



# Ramah's Voice

## Help Wanted: Post-Abortion Ministry Leaders Who Aren't Post-Abortive!

By Sydna A. Massé

If you've attended one of my conferences, you've probably heard me welcome non-post-abortive attendees by saying, "never be ashamed of not having an abortion!" This comment is always met with laughter. Half of all our conference attendees fit the category of "called by God but never experienced abortion." What a delight it is to affirm and thank them for caring enough to minister to our wounded hearts. Many thank me for this open welcome because they felt **disqualified** from this ministry. My hope is that this article will not only encourage you non-PAS folks and help you recruit more to help reach wounded hearts!

### Job Qualifications

I strongly feel God has directed me to dispel the myth that you must be post-abortive to be involved in this ministry. Many post-abortion ministries even discriminate against those who aren't post-abortive because they believe their influence could hurt or interfere with their group's healing. Some even believe it could hinder "confidentiality." It angers me to hear how wonderful people, clearly called of God, are rejected from ministry on this superficial basis.

Consider the comparison of other aspects of life to show the foolishness of the theory that you have to have an abortion to work in this ministry:

- A veterinarian has never been an animal. Does that mean they can't help animals?
- Male OB/GYN's have never experienced childbirth. Are they, therefore, precluded from delivering babies?
- Pastors haven't experienced all forms of sin. Are they only allowed to counsel about the sins they have experienced?
- Many pregnancy care center advocates were abstinent until marriage. Does this make them ineffective to minister to those in crisis pregnancy situations?

Another interesting fact is that many of the early leaders of post-abortion research and healing weren't post-abortive! These individuals include Teri Reisser (Author, Help for the Post-Abortive Woman), Dr. Theresa Burke (founder, Rachel's Vineyard), Fr. Frank Pavone (Priests for Life), Dr. David Reardon (The Elliott Institute), Dr. James C. Dobson (Focus on the Family), etc. We wouldn't have begun to reach post-abortive hearts if these folks had considered themselves disqualified to help! Their anointing has been obvious and God has made them all critical players in the work to end abortion.

Everyone is on common ground at the foot of the cross. No sin outshines another in God's perspective. By obeying the Lord in following this leading you will be a window to the Christian community that tells these individuals that you love and don't judge them. While this may not be the easiest ministry role, if God is before you, who can be against you?

The bottom line for helping the post-abortive is that you are called by God and receive training. We have too few healed post-abortive individuals who can endure working around the abortion issue for long periods of time. The pro-life movement cannot afford to turn away anyone God has led to this work and who has been trained for this ministry.

### Job Benefits:

**Isaiah was a prophet sent to preach the truth to the people of Israel. A passage from Isaiah 61:1-3, 7 (NIV) highlights the mission he had from the Lord:**

*"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captive and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—*

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Ramah's Voice membership:  
suggested donation  
\$20/year (6 issues)

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*to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.*

*Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion,  
and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance;  
and so they will inherit a double portion in their land,  
and everlasting joy will be theirs”*

Isaiah 61:1-3, 7 (NIV)

What an incredible passage that describes your role in this ministry! You are sent as an encourager to comfort all who mourn. Before He formed you in your mother's womb, God established you as one to reach these hearts. He gave you various talents and experiences that would allow you to mesh perfectly with these wounded hearts. Your reward will be that you are allowed to see God transform them into “oaks of righteousness” for the display of His splendor.

### **Biblical Role Model – Ruth**

One of my favorite Bible stories is about the Moab woman named Ruth. Through her mother-in-law, Naomi, she became a devoted follower of the living God. When her husband died, and Naomi decided to return to Israel, Ruth wanted to go along. She said in **Ruth 1:16b (NIV)**, *“for wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people and your God, my God.”* Leaving her family and homeland behind, she showed her love for Naomi and her faith in God.

Ruth was entering a new territory where she didn't belong. Israel law, as stated in Deut. 23:1-4, didn't make marrying a Moabite illegal but it did **exclude** them from the congregation of Israel for ten generations. She must have known that her chances of marrying again within the Israel community could be small and that the possibility of rejection was nearly guaranteed. Yet she wouldn't leave her mother-in-law alone to fend for herself regardless of the cost to her personally. God rewarded such loyalty many times over. God not only provided for her, He placed her in His messianic family line. Her son, Obed would be the ancestor of King David and, ultimately, Jesus Christ.

Ruth was compassionate and had a love for the God of Israel and a desire to follow Him. The same is true for every ministry leader. If God is leading, He will go before you to ensure the success of your efforts when you operate in a Biblical manner.

### **Suggested Experience**

While the call of God and training are essential elements to participating in this ministry, there are other aspects of your background that might enhance your credentials.

**Grief Background** – Everyone has experienced grief. Whether it comes from losing a parent or a beloved pet, grief is a natural part of our lives. Therefore, everyone can relate to many of the emotions encountered in post-abortion ministry. If you have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or any other form of fetal loss, you can clearly feel sympathy with post-abortive emotions.

**Second Degree Post-Abortion Trauma** – When someone close to you chooses abortion, you can become post-abortive to a certain extent. This is especially true with family members of the aborted child. Grandparents, siblings of the post-abortive woman or the aborted child, as well as those who might have encouraged/participated in an abortion, can feel PAS pain as well. Maybe you have counseled a woman who chose abortion despite knowing the truth. You are connected to that aborted child and comprehend their loss when they are aborted. This connection is particularly qualifying in ministry. In fact, I would consider you post-abortive!

**Personal knowledge of sin's consequences** – The emotions of shame, guilt, anger, forgiveness, bitterness, and resentment relate to many sin issues. Always be sure to use your own sin issues to find common ground with the individuals in your groups.

**Previous bible study group facilitation or grief counseling/ministry** – There are excellent bible study leaders who have worked through all sorts of sin issues and would be wonderful in the post-abortion arena. Those who are fluent in the “Experiencing God” or Kay Arthur's “Lord Heal My Hurts,” can translate easily into this work. Again, they need to be trained on post-

abortion ministry issues because it can be an entirely different group of individuals than regular church bible studies.

### Team Environment

#### Post-Abortive Workers

With constant spiritual warfare that relates to pregnancy care work, the post-abortive can be targets of incredible pressure at home and work. This can lead to instability. Outside influences such as trouble at home can equally weaken them. Topics in the group can stretch them farther than they can emotionally handle. This is particularly true when the tales are overwhelming and they are struggling to be an emotional support. This can lead them to abdicate their leadership position and join the group's emotional level. I speak from my own experience and thank my non-post-abortive friends who have helped me continue to cope during some of these stressful periods.

Non-post-abortive workers can provide stability during the harder sessions. They can be the calming influence in the group when emotions are running high. While you may also endure the spiritual warfare, Satan simply cannot push your buttons in the same way because you have never had an abortion!

#### Pregnancy Center Client Advocates

One of the main rules in pregnancy centers is that if you have had an abortion, you must sit through the PAS program before you can advise women considering abortion. This is to ensure the advocate's emotional health. Yet the same should be true of the non-PAS counselors. At the very least, they should have training in post-abortion trauma and how it relates to pregnancy care ministry. (See "Ramah's Resource Corner" on page 4 for information on one-day seminars that can provide this education.)

Considering the fact that nearly half of all women (43%<sup>1</sup>) are post-abortive, most pregnancy care client rooms are filled with post-abortive women. Of the 43% who experienced abortion, 44% will have multiple abortion experiences.<sup>2</sup> It's essential that everyone who works with the abortion-minded understand the post-abortive thinking process. With this background, they will be able to empathize with where the client is when considering abortion and educate them as to the psychological, spiritual and emotional consequences of abortion. There is nothing better than to be able to say, from experience, "I know many post-abortive women who feel this way...." It guarantees to the client that you are not judgmental and helps establish trust.

### Apply Within

When you consider that there have been over 40 million abortions in the US alone since 1973, it's easy to compare the post-abortive population to the situation described in **Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV)**:

*"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"*

With only a small amount of ministry efforts occurring around our world, the post-abortive are certainly harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. God is calling you. Will you accept the position? Please take the time to search your heart and carefully consider whether you can commit some time to working with our wounded hearts. I promise that your compassionate heart will be put to good use and that God will continue to bless your efforts.

<sup>1</sup> "Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion," The Alan Guttmacher Institute, Washington, D.C., January 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Job Expectations: Expect Rejection

Ruth was ready for rejection when she followed Naomi home because she was of a different nationality. You should initially expect the same thing. During my own post-abortion healing class, I held a certain amount of resentment against an observer who confessed she wasn't post-abortive. While one of my group leaders wasn't post-abortive, she was a counselor and therefore qualified to be involved in the work.

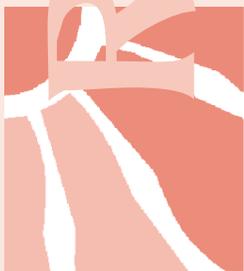
Be prepared for the fact that some women will dislike you for various reasons until they learn to trust you and/or have victory over the spiritual warfare rampage going on in their souls. **Never take this rejection personally because they don't know you well enough to hate you!** Keep in mind Jesus' words in Luke 6:22-23a (NIV):

*"Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven."*

You could remind them of someone who encouraged their abortion, or of their mother whom they are struggling to forgive. Or you could just bear the brunt of their anger against Christian society. Whatever reason, don't take it personally but be willing to handle any emotions they may throw at you. Some simply won't be able to help themselves! The Lord will need to tame their wild spirit before they will understand and be able to accept the love you have for them.

Their initial reaction doesn't mean you are hindering their ability to receive God's healing. It means that Satan is working overtime and encouraging them to hate you. Spiritual warfare is a known fact in this ministry because in abortion, one is dead and one is wounded. If you help the wounded to heal, Satan's grip is weakened/eliminated and God gains the victory. Patience is necessary. When God's hand overshadows Satan's words, you will have the incredible blessing of watching the person set free from this sin.





## Back in the High Life Again...

Working at Focus on the Family was one of the greatest experiences of my life. As a member of Dr. Dobson's staff I received immediate attention and respect from individuals and organizations. I didn't realize when I left to start Ramah how many of my friendships would be affected and the intense loneliness of working in the outside world.

In those initial lonely times, God took the time to *"hide me in the shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock"* (Psalms 27). When former friends wouldn't return my calls, God allowed me to look down at the world from a different perspective. I was learning that my "clout" had nothing to do with Focus but everything to do with Him! He was letting me know who my "true" friends really were as well as my enemies. For every lost friendship, ten more were added.

God doesn't leave us in hiding for long. He sent many former Focus employees to comfort me who understood my loneliness. God would later use me to comfort others making a similar transition. After six years of God proving He was behind our ministry, most now want to speak to me!

Knowing when to move on in ministry is a critical aspect of trusting God. If the Lord is changing your part in ministry to something new or more defined, embrace His will. His leading you to another "season" will build on the experience you have gained in your present ministry. God doesn't waste anything! Trust His plan for you and praise Him in spite of the trouble you may feel. If you need a friend, I'm here for you!

*Sydna A. Massé*

### Ramah's Resource Corner: One-Day Seminars

In 2003, Ramah changed to a low-cost, one-day seminar format. Our goal is to provide in-depth training to pregnancy care volunteers and staff, along with church workers, in how post-abortion trauma affects their clients, their own emotions and ministry. For the price of the training manual (\$25), a meal, and a love offering for Ramah, attendees can come for less than \$40. Due to the low-cost, most are even paying their expenses to attend. We are able to reach a new audience that might never have attended our full conferences.

If you are interested in sponsoring a Ramah seminar, the requirements are minimal. By helping us secure a location (normally a church), lunch food and local promotion, we can assist you in your training needs. You can also specify the topics we will cover. Please call today for more information.

### From the Word of God:

*"For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD."*

*Psalms 27:5-7*