

## PIECE OF MIND

*Jessica Martin*

# *What About the Mom?*

**M**ore than one million abortions are performed in the United States each year!"

The young woman continued, with compelling conviction, to speak of the rights of the unborn child – the child created in God's image.

I was glad my church was taking a stand and that the pastor had invited a pro-life speaker. I agreed with everything she was saying, but my heart cringed at the way she said it.

I remembered the day a dear friend asked me to come over for lunch. For the past few weeks Linda\* had been unusually quiet and pale. I had been worried about her.

"I'd love to," I replied. "But please don't fuss."

I didn't need to worry. When I got to her house, I was amazed at the clutter. Linda always had been a fastidious housekeeper.

"What's troubling you, Linda?" I asked. "You haven't been yourself for weeks."

"I – I haven't told this to anyone," she said. "Please promise me you won't repeat it. I feel so awful for what I've done." She began to sob.

I reached for her hand. "Nothing you have done could be that awful," I said.

"But it is! God will never forgive me. I'll never forgive myself."

Haltingly she told me how she hadn't been feeling well. When she went to the doctor, she learned she was pregnant.

"I didn't see how I could be.

Tom and I had decided after Susan was born that three children were enough. We were taking precautions. But – but I was, and the doctor said it wasn't a normal pregnancy. He recommended an abortion."

**"I killed my baby," she sobbed. "How can God forgive me?"**

Linda struggled to control her sobs.

"I didn't want to have one. I knew it was wrong, but the doctor kept saying it was for the best – that my own health was being endangered. Oh, Jessie, it was awful. Not just the physical pain, but the feeling that a part of me was being ripped from me. It wasn't easy like he said it would be. I – I wish I had died along with my baby."

"No, Linda. No, you don't," I said trying to comfort her, Linda just shook her head as tears continued to stream down her cheeks.

"You did what the doctor recommended. God knows that. He isn't blaming you."

"I killed my baby," she sobbed. "How can God forgive me for that?"

I prayed with her and tried to assure her of God's forgiveness. We talked for another hour but I'm not

sure anything I said helped.

Linda never again mentioned the abortion. It was obvious she wanted me to forget what she'd told me. Eventually she moved and I lost touch with her. But I never forgot her.

My thoughts flashed back to the present. Were there other Linda's in the congregation? Were they still struggling with remorse and guilt? And what of the ones who were victims of rape or incest? Or those who had been frightened unwed mothers?

I'll probably never know how those words affected the women who were listening that day, but I do know how they affected me. I saw how I was guilty of using the same strong rhetoric as the speaker. In my crusade to save the lives of unborn babies, I had undoubtedly inflicted pain on the mothers who had aborted them. Instead of ministering comfort, hope, and forgiveness, I, too, had spoken words of accusation and condemnation. I had forgotten how Jesus Christ died for their sin as well as for mine.

"God, forgive me," I prayed. "Help me to care not just about the unborn baby but also about the mom – to love her as much as You do."

■ *Piece of Mind is designed to make you aware of current thought on issues facing the church. Views expressed are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of the Wesley Biblical Series. Jessica Martin is a free-lance writer from Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania.*

\*Name has been changed