



Life Insight

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Touched by the Truth

It's remarkable how a fantasy-based, sometimes sappy TV show featuring angels disguised as ordinary folks can pack more profound truth into one hour than a month of nightly news programs! That's precisely what writer/producer Martha Williamson accomplished in a recent episode of *Touched by an Angel* called "The Empty Chair." Bucking the Hollywood establishment and its "pro-choice" ethic, Ms. Williamson displayed unmatched courage and insight into the aftermath of abortion.

As newlyweds in Boston, Betsy and Bud Baxter wanted nothing more than to work together on a television show. An offer from an Omaha station to co-host "Breakfast with the Baxters" seemed their first big step on the road to fame and happiness. Fifteen years later, when new station owners abruptly cancel their show, the Baxters are devastated by the loss of their jobs, of their dream, of all that had given their life meaning, and, apparently, of all that had been holding them together.

They bitterly vent their disappointment and grief at each other until the arrival of stranded travelers (the angels Monica and Andrew) give Betsy and Bud the chance to tell their stories separately to a compassionate listener. It's not long before the underlying problem surfaces—the unspoken issue that stood between them since accepting the Omaha job: that the only child they'd ever conceived was "lost" shortly before moving there.

When Betsy learned of this pregnancy, she spontaneously bought a little baby jumper. Bud reacted negatively to the news. He thought only of how a child could disrupt their career plans on the eve of their first big break. When Bud left for several days to attend a friend's wedding,

Betsy dutifully took care of the problem with an abortion. She told Bud only that she had "lost" the child.

Betsy tried to conceal her grief, submerging it in work. The sorrow and pain did not go away, but silently, stealthily robbed her of joy, of sleep, of the ability to feel close to her husband, of the ability simply to relax and open herself to life.

Bud is torn between wanting to know if their child was aborted and wanting to avoid the question, to protect Betsy and himself from painfully confronting what they had done. Bud struggles to forget, and bristles at the first hint of a discussion of their loss. His reaction is common; surveys have shown that up to 80% of marriages/relationships end in the months following an abortion. With dawning understanding, however, Bud tells Andrew: "Ironic, isn't it? You make all these plans for the future and then one day it's the wrong future and you don't have what you sacrificed for."

Betsy has always understood the full weight of the sacrifice she made for the sake of their marriage and their career: "You know, Monica, they can talk all they want about politics and choices and rights. I did. And then you're in that room and you're putting your clothes back on and you know that when you walk out that door, you're leaving a piece of your soul behind that you'll never get back."

Overly dramatic? Time and again, women who've experienced abortion describe a similar wrenching loss of part of themselves, their spirit or their soul. (Numerous examples can be found at www.hopeafterabortion.com, a website supporting the Project Rachel post-abortion ministry.)

Post-abortion anguish can be seen on many websites. On www.afterabortion.com, for example, predominantly "pro-choice" women try to support each other in their grief. This site even contains a section called Media Warnings—programs and movies to avoid because some situation or remark in them could break through post-abortion coping mechanisms to trigger emotional and psychological crises. Warning entries seem to include everything relating to babies, happy families and, of course, abortion.

Betsy has wrongly concluded that a lifetime of sorrow is simply "the price you pay" for aborting a child. Monica gently corrects her: "It's the consequence of a choice, but it's not a punishment from God. That's not how He works." Monica reminds Betsy and Bud of the truth that so often eludes those involved in an abortion: God cherishes them and does not reject them for having rejected His gift of a child. He asks only that they open their hearts to Him, so He can heal them and make them whole again. God wants them to find consolation and joy in His love and in their mutual love for Him and one another.

How was Martha Williamson able to give flesh and life to this essential truth, and all the hurt and sorrow, the anger and lashing out, the loneliness and terror of the abortion aftermath? The episode was inspired by her own experience following an abortion. Through post-abortion counseling, she has found forgiveness and peace—and she offers this story so women contemplating abortion will seek a life-affirming solution for themselves and their children.

She deserves our support and encouragement. Write *Touched by an Angel*, c/o CBS/MTM Studios, 4024 Radford Ave., Studio City, CA 91604 or e-mail her at fanmail@touched.com. The telephone comment line is 323/ 575-2200.