

Relinquishment

By Nancy M. Stroppel



The snow's luster was gone. Only dingy mounds remained while winter held the earth in its death-grip. Pale-gray hues of frozen ground cast even darker hues over nagging doubts. Bleak thoughts sank into my chilled soul as I left work. 'Lord, have I made a difference for You in anyone's life? Have I ever produced any worthwhile fruit?' Before going home, I stopped for a haircut at the shop I frequented. A new, bright-faced woman draped the bib over my shoulders. The mid-twentyish stylist bubbled with conversation, asking where I hailed. We discovered we were from the same town. As this fair-haired stranger snipped, we discussed non-essentials. The stylist said "hello" to people walking behind us. Turning my head slightly, I caught a glimpse of a nice looking man, young boy, and an even younger girl. Continuing the haircut, she explained with pride that the three were her family. They would spend the evening together once she finished her shift. Not missing a clip, her conversation turned to an event from her high school past—an abortion debate. "I became pregnant soon after," she tersely recounted. "When I remembered the words spoken by the woman who debated for Life, I knew I could not abort my baby. My boy is now nine-years old." Stunned, I tried to get a glimpse of her son without getting my ear clipped.

Ten years prior, I was the pro-life advocate for a debate at the local school. My opponent, representing Planned Parenthood, was a self-confident, ACLU lawyer. Barely arriving at the wire and appearing disheveled, he scribbled notes on a scrap of paper just in time for the opening remarks to the capacity-packed crowd. I knew my strategy had to be forceful. Truth had not come from the media; Truth was blocked

from the newspaper and airwaves. It was forced underground, not by choice, but by censorship. I had fifty-minutes to impact Life-choices for eternity, so I arrived armed for battle. The life-sized, preborn replica carried its Truth message well as each student cradled it in one palm. Reverence filled the room as all comprehended the so-called “mass of tissue” was indeed a tiny human. My arguments also enumerated the dramatic parallels of the Dred Scott and Roe v. Wade cases—judicial decisions which stripped protection for specific, defenseless people groups. The lawyer’s case rested upon his boastful claim to defend women’s rights. Pointedly, I asked my opponent how he could ignore the compelling rights of the unborn. His reply was that women’s rights supersede the rights of the unborn. He defended the “right to choose” to abort the baby. Shifting his remarks to the safety of abortion, I became aware of the lawyer’s Achilles heel. “If you are committed to the defense of women,” I pounced, “why did you not investigate the rumor of a woman dying from an abortion performed at a local clinic?” Startled, he denied the incident. “Why did you choose to conceal this matter from the media? Where is your concern for the safety of other women?” Denial, again. “How can you justify legally representing that clinic?” Silence. “Rumor is, the clinic postponed calling an ambulance. Is this true?” Cornered, the lawyer struggled to salvage his reputation. Desperate, he admitted that a woman did indeed have abortion complications. Exposed, he confessed the clinic summoned an ambulance, but she died before arriving at the hospital. Deceit relinquished. Darkness succumbed. Truth triumphed.

Finishing my haircut, the stylist brushed the hair off my neck and shook the bib. “I was the woman you heard speak for Life ten years ago,” I revealed in a hushed tone. The young woman was oblivious to my disclosure. She was too enthralled with the wonderful gifts from God—her thriving son, loving husband and father, and beautiful daughter. She didn’t care who the messenger was, only that she had yielded to the message. Stepping out into the brisk air, I rejoiced that the lifeless winter would soon relinquish to spring.