



# Ramah's Voice

a ministry of Ramah International, Inc.

## Children of the Light

### The Abortion-Vulnerable: Children of Pregnancy Center Workers

By Sydna A. Massé

Since I started working with pregnancy care centers in 1991, I've heard many heartbreaking stories from directors and staff about their own children's experiences with crisis pregnancy situations. Pregnancy center workers are modern day missionaries despite the fact that they might not often consider themselves in this position.

Because we are involved in ministry, our children are vulnerable to attack just like any other preacher's kid (PK) or missionary kid (MK). In order to stifle ministry efforts, the enemy can entice our children through rebellious thoughts that can lead to dysfunctional behavior. In this article my desire is to highlight this risk and provide solutions that our movement can use to protect our children from these attacks.

### Model Behavior

I was born a PK, the daughter of a Baptist minister. I learned early in life that I was to always be a "good example" for others. The rules and regulations laid out for my life were different from my friends. Unfortunately, these rules were imposed with hypocrisy and were confusing. Leadership among my peers was expected because I represented my dad and the church.

Children of ministry leaders are expected to emulate their parents. This is especially true in the area of sexual purity. MK's are open to spiritual attack at a young age, increasing their risk to inappropriate sexual behavior, which can

reflect negatively on their parents' ministry. The anxiety of having to perform can cause a powder keg of issues to boil in their souls.

An awareness of this potential is essential to avoid an explosion of rebellion. Communication and truth with God's Word can break the enemy's power and save our children from the painful consequences of poor choices.

Our children deserve just as much grace, time and energy as anyone else's kids. We need to make sure that we have taken time with them to know their hearts and earn their respect before helping others. It's essential that we know what is going on in their lives so we will recognize when something may be wrong.

Respect is developed through time, love and nurturing. I believe this principle is the essence of the famous "family" verse in I Timothy 1:1-5 (NIV):

*Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.*

*He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.*

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### **Sacrificing Our Own**

Another element about my upbringing was that people in the church seemed more important to my father than his family. They would call at all hours of the day and night and my father would leave us to be with them. The emotional duties of running a church often left him devoid of any sensitivity for his own family.

To cope with his absence I would focus on the accomplishments of his ministry. I remember watching on Sunday mornings as people came down the aisle to accept Christ after his sermons. My heart soared with pride that my father was doing so much for the Lord. I reasoned that if he was helping others to know God, I could easily sacrifice my own time with him. As I grew older, this perspective was difficult uphold because even on vacation my father spent little time with me. I eventually concluded that I wasn't worthy of his attention. I started searching for his lost love in the arms of other men.

Helping wounded individuals and being used by God to save children from abortion is a labor of life and death and extremely important. But it can consume our time and energy, leaving little for our families. When our children see us giving more of our time to strangers, resentment and bitterness may take root, encouraging a low self-image. Their subsequent search for someone to pay attention to them may result in crisis pregnancies.

### **Avoiding Exasperation**

I once asked my oldest son how he would feel if I shared my testimony at his youth group. His response was quiet and direct, "I'd have to kill you, Mom." His point wasn't driven by disgust or anger. It was delivered with humor but had a strong message. His youth group was HIS territory. It wasn't my testimony that bothered him. It wouldn't have mattered if I was talking to his friends about "hanging wallpaper." He wanted his youth group to be his own private world. I smiled and said, "Okay. I promise never to talk there without your permission." I knew there were others I could refer who were available to talk to his youth group. God would later provide many natural "teachable moments" with his friends to share about my work and the reason I am an abstinence speaker.

The apostle Paul says in Ephesians 6:4, *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.* The Encarta Dictionary defines exasperation as an, "annoyance and frustration, often caused by an irritation that cannot be overcome or stopped." I wonder how many of us forget to consider our family's opinion before sharing our convictions to their "world".

Without their consent, we could embarrass them in front of their peers. This can lead to resentment, mistrust, and rebellion. It's better to make sure we are providing them some degree of control before treading on their hearts inadvertently.

### **Perceived Confidentiality**

Another time, Bruce and I drove by our local pregnancy care center. He made an interesting remark that hit a part of my heart. He said, "If I ever thought a girlfriend of mine was pregnant, I would never take her there!" I asked, "Why not?" His response was simple, "Because they all know you there, Mom. I'm not sure they would keep my visit a secret from you."

God used that comment to provide a picture of our entire movement. No wonder so many directors and staff report that they have discovered their children have had abortions!

Our children are not assured of confidentiality in our centers! Our centers may not be accessible to our kids. While we may relay that their visit will be a secret, many may not be able to trust that answer. *This is one of the main reasons our children turn to Planned Parenthood for help!* It's the only place they feel they can be ensured of privacy and their fears can drive them to into the hands of the enemy!

How can we ensure confidentiality for our own children at our centers? We should first start with an honest discussion of this possibility with our children and encourage everyone in our ministry to do the same. We have fire drills at our places of work and in our homes, why not "crisis pregnancy" drills? We can initialize "stop, drop and roll" procedures that will ensure that they don't inadvertently head into the "burning building" of pro-choice forces.

That day Bruce and I talked about centers in other cities and how he could find their information in the Yellow Pages under "Abortion Alternatives." Centers in other cities may be the best place for our kids to find confidential help and retain anonymity. The Internet is also a great resource because they don't have to use their real names in making first contact. Feel free to give children of your ministry leaders my personal e-mail of [sydna@aol.com](mailto:sydna@aol.com) as someone they can talk to should they be afraid to approach you! I also told Bruce that no matter what the situation, his father and I would love him. I repeat that message often.

## Conclusion

The best way to relieve pressure on our children is to let the let off a little steam gradually. Asking them questions about how they feel about your work is a great start. A good place to have these conversations is in the car because of the lack of eye contact. Questions like, "What do you think I do at the pregnancy center?" or "Do you think I spend too much time away from home?" can often jump start communications and provide insight into their true feelings.

Relaying success stories of God's using you also helps our children understand that while they may have to surrender some time with you, that sacrifice is saving lives. When you are home, give them your full attention. The Lord can help you forget the trials of the day for a time when you see their beautiful faces and understand that they need your attention too!

For those of you who have already had children experience the heartache of sexual activity outside of marriage, take hope in God's hand on their lives. The Lord used all of my poor choices, including an abortion, for His own good. His hand never left my heart, and He protected me through many dark moments. Many of us are prodigal sons and daughters who have returned home to enjoy the love and forgiveness that Christ offers. As a result, our potential to help others in similar circumstances is enhanced.

Our children can eventually follow our ministry footsteps because of the Lord's power, mercy and grace. Remember the words of Solomon in Proverbs 14: 26-27, *He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.*

## Providing Them Perspective

It is often difficult for our children to physically comprehend the incredible Godly results of our work. Many of our clients could be kids they go to school with, so confidentiality is an issue. Yet there are other ways to allow them to understand how the Lord is using you.

One precious memory of my father was the night we spent at a local Rescue Mission. My dad preached a sermon to a group of homeless people, many of whom I remember to be drunk, filthy and sick. That fact didn't bother me. In fact, it grew my compassionate heart.

When the service was closed by singing "The Old Rugged Cross," many cried and got down on their knees and worshiped the Lord. The seeds of ministry were planted in my heart and when I hear that hymn, tears come to my eyes as I relive that precious memory. Afterwards I stood with my father and served these wounded souls dinner. It was one of the few times I was actually able to participate in his ministry.

Our children need a perspective of the work God is doing during our time away from them. Allowing them to attend banquets where testimonies are offered is a good first step. Bringing them along on hospital visits when we are visiting the mothers and babies who were saved because they visited your center is another powerful witness to their hearts. Permitting them to work in your center – i.e., sorting through baby clothes, helping with office work — can give them an opportunity to participate in a powerful work of the Lord.

This "inside" perspective of clients can also afford them a first-hand perspective of the importance of remaining abstinent. While we don't expect them to become leaders until they are called by God, our children can certainly benefit from being a more tangible part of our ministry.



### Using the "A" Word Gently

*I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves . . . At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Matthew 10:16, 19-20*

Many of us have a common dislike of being associated with the word "abortion." It seems like every time I meet someone new, the first question is, "What do you do for a living?" When I was truthful with a new neighbor, the smile fled her face and she turned around and has yet to address me kindly again. I asked the Lord that day, "Is there anyway I can do something else for a living? I hate having this effect on people!" Sound familiar?

One man was in a delightful mood as he sat down next to me in Atlanta on a plane bound for California. That's a four hour flight – a long time to be next to someone who may not like my pro-life perspective. He was particularly talkative and God gave me that nudge that this seat mate was a divine appointment. I answered his query on the purpose of my trip. Before long we were involved in a conversation where he confided that his wife was post-abortive. He was shocked when those words came out of his mouth. God would open my eyes to the pain and misunderstanding the spouses of the post-abortive may feel. I believe God used me to give him some insight into his wife's heart as well as a copy of my book.

Another night I was at a friend's house who was familiar with our work. There were several men around the table and I chatted about Ramah, easily mentioning the word "abortion" several times. Later my husband would ask, "Can't there just be one night when the topic of abortion doesn't come up? Those guys went under the table emotionally when you said that word, Sydna. I don't think they heard anything after that." I clearly hadn't shared about this topic in a "gentle" way. I've been prayerful since then when introducing the topic of abortion into general conversations.

There are times when we don't have to talk about this subject and times when we must. I've learned to keep the "a" word out of normal conversation unless the Lord specifically prompts me to share. While I'm always open to sharing about His grace and mercy, sometimes we need to be as gentle as doves and recognize when we are allowed a night free from the "a" word!

#### Ramah's Resource Corner:

##### From the Heart: Daily Encouragement for God's Workers

Sydna Masse has encouraged many through her writings. They have been particularly enjoyed by pregnancy care center workers and women in ministry. This booklet contains 30 one-page devotionals that include a scripture and personal thoughts from Sydna as they relate to her personal growth the Lord and ministry issues. This is an excellent booklet for anyone involved in ministry and can be used daily to bring on-going encouragement to God's "life" workers.

To order this booklet, or others, use the enclosed order card, call 1-866-807-2624 or visit our website at:

[www.ramahinternational.org](http://www.ramahinternational.org)  
(Suggested donation is \$5 or 15 for \$70)

Sydna A. Masse

#### From the Word of God:

Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

II Corinthians 2:14-17 (NKJV)