You can in some ways understand the symptoms that men have after abortion. They're living out this reality, this denying the fact that

they're fathers and that they're hurting. They have a sense of shame and guilt about their role in the abortion decision.

David: Theresa, one of the things we see a lot in women is this phenomenon of repeat abortions. Why has this become such a problem?

Theresa: Actually it's becoming an increasing problem. A few years ago when I was teaching this statistic it was 46% of women would go on and have a repeat. Now it's up to 50%. In other countries like England, the health minister and the people who are tracking abortion and the numbers, they are just a bit appalled by these high rates of repeat procedures. They'll go on and say that it's not traumatic and women are just using it as a way to control their fertility, or they might be a little bit careless.

But it has nothing to do with carelessness and it has nothing to do with not having access to contraception which they always like to say is the problem. It has everything to do with trauma. Repetition is one of the greatest indicators we have that someone has experienced trauma. It's the most reliable demonstration that we have, just the fact that they do it again, a second, a third, a fourth.

I do understand abortion as a symptom of the trauma and what we call traumatic reenactment. A lot of women out there, and I think probably men as well, don't see it that way. I think it's an important thing to understand, even among your listeners. Because so many times the woman or others perhaps looking at her after they hear she's had 8 or 9 abortions, they could think she's like evil. Many women feel that about themselves.

It's really a symptom. Our symptoms tell our story. Every symptom tells a story when someone's involved in a pattern of repeat procedures.

Just one other quick thing I want to say about this is I don't know if your listeners remember, but the APA came out right before Obama's election with this report saying that the best scientific evidence published indicates that women in unplanned pregnancy have the exact same mental health risk as a woman who is delivering her child.

They were saying that of women who were having their first elective abortion. What they failed to note was all of those women that they were saying were so stable and healthy were going on to abort a second and third time. So it just really debunks their whole sort of thesis

because we're not looking at the repeat abortion rates. It's very high, 50%. We're not looking at it as a symptom of trauma.

When a person's undergone trauma they need to work it through. A lot of people will attempt to do so by recreating the very situation which traumatized them in the first place. We could look at it as trying to get it right this time.

Anyone who's out there that's listening who is involved in crisis pregnancy counseling, you guys have all seen this a thousand times. The girl has an abortion and she's back in your clinic usually on the anniversary date of when her baby should have been due or on the anniversary of her abortion. So there's this unconscious need to finish what they started. The replacement and atonement babies we call them.

This is all part of the trauma acting itself out and telling the story and trying to resolve it. You're sort of doomed to keep repeating different aspects of a traumatic experience unless there's healing. Right away we can cut the abortion rate in half – half, by engaging in healing.

David: Wow. That is a critical part. If we want to end abortion we have to intercede with those who have been through that experience previously and help them to find freedom. Speaking of freedom, Kevin, at the time that we're doing this Ending Abortion Webcast Event, you are in the midst of gearing up to participate in Freedom Rides across the south with Dr. Alveda King who is going to be on one of our later panels.

How is this concept of freedom which will certainly be shared July 23 and 24 in Birmingham, Alabama, all the way to Atlanta, Georgia. How is this concept related to post-abortion healing, especially for men?

Kevin: What comes to mind for me is the words of Jesus, "The truth will set you free." When I think of racism I think of how much it is grounded also in lies. We know the Civil Rights movement had to fight against these lies about the dignity and humanity of the African-American. Lies which enforced racism and segregation. How did they fight these lies? They fought them with love, but also with action, non-violent action of various kinds, and with the truth.

If you think about the lies associated with racism, not only did they oppress the African-Americans and did violence to them, but it also injures those that are involved in the oppression of the people. That also hurts. They are oppressed and hurt by that.

Evil violates the dignity of the oppressed and the oppressor. Conversing them when the truth is embraced, when institutional and individual racism confronts the truth, the lies are revealed, there's freedom. It opens up at least the possibility of freedom for the oppressed, but also the oppressor.

I see these same dynamics in post-abortion healing, for those who have participated in the death of an unborn child in any way. When they begin their journey of healing it's a matter of – I talked earlier of the lie of 'I'm not a father.' Of not embracing that child not protecting that child.

David: Right.

Kevin: When you – where's the road to healing? It's about embracing the truth that you are a father. You are a father at the moment of conception. Yes, you did not protect that child. But there's an opportunity now to heal that wound because your father's heart is wounded. So in the interest of your current relationships and family life that healing is so important.

So the message of healing is the good news of freedom of letting go of those lies, of having the emotional, psychological, spiritual healing that God wants for us. Embrace the truth. There's freedom in the truth, just as there has been for the civil rights movement. I believe that's a powerful message also for the pro-life movement as well.

David: Theresa, let me give you one final question before we move to our next presenter. For anybody, whether they're on this webcast right now, whether they're listening to the recording after the fact, or whether it's somebody that's a friend of somebody who is participating in this event. For anyone who has experienced the pain of abortion, women, men, what options are available to them to find hope and healing and how can they find out more about those options?

Theresa: Well, this is good news. Actually when I started Rachel's Vineyard there actually was very little out there. You could do a Google search

today on post-abortion healing and come up with hundreds of resources. Most crisis pregnancy centers throughout the United States offer post-abortion Bible studies.

Project Rachel, an outreach of the Catholic Church offers one on one counseling with a therapist or an opportunity to go to confession with a priest. Certainly Rachel's Vineyard serves within our weekend retreats women and men and grandparents who are grieving the loss of an aborted child. Of course we're up to I think 750 retreats this year throughout the United States. So any of these resources.

There's so many books. Every week I probably get a different book a post-abortive man or woman has written and sent to us to review it. People are really breaking out of their shackles of shame and silence. They're telling their stories.

Just as Shawn mentioned at the beginning of this session, the power in these post-abortive testimonies can really change everything because...

Kevin: I'm sorry, can I add the www.RachelsVineyard.org website?

Theresa: Yeah, sure.

Kevin: You'll also find Theresa's book *Forbidden Grief*. You'll find a great book on men and abortion called *Redeeming a Father's Heart* at www.RachelsVineyard.org.

David: Great resource. I would encourage everybody to visit that website to learn more. Theresa and Kevin, thank you so much for your leadership. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for helping so many to find hope and healing in the aftermath of abortion. God bless you and thank you for your awesome leadership.

Kevin: Thank you.

Theresa: Thanks to everyone out there doing the work in the trenches. Right?

David: It takes all parts. The body is made up of many parts. Thank you so much.

Our next presenter actually is going to take that theme of sharing those post-abortion testimonies to a whole new level. That is dear friend Georgette Forney.

Georgette is the President of Anglicans for Life. She's also the co-founder with Janet Marana of the National Silent No More Awareness Campaign. She serves on the National Episcopal Church Standing Committee for National Concerns, and is also on the National Pro-Life Religious Council's Board of Directors.

Georgette, how are you doing today?

Georgette: I'm great, David. Great to be with you guys. Everybody, welcome to the conference! I'm so glad everybody's on board here.

David: Can you believe we just started talking about this event publicly just a few days ago and here we are today and over 10,000 people a part of this event throughout the day. It's amazing what technology can do. It's almost like being in front of an arena full of people. We've got a great opportunity to share the good news about life with so many.

Georgette, let me ask you to go back in time a little bit and share just very briefly how did you get started in pro-life work, and how did you come to where you are today?

Georgette: By God's grace. I had an abortion when I was 16 and for 19 years denied it. I hated thinking about it. When I would hear the word it would feel like somebody stuck a knife in my gut.

But God's grace prevailed and in 1995 I went through a healing program. It was life changing for me. I made that deal with God if He ever wanted to use my story, my daughter needed to know. She was 5 at the time. I thought I had a good 20 years. Long story short, she came to know about it. I shared my testimony at the church that we attend.

Our pastor was the President of Anglicans for Life at the time and asked me to apply for the job. I said, "Oh, I can't get involved in pro-life work. I've had an abortion. They won't like me. They won't accept me." Low and behold I found out that the pro-life community was the greatest group of people. I've been privileged to work now for 12 years as the leader of Anglicans for Life.

David: You have done profound work in the Anglican church community as well as in helping to bring a voice to those who have been hurt by abortion through the Silent No More Awareness efforts with Janet Marana of Priests for Life.

Georgette, with your personal experience of abortion yourself, with years now of working with women and men, what would be your most important advice that you would share with those who will be working in their community to save lives where they live?

Georgette: I think we have to be careful of the words that we use. That old phrase that we used when we were children, “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt.” That’s an outright lie. Words do hurt. Words do impact us.

I think that one of the things – when I thought about that question I thought we need to be a little more careful about the words we use when we are for instance in the course of a conversation or in talking to somebody referring to abortion as murder.

It’s the strangest thing, but I can talk to another post-abortive woman and we can talk about the fact that we’ve murdered our child. But when I hear another person say it, I have to really work not to let that shame just shut me down.

So we have to be conscience of when we’re working out on the sidewalk especially that we don’t – that the words we use, that we’re careful about them. Saying for instance that often times when we’re in front of a clinic we want to say something like, “You don’t have to kill your baby.” That doesn’t really come across as a conversation starter. It doesn’t come across like you care about the woman.

David: Right.

Georgette: We have to think carefully, what are the words we are using? We need to be almost prayerful in thinking about it in advance. I would say we need to think about saying something to the woman like asking her, asking the girl why she feels abortion is her only choice? That’s more realistic to engaging her. Use words that are empowering.

It's interesting, we actually have a girl living with us right now, we saved her baby. She's 20 weeks along right now. It all started because she came to me at Clarion University and said, "I'm 7 weeks pregnant and I want to have an abortion." I said to her, "There's nothing about this pregnancy that makes you weak. You are a woman. You have strength. You can do a pregnancy and go to school."

I realized that the simple words of empowering her and trying to encourage this young girl made the difference because it made her feel like she was not incapable and abortion had to be the solution because she wasn't strong enough. What I did was I tried to use words to say you can do this.

Women have been having babies forever. We can help you. When you think about using words like that, we're empowering her. We're helping her to realize she's strong and that she's capable of great things.

Especially if the abortion mill is at a university we need to think about her – where she is. Put yourself in her shoes. Is she thinking, "If I keep this baby I can't finish my schooling." So saying something to her like, are you afraid that you're going to have to drop out of school if you keep your baby? Engaging her kind of where she is and not so much where the baby is. If we engage her and win her, we win the baby and protect the baby as well.

She's thinking about it. She's been thinking about this abortion when she's at that mill. She's pretty determined. I remember being very determined that I was going to have that abortion because it was going to fix my problem. So recognizing where they are and helping the woman.

I think we need to appreciate it. As pro-lifers we know words like post-abortion and they seem normal to us. We say "post-abortion syndrome" and "post-abortion stress." Those things all come off of our tongue naturally because we think about these things and we work in these things all the time.

But if you're a woman coming out of a clinic and you hand her a pamphlet and say, "There's a post-abortion program for you if you ever want to go." She's not connecting herself and the word "post" and the word "abortion." She's just been traumatized as Theresa was saying so

eloquently. She needs somebody to connect with her and talk more about there's help for you if you ever want to talk after your abortion experience.

So thinking those things through, words are very important. Be careful of our words. Be careful of not using pro-life-ese or Christianese.

David: Absolutely. Georgette, what would you say a lot of the people who are participating in this webcast may at some point go out and pray or sidewalk counsel outside an abortion facility.

Sometimes nothing we say or nothing we do has the effect of helping that mother to feel empowered to choose life. Many times we witness a woman coming back out of the abortion facility after having that abortion. What is the best thing in maybe one minute to say to that woman after the abortion?

Georgette: Put yourself in her spot. That's the key thing. She's been traumatized. Theresa said it. She's numb. She's shocked. She might be angry. She might be sad.

At the same time she might feel relieved and anxious and she wants to put it all behind her. Maybe the boyfriend's coming out and he's just trying to get out of the whole situation and get away from everything very quickly. So we have to recognize that they're in trauma, crisis mode. We have to honor her pain and be praying for that pain.

As I've been thinking about this I thought, wouldn't it be neat if we had some sort of little gift bag if you will and in it had some brochures, and some references to the Silent No More Awareness campaign resource that they can go online and maybe hear other women's testimonies, realize they're not alone.

I was also thinking about something sweet and simple like a little handkerchief or cross, something that would let that woman know that we are connecting with her in a tender way, not in a judgmental way.

David: Let me ask you as a final question here Georgette, if somebody is listening and they know a person, a friend or family member who's gone through an abortion. What should they encourage that person to do and how can they be effective offering that encouragement?

Georgette: I think it's really important for us, especially if you've got an abortion experience in your own background, I really want to encourage you to go through a healing program. You might say, "I've made peace with God and I've worked through it."

But Theresa, Rachel's Vineyard is a brilliant program. All of these programs have great components in them that allow women to unpack why they had their abortion. If a man is involved why he led his wife or girlfriend have an abortion and how he feels about it.

The reason why this is important is that you need to be able to give testimony, but your testimony has to come out of a healed place.

David: Right.

Georgette: If you know somebody who has had an abortion, we want them to be able to speak out of their healed place because if it's not healed they can do more harm than good in trying to reach out to somebody else.

David: Georgette, is there any place that you would recommend people go to get additional resources to help them learn more about this topic or to learn more specifically about the work of Silent No More Awareness?

Georgette: The www.SilentNoMoreAwareness.org website is great. We have over 1,000 testimonies that you can actually read through. You can search them by country, state or topic. There are over 100 video testimonies now. We actually have had women take a little DVD player out to the clinic and let the women as they are coming in listen to some of the testimonies and we've saved lives that way. So it's a great resource. It's a great place where you can find all kinds of healing resources.

As Theresa said earlier, there's some fabulous books. One of the things Silent No More tries to do is be a source for all those resources. We've got a great book list on board as well.

www.SilentNoMoreAwareness.org.

David: Georgette, thank you so much for sharing. As somebody who was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania it's always great to see a pro-life leader from the Pittsburgh area that's making a profound difference across the nation and around the world. So thanks for being a part of this webcast today.

Georgette: Great to be with you all. Blessings.

David: Our next presenter in this topic of Hope and Healing for Post-Abortive Women and Men is another Texan. This is Allan Parker who hails from San Antonio, Texas. He's a dear friend I've worked alongside for quite a long time from when I lived in Texas, and even now from my vantage point on the national pro-life front.

Allan serves as the president of The Justice Foundation, has been since 1993. His organization was founded specifically to protect the fundamental freedoms and rights essential to the preservation of American society. He also, the Justice Foundation, setup the wonderful outreach called Operation Outcry. That is a ministry that reaches out to hurting women and men to help with their grief and to offer hope and healing.

Allan, how are you doing today?

Allan: I'm very blessed to be with you and the thousands of people who are listening to this and working together to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

David: Amen to that. Allan, let's get a little background. Let's help people to understand God doesn't – what's the saying? God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called. Some point along the line you got called to be actively involved in this pro-life work. How did this all come about and how did you get to where you are?

Allan: That's right. I never thought that I would be able to be here as a representative of Lisa Dudley, the National Director of Operation Outcry, and the thousands and thousands of women who have been hurt by abortion and who are now speaking out publicly about that truth.

I started out in pro-life politics actually, working to elect pro-life candidates from early '90s to 2000. I went from my precinct convention not knowing anything to going to the national convention that nominated George Bush to office.

Then to really get directly into what we're doing now, in 1997 women who had been hurt by abortion, very seriously physically hurt, began coming to us at The Justice Foundation, and some young women

lawyers from St. Mary's University School of Law came and we started a women's health protection task force that eventually grew into Operation Outcry.

David: So in addition to speaking out, the women that make up Operation Outcry, thousands of them, also give their testimony in legally admissible written form. Can you tell us a little bit about these declaration forms, how they're linked to healing after abortion. Then also, from the perspective of running the group called The Justice Foundation, how do these declarations help to bring about justice?

Allan: Well as Kevin said earlier, and as everyone in the post-abortion recovery movement knows, the truth shall set you free. When a woman can speak the truth then she's been healed. It's the shame, the secrecy and the shackles that keep her in prison for so many years after the abortion.

So we always encourage every woman we know of, and every man we know of that's had an abortion to go through the abortion recovery process. Get that freedom. Get that healing and recover your own self, your true identity, through forgiveness and healing in Jesus Christ. Then become what Jesus said we're all to become – a witness for Jesus Christ.

The whole church advances through the testimony of witnesses. In Revelation 12:11 it says, "How do they overcome Satan? By the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, and that they loved not their lives onto death." So it is the power of speaking out that breaks the lie.

When the women speak out it saves babies in the short term because even Courtney Kardashian recently had a baby and wrote on the web she read so many stories of women who felt guilty about abortion after having them that she decided to save her baby. That may have been Kim Kardashian, one of the Kardashian sisters. So when women hear how bad it is for the women, many of them save their babies.

Then we need to get those who have chosen abortion the abortion recovery. Then we need to take that truth to the United States Supreme Court because David, for the first time since *Roe v. Wade* was decided, the Supreme Court has begun banning particular types of abortion. They allowed Congress to ban partial birth abortion.

In that opinion Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing for the United States Supreme Court, the highest court of our land, said this truth. “It’s unexceptionable to conclude that some women come to regret aborting the infant life they once created and sustained.”

David: Wow.

Allan: He called it infant life, not a fetus, not potential life like *Roe v. Wade*, infant life. Then he said, “Severe depression and loss of esteem can follow.” We know what influenced his decision because he wrote it in the opinion. He cited to a brief of The Justice Foundation representing Sandra Cano who was the Mary Doe of *Doe v. Bolton*, and 180 women hurt by abortion. These women’s testimonies showed the court in writing in a legally admissible form that abortion does hurt women.

So Sandra Cano now wants to see *Doe v. Bolton*, the companion case to *Roe v. Wade* overturned. Norma McCorvey, the Roe of *Roe v. Wade* wants to see it overturned. Now thousands and thousands of women who have had abortions are coming forward to say, “You all thought this was going to help us. Instead it opens the doorway to pain and suffering. Let’s end this madness.”

That’s what Operation Outcry and Silent No More Awareness and all of the abortion recovery movements do. They heal women and they reveal the truth about what abortion does to women.

David: As you gather these declarations from thousands of post-abortive women, tens of thousands, even eventually hundreds of thousands, a million or more, and you take those to the Supreme Court. Why would the Supreme Court be interested in hearing from these women who’ve had abortions?

Allan: Alright. Justice Kennedy also wrote in that opinion. He said, “We find no reliable data to measure this phenomenon.” Phenomenon means the thing he is discussing. In other words he said how big is this problem of trauma and depression?

In layman’s terms, he’s asking how many women are hurt by abortion in America. That decision was in April of 2007. That’s why in the very same year the American Psychological Association came out with a report trying to convince Justice Kennedy that abortion is not a bad

thing. It's no worse than pregnancy. But we must get more evidence for him from women.

Everyone who is listening to this call can go to our website www.OperationOutcry.org, download the declarations and begin to hand them out to all the women in their church.

This will accomplish two things. When a woman who hasn't been healed sees it she thinks about the abortion and it has information on there where she can get the abortion recovery help that she needs. So it helps to heal the women who haven't been healed yet to know there is something they can do, get healing and speak the truth.

Then when the evidence is collected we know the Supreme Court will consider abortion again. It may not be for another year, two or three. This is a long-term battle when you're talking about the Supreme Court level. But we must be ready with thousands and thousands and thousands, a hail storm, that will break the shelter, the refuge of lies that support abortion. That's what we've got to collect for the Supreme Court.

David: Okay Allan, recap again how can people get those declarations and distribute them to others, and then once those are handed out, how are those collected? Just give us a scenario how do people actually do this?

Allan: You go to the www.OperationOutcry.org website. Google Operation Outcry and you'll find it. It has the declaration form. If you are a woman who has had an abortion you can fill it out online and sign it electronically using your own mouse to give us a legally admissible testimony signature.

If you're not a woman who has had an abortion, you're a man or woman, a pro-lifer of any kind, you can be involved. Print out that form and take it to your church. It has all the instructions on it. It says where to mail it back to us or where to go online to fill it out. So you can become what we call a declaration ambassador. You can do justice. Another way is a DA, the DA in the justice system.

The Supreme Court is asking. That's why the APA is trying to convince Justice Kennedy abortion doesn't hurt women. If you're a post-abortion counselor or you're a woman who has known abortion

personally, then Justice Kennedy is asking you show me how many women are hurt by abortion in America.

If in a few years we only have a couple of thousand he's going to say, "I guess not many are hurt. There have been a million or more abortions a year so maybe not many women are hurt."

The shame is what keeps the women silent. We have to get them healing so that they can break out of that shame. It's a healing ministry because we've got to get the women into abortion recovery programs, same way with the men, for their own sake. We don't want anybody left in that prison of darkness.

Our ministry is releasing captives and bringing hope and healing to those who need it. Then as they are healed they are able to bring the truth so that others don't have to go through the horrible misery that they went through. All of that is on our website, www.OperationOutcry.org.

The best – the other resource I just kind of want to leave with people, the National Helpline for Abortion Recovery. National Helpline for Abortion Recovery is a toll-free number. I'm going to say it in a minute. A toll-free number that any man or woman who has had an abortion can call confidentially 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

You can put this in your wallet and give it to people when they tell you in the women's Bible study or something that they've had an abortion. They can call and get the help. It refers to Christ centered Biblically based recovery programs in their area such as Rachel's Vineyard, Forgive and Set Free, any of the other great programs. That number is 1-866-4-Outcry. It's a toll free number. That's our number. Excuse me. The number is 1-866-482-Life.

David:

Okay. Allan, thank you so very much for all that you're doing. I hope people will tap into that as a resource. I hope they will also visit www.OperationOutcry.org. Get those declaration forms and help to circulate those so more people can find healing and so that voice can be heard before the United States Supreme Court.

Ultimately, we can work toward that day when abortion will finally end. God bless you Allan. I appreciate you more than you know. Keep up the great work.

Allan: Thank you, David.

David: Our final speaker on this panel on Hope and Healing for Post-Abortive Women and Men is a dear friend, and somebody who is on the board of directors of the organization that I'm blessed to work with, 40 Days for Life. That is Carmen Pate.

Carmen has so much experience with this issue. She'll share a little bit about her own personal testimony. Carmen has effectively led pregnancy center ministries and helped other pro-life organizations become more effective at what they do.

She spent a period in Washington, D.C. as the head of the largest women's advocacy agency in the United States of America. She has hosted nationally syndicated talk radio shows. She is just the most beautiful, humble woman of God. She is a dear friend.

Carmen, how are you today?

Carmen: Oh, I'm great David, and just so blessed to be a part of this.

David: Carmen, how about you share a little bit about your background. How did you get to where you are today involved in this pro-life work?

Carmen: You know, my involvement David in the pro-life movement is truly a response to God's amazing grace and mercy on my life after facing the truth and really receiving healing for my own abortion. I was determined that I was going to stand in the gap for other women who were facing an unplanned pregnancy so that they could hear truth and they could experience God's grace and healing first hand.

So David, I left my career of 17 years in the corporate world to run a pregnancy care center. I served there in the frontlines as Executive Director for over two years. What a blessing, what a reward, and how my eyes were opened. I have stayed involved as a result of that time and God's leading, stayed involved in the movement now for over 20 years.

David: Carmen, one of the places where we really see the impact of post-abortion is in all of the pregnancy care centers that we have across

America. You've had the experience of leading those types of ministries.

If somebody was to visit any of the thousands of pro-life pregnancy help centers across the country, they would discover that many of the volunteers who help day and night in these centers have themselves had at least one abortion. Why would so many formerly pro-choice women, or at least women who were willing to procure an abortion, why would they now be so adamantly pro-life?

Carmen: You know David, after experiencing negative consequences many women affected by abortion feel compelled to warn other women. I know my voice represents thousands, maybe even millions of mothers across America whose voices have yet to be heard.

Now these women, they've experienced firsthand the painful aftermath of abortion. So now they're devoting their lives to protecting their daughters, their sisters and friends from making the same choice that they made.

You know David, many like me believed that we were making the best choice for our lives when we made the difficult decision to abort. In fact, we didn't see it as killing a child. We desperately were trying to save our own lives.

After hearing the news of perhaps an unplanned pregnancy we begin to look for a quick return to normalcy. We really believed that terminating the pregnancy was the only solution. We had no idea at the time that we weren't given all the facts, the facts regarding our abortions, the facts regarding the aftermath of an abortion, not until it was too late.

There are some who choose abortion who are not as adamant in their decision. According to a 2004 study in *The Medical Science Monitor*, 64% of American women undergoing abortions said they felt pressured by others. More than 80% reported that they didn't receive adequate counseling beforehand. 79% were not counseled about alternatives. More than half said they felt rushed or uncertain before the abortion.

Now the numbers of women seeking help for physical, emotional and spiritual difficulties resulting from abortion is on the rise. Ministries offering counseling and support for women and men affected by

abortion are overwhelmed by the numbers seeking help. One such ministry David, received calls from more than 40,000 people in 2008 alone.

David: Wow. Carmen, you said many women are not given all the facts about the aftermath of abortion. What is it these women are not being told?

Carmen: Well, if you just consider a 2006 study, now David this was by a pro-choice researcher, Dr. David Ferguson. He was publishing in *The Journal of Child Psychology*. The study revealed that young women who aborted were at a higher risk for various psychological problems compared to women who carried to term or whom were never pregnant.

Now Dr. Ferguson stated those having abortion had elevated rates of subsequent mental health problems including depression, anxiety, suicidal behaviors and substance abuse disorder.

For some women the resulting physical complications have prevented them from having children later in life. Researchers in the UK for example found that women who had experienced abortion had a 60% higher risk of miscarriage in a later pregnancy.

Through various studies the attempt to refute the abortion breast cancer link. Dr. Joel Brandt, President of the Breast Cancer Institute, he presents much evidence to the contrary. Really David, his important research shouldn't be ignored.

David: Absolutely.

Carmen: Women are not told any of these things David. As tragic as these consequences are, the worst is the void that's left in the heart of each mother who has aborted her child. That's the most devastating thing. It remains a lifetime. The void results from a loss of relationship that God intended from the very moment of conception, that natural relationship between a mother and her child. Severing those ties through abortion goes against everything that her internal instincts tell her is right.

Now the good news is that there are ministries and pregnancy care centers who are equipped and available to offer counseling and support so that healing and restoration are possible. But we have to

get that message out to the millions who are still suffering from their choice.

David: Carmen, for those who are still suffering from their choice, obviously finding healing is that first step. Then Allan talked about the importance of the Supreme Court hearing from those women affected by abortion. We've got about one minute left here before we start to wrap up this panel. But do you have any word as to why it's important for Congress to hear from women affected by abortion?

Carmen: Absolutely. It appears that many members of Congress have been heavily influenced by those who discount the pain of post-abortive women. Perhaps they have not taken the time to consider the research concerning the negative effects of abortion on women and men, extended families, communities and ultimately our nation.

But if the President and our Congressional leaders are truly concerned about how policies will impact women and girls, they must consider the testimonies of women who regret their abortions, women who have been harmed by their choices.

They must acknowledge the injustice of pregnancy related abuse, widespread coercion of forced abortions. They must recognize the danger to teens and women, dangers ranging from post-abortion injuries to trauma, and perhaps even death. The least Congress can do David, is show compassion for the survivors of these injustices by listening to the heart cry of post-abortive women.

David: That will be a day when we will see transformation continue, and more and more lives will be saved from abortion and more and more people will find healing. Carmen, as we wrap up this session, is there any additional resource or anything you would recommend for people who want to learn more about this or about you and your work?

Carmen: Absolutely. Abortion Recovery International, ARIN, is a network of resources that provide information concerning after abortion issues. Their website is www.AbortionRecovery.org.

You can learn more about me, stay in touch with me through www.40DaysforLife.org, or also on Facebook or LinkedIn.

David: Alright Carmen, thank you so much. I appreciate you sharing your heart and helping people to understand the importance of helping those find hope and healing, sharing their testimonies with Congress, and helping women to know what abortion really does cause – the harm to women, the harm to men. Thank you. I appreciate you more than you possibly know. Thank you for being a part of this webcast.

Carmen: Thank you David.

Allan: David, this is Allan Parker. Can I mention one more thing? Women can do their declarations confidentially on our website. Not every woman has to be as bold as Carmen and Georgette and the other women speaking out super-publically on radio and TV. They can do it confidentially at the www.OperationOutcry.org website.

David: Alright, thank you. We've covered a lot of great resources. We've given a lot of resources for people. Again, this is just the beginning.

If somebody is now listening who themselves has been through the pain of abortion, I would encourage you to take the first step and begin that healing process to find the forgiveness that our Savior, Jesus Christ offers to each and every one of us. Then once you have found that healing to begin to offer it to others.

For those of us who have not personally been directly affected by abortion, when we meet people who have, being able to plug them in with many of the great resources we've heard about today.

In just a moment Shawn our co-host will wrap up in maybe one sentence a quick summary of what we've done during this session. I want to thank Kevin and Theresa Burke, Georgette Forney, Allan Parker, Carmen Pate. You've all done an amazing job. Shawn, any quick closing thoughts on what we've done and what we've heard on this panel?

Shawn: I thought it was amazing that all these presenters stuck with the trauma that abortion causes women, that 50% of women repeat abortions who have one. I just thought Georgette, Allan and Carmen, this was so powerful.

They showed the pain of abortion but also, and Allan mentioned this earlier, how much healing can come from sharing and how many

hearts you can touch, whether you do it confidentially or you are on the radio, TV or church groups.

But the fact that these post-abortive women have such a huge role in the pro-life movement because they can touch lives that most of us can't.

David:

Absolutely. Well this Ending Abortion Webcast Event, we're going to be closing out this session on Post-Abortive Healing for Women and Men and moving on to the next session which is on Legislative and Political Efforts. We'll continue to build on everything we've accomplished during the first seven hours of this mega event.

If you've been enjoying this event it's been organized by 40 Days for Life. That's the organization Shawn and I are blessed to work with. The website is www.40DaysforLife.com.

Also we've had a lot of help co-organizing with Students for Life of America, www.studentsforlife.org.

I also want to encourage you if you want to move on to the next topic or listen to recordings of any of the previous topics, all you need to do is go to www.EndingAbortion.com/event and you can listen to the next session that we'll be covering.

To whom much is given, much is expected. You've been blessed I believe throughout this panel and throughout this entire event. If you have benefited from this, if you think this information has been beneficial to you, please share it with others. Tell others to go to www.endingabortion.com.

We are giving it away freely to you. Use it any way you can to save more lives where you live.

That brings us to the end of this session. Let's press forward as we rededicate ourselves today to the work of ending abortion. God bless you. Thanks. We'll talk to all of you soon.