

Preface to "Who Broke the Baby"

By

Jean Staker Garton

All our children were in bed; the late television news was over, and I was putting the finishing touches to a presentation for medical students scheduled to be given the next day. As I reviewed some slides which might be used, there appeared on the screen a picture of an abortion victim, aged two and one-half months' gestation; her body had been dismembered by a curette, the long-handled knife used in a D & C abortion procedure.

Suddenly I heard, rather than saw, another person near me. At the sound of a sharp intake of breath, I turned to find that my youngest son, then a sleepy, rumped three-year-old, had unexpectedly and silently entered the room. His small voice was filled with great sadness as he asked, "Who broke the baby?"

How could this small, innocent child see what so many adults cannot see? How could he know instinctively that this which many people carelessly dismiss as tissue or a blob was one in being with him, was like him? In the words of his question he gave humanity to what adults call "fetal matter"; in the tone of his question he mourned what we exalt as a sign of liberation and freedom. With a wisdom which often escapes the learned, he asked in the presence of the evidence before his eyes, "Who broke the baby?"

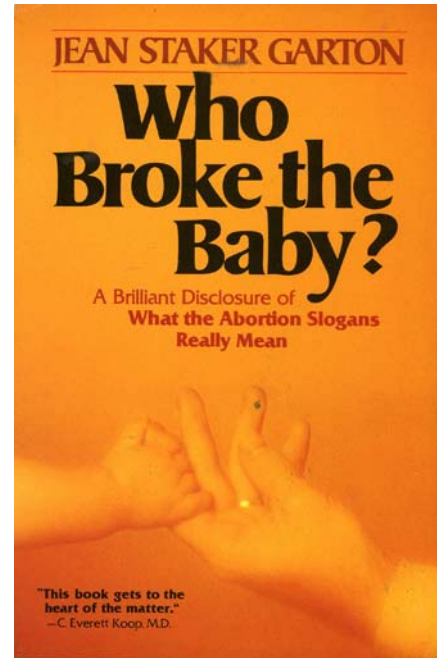
Why is it that so many of us fail to see and to feel what a three-year-old knows by nature? My personal answer to that question forms the basis for the pages which follow. It explains, in part, the responsibility I feel to speak on behalf of our unborn brothers and sisters. It explains, in part, the commitment I have made to plead their cause. But most of all, it helps explain my faith in God, the God of creation, the God of surprises.

"Life begins at forty!" is a slogan familiar to most of us. Actually, I was looking forward to that time, for I had calculated that finally all the children would be in school and I could start to live my own schedule and pursue my own interests. Birthday number forty came and life began—but it was not mine alone. It included another life, a very "unwanted pregnancy." How unfair! After all those years of bottles and babies, didn't I deserve some freedom? What about my rights and my needs? However, at that time abortion-on-demand had not been legalized by the Supreme Court; so, after much ranting and raving, having no viable choice, I gradually accepted the reality that I was about to become one of those "mature mothers" for whom everyone feels sorry.

My growing feminist interests, plus my inability to control my reproductive life because of restrictive abortion laws, led me to join a pro-abortion group which was seeking to liberalize the laws of our state. Within weeks after my baby's birth, I was attending meetings and workshops on how to be a pro-abortion activist.

Indoctrination into the language of abortion formed the basis of many of these sessions. "Never accord humanity to what is in the womb," we were told. "Always talk about 'the blob,' never the baby." "Stress the woman's rights and her freedom to choose." However, as time passed, I became increasingly uneasy with such arguments; for it seemed to me they involved a semantic deception which, while effective and persuasive, nevertheless lacked integrity. I decided to develop my own argument, one I could debate with honesty, to support a right-to-abort position.

I spent many months of study and research, examining the issue from various disciplines and perspectives. I read the law, medicine and history. I studied Scripture and the church fathers. I worked long and hard to discover evidence to support my theory. But I found none. I had to either face up to reality and change my position or continue to change reality by disguising the truth. It was then, borrowing the words of C. S. Lewis spoken after he converted to the Christian



faith he had set out to discredit, that "I was carried kicking and screaming" into the pro-life position "by the sheer weight of the evidence."

The same catchy abortion slogans which I once employed continue to manipulate the feelings and thoughts of many others. The inaccurate ideas fostered by the abortion rhetoric escape the notice of the less critical. Language is an agent for change and when language lies, when words are warped and twisted perversely, they are eventually emptied of their true meaning. The linguistic deception of the pro-abortion argument "tells it like it isn't."

In those months of study, however, I learned much more about God's wisdom than about the abortion issue. He heard my complaints, displeasure and anger; He received my demands and protests; He bore my weeping and gnashing of teeth—and lovingly endured them all, for He knew exactly what was needed in my life to accomplish His purpose and plan. The unwanted, unplanned pregnancy resulted in a very wanted and loved child. Those who expressed sympathy at my after-forty pregnancy cannot begin to appreciate the special joys and blessings which come to "mature mothers." And life *did* begin at forty for me when I acquired a new and wise teacher in the form of a little boy who taught me what life is really all about.

It was this child who one night slipped in behind me to ask, "Who broke the baby?" By the grace of God, when he is old enough to understand the deeper meaning of his childhood question, I will not have to say that while millions were being destroyed, I was too occupied "seeking a meaningful life" to protest. I will not have to admit that I was too busy "finding myself" to challenge the laws which condoned the destruction. In the "foolishness" of God's plan, His kingdom belongs to children—His little ones whose faith and trust and love are to instruct us. "Who broke the baby?" asks the three-year-old. Because of what you have taught me, my dear son, I pray for the blessing to answer, "Not I."

Contents

1. Seduction by Semantics	13
2. Every Woman Has a Right to Control Her Own Body	20
3. Every Child a Wanted Child	27
4. Termination of Pregnancy	35
5. Freedom to Choose	43
6. A Fetus Is Not a Person	50
7. Eliminate the Back Alley: Legalize Abortion	56
8. Abortion Is a Catholic Issue	65
9. What About the Difficult Cases—Rape? Abnormal Child?	73
10. The Fallout	84
11. The Choice	91
Notes	102