

*After*CHOICE Symposium 2011 Reflections

“What a fantastic, soul-stirring, eye-opening event!!” From one pastor, “Great insight....The [Tilly] Ballet was amazing. Dr. Reardon and Dr. Khouzam were amazing.” A pastor’s wife: “I learned a lot & the testimonies touched my heart. Thank you for helping me begin to understand & have compassion....” Another pastor, “It was really worth it.”

Here are two gems for those who missed out. **What will open hearts to God’s tremendous healing power?** David Reardon, PhD: “Wearing compassion on our shoulders”; and Hani R. Khouzam, MD: “God wants trauma to change us so that we will have greater intimacy with Him.”

Yes, I was exhilarated that *After*CHOICE was everything I envisioned. BUT, how practical was it for our participants? Less than 2 weeks later--10 days to be exact--God gave me an insider’s view of the answer.

Kristen, licensed counselor and co-facilitator with me of an addiction recovery group at a local church, was at the seminar. Group opened up with a young man talking about the numbness of his addiction wearing off and being overwhelmed with his feelings of [emotional] pain. Suddenly, paroxysmally, out tumbled his grief over an abortion and a subsequent miscarriage he and his girlfriend had experienced: pain upon pain, regret upon regret, punctuated with emphatic “I don’t cry,” though his eyes were wet. Before I knew it, Kristen was in with her whole heart, sharing tender compassionate responses, the kind Dr. Reardon and Dr. Khouzam talked about. Soon another group member opened up about her abortions, and then another guy, and another lady: 2 men and 2 women out of 9. Kristen and I looked at each other: silently communicating and recognizing the statistics are right on at 43%. Together, our group moaned and grieved and expressed God’s grace and forgiveness to each other. And we talked about babies being in Jesus’ arms; all totaled, we counted 8. Four years we have been leading this group, but that night for the first time, group members talked about their abortions!

After group, Kristen and I reflected about how surprisingly comfortable, at ease and prepared she felt the whole time. And how good the LORD is, how impeccable His timing! It was a real-live experience of Nancy’s insight, “While it takes the blood of Jesus to deliver us from guilt, it takes the acceptance of others to deliver us from shame,” *The Jericho Plan*, p.76.