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ISRAEL TO "EASE" TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY FOR TEENS

About six weeks ago, the media was filled with reports over what had been designated as a "*Romeo and Juliet*" shooting tragedy. The story concerned an 18-year-old youth and his 17-year-old, pregnant girlfriend. According to the reports, her pregnancy generated a "chain of events", which ended when police volunteers shot the young man to death in a forest near Beit Shemesh, a city not far from Jerusalem.

It was front-page news, which included a statement from the mother of the young man, who said that the couple were intending to keep the pregnancy. There are conflicting reports about whether the parents of the man pressured the young couple to abort the child. The pregnant teen later related their intentions: **"Our plan was to die together... [He] wanted to shoot me and then kill himself, but I changed my mind...."** One thing led to another, ending with a confrontation with police volunteers, following which the pregnant girl, cold and confused, managed to get out of the car and from the gun that belonged to her boyfriend's father, which was pointed at her head. Seconds later, after an exchange of gunfire, her boyfriend was killed. And with that, their simple love story ended.

In the midst of her difficulty to comprehend the immense tragedy that enveloped her life, a joint decision was made among family members of the girl to terminate the pregnancy. The girl's mother was quoted as saying: **"She is a 17 year-old girl and this is not a suitable time for pregnancy... With this, our relationship with the [man's] family ended. Our goal is that she'll get well and will be able to continue with her life...It's unfortunate that I did not know about the pregnancy. Only the mother of [the young man] knew. They were under stress and it could have ended differently if they had shared with me."** This story is not even a close parallel to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, other than that it ended with a double tragedy, the shooting death of the father and the aborted child.

An incident such as this generates many questions, which we will not deal with at this time, as they do not lend to dissecting the tragedy, but instead, they open the door to potential other issues that have no easy answer or resolution. Some questions may also remain forever unanswered.

It was argued that the decision of the couple not to abort the child resulted from counsel the young woman received from ladies that she met in the hospital, when she was admitted earlier after she had complained of abdominal pains. These women were said to be affiliated with a religious organization that encourages women not to abort. When this part of the story was made known, it allowed both the Israeli press and feminist organizations an opportunity to attack those who oppose abortion. One even went so far as to accuse that same organization of **"taking upon itself the role of God."**

Knesset Member Zeev Nissim of the Orthodox Shas party argues that abortion is akin to murder and said in a recent interview: **"I demand that we have a public debate on this campaign of murder"**. He has shined a spotlight on this issue that has not even remotely figured in political campaigns here. If MK Nissim continues with his pursuit to change the law pertaining to the cessation of pregnancy, he could be joined by other religious parties and what has been up to this point a private matter could well become a political issue, placing Israel alongside other countries where views on abortion can make a difference at the polls. It should be noted that many orthodox Jews believe that abortion delays the era of Messianic redemption. This, coupled with the usually unpredictable political scene in Israel, could bring the issue of abortion to the public's attention again. Most political observers, however, do not believe that he will succeed. And, at least at this point in time, they could be right.

"כי אניכי ידעתי את המחשבות אשר אניכי חושב עליכם נאום יהוה מחשבות שלום ולא לרעה לתת לכם אחרית ותקווה". (ירמיה 29:11)

"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope". (Jer. 29:11)

The thwarted intention to commit a double suicide in the story mentioned above did not escape the notice of the Department of Health. But, instead of looking for ways to help those who find themselves in similar situations, while preserving the life of the child, new guidelines were issued by the Department of Health, the purpose of which is, admittedly, **"to make it easier for the young women to discreetly abort their unwanted pregnancies"**.

These guidelines provide that every visit to a gynecologist by a young woman up to the age of 19 will be without payment by her. Similarly, health maintenance organizations ("HMOs") are to ease and even prevent payment by such patients for examinations and services, in order not to create a situation where the payment would be an obstacle to her terminating the pregnancy. Medical staff and HMOs are to make every effort to protect the girl's privacy by the various means specified by the Department of Health.

Israeli law already allows a young woman up to the age of 16 to have an abortion, without the need for anyone to inform her parents. In line with this, the law also allows for the cessation of a pregnancy of a young woman up to the age of 18, regardless of medical circumstances, at the expense of the various HMOs. The present guidelines, while intending to prevent situations similar to that of the young couple who were mentioned at the outset, will in all likelihood not only increase sexual promiscuity and result in the increased shedding of innocent blood in this land, but also multiply the number of incidents of post-abortive trauma. They will constitute a **"conspiracy of silence"** that will increase the **"silent scream"** of those who are unable to speak for themselves. **Woe to us!** As we celebrate Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, easing the accessibility of abortion plunges us one step further into darkness and adds to the spiritual pollution that now affects our land. Contrary to what the aforementioned critic said, we do play God when we take life into our hands and choose to destroy it, not when we protect and nurture it.

"See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life..." (Deut. 32:39); "You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before You." (Neh. 9:6); "The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (Job 33:4) "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10) "And whoever saves a life, the Scripture considers it as if he saved an entire world." (The Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 4:1(22a)

Our terminology is the key:-

The civilized world is all over itself about the news of Kate Middleton's pregnancy. The child will be third in line for the throne. But no one writes or reports that the **"royal fetus"** is now this many or that many weeks old. No one would refer to royalty, or even expected royalty, that way. Even the liberal media refer to the **"child"** or to the **"royal baby"** that is growing within her womb. Could it be that the difference in our terminology reflects our desires and expectations, the lack of them? We call the baby by his name, **"a child"**, or, **"a baby"**. We say that we're expecting **"a son"** or **"a daughter"** or **"twins"**, if the birth is desired and hoped for. But, when the pregnancy is unwanted or unexpected, we look for ways to dehumanize the pre-born child. If so, then our own terminology condemns us ... and we are found guilty!

New Life

E was in the middle of her pregnancy when she contacted us, saying that she was considering abortion. Her situation was very difficult and her living conditions could only be described as deplorable. The timing of her call was divinely ordained, as another non-profit organization provided us with the means and the talents to renovate her apartment, at no cost whatsoever to her. The improvement in her living conditions, as well as our promise to provide her with assistance for the first year of the child's life, enabled her to make the decision not to abort. Her son, her fourth child, was born around Passover this year. She expressed joy in making what she calls "the right decision" and in choosing life.

R was a 20 year-old soldier, pregnant and determined to abort the child, believing she had no choice. The father of the child was opposed to ending the pregnancy and threatened to commit suicide if she did (a story slightly different from the one mentioned at the outset of this Newsletter). When she finally agreed to meet with us, it was the day before she was scheduled for the abortion. She wanted to continue her studies and wanted to get a job. A child now would only complicate matters. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties of her situation, including that of being from a minority community, she decided not to abort. Two weeks later, the couple decided to marry. ***A Future and A Hope*** was able to provide some help with the expenses of the wedding and continues to be in touch and assist the couple as part of our "First Year of Life" program. Their little girl was born six months ago.

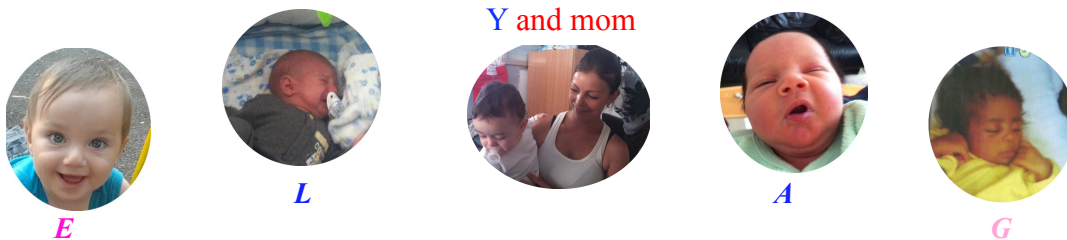
We continue to produce new tracts dealing with sexually-transmitted diseases, drugs, dating and other matters that are of daily concern to the population and they are being widely distributed. The latest tracts deal with Hepatitis B, as well as tatoos and piercing.



Our first group workshop is planned for January 21, 2013, dealing with the subject of support for women who have had abortions. It is intended primarily for women from the Messianic community in the north of Israel who speak Hebrew, Arabic, Russian and English. Afterwards, by God's grace, we will expand it to other women. Until now, counsel to post-abortive women has been given on an individual basis, but we believe that the time is right to be able to assist considerably more women, some of whom have suffered for years because of decisions to abort.

Counseling has increased far beyond what we had expected during this past year and we have been blessed and encouraged by it. Nearly all of the women, who range in age from 17 to mid-40s, need financial assistance. But, more than that, they need someone to speak with, who will listen and who will be interested in them, as people, as mothers, as women. We discovered that very often, those who appear outwardly to be simple, without goals and seemingly disinterested in life are, in fact, extremely gifted, talented, intelligent and capable workers, with large hearts and giving and forgiving spirits. They love their children, manage their families well and live simply, without debt (no small accomplishment in today's society), despite the fact that many of their spouses left them for one reason or another, including the refusal to agree to terminate a pregnancy. The stories of these women are heart-wrenching and challenging. They demonstrate a bravery and a persistence to press on in circumstances that others would consider insurmountable.

G is 17. She came for counsel after having her first sexual experience with her boyfriend. She was panic-stricken, crying and embarrassed. She expressed love for the young man, but was afraid he would leave her (and, in fact, did so a few weeks later). She was coached by our counselor, Irena Gorohov, as they both sought to discover who she is, what are her strengths, what did she want and what were her values. After two months, everything around her seemed to change because of the changes that she, herself, experienced. Even the young man who left her entered the picture again and sought after her. But, this time she asked herself whether this relationship will honor the Lord, is it right for her, will it build her up, what does she want and expect from it and from herself. She is one example of many whose lives have been changed for the better, simply because she was willing and open to receive help by someone willing to take the time to listen, to care and to encourage from a Scriptural basis. Photos of a few of the newborns appear below. The parents of some of the others were camera-shy.



We rejoice with the new lives that celebrate their first Festival of Light...and year of life... because of you!

Government Certification

We are thankful that once again, after reviewing our various documents, the government granted us a Certificate of Proper Management, valid throughout all of 2013. This Certificate attests to the fact that we have complied with all requirements imposed on non-profit organizations by law.

We were hacked!

Our website: <http://hope4u.co.il> was broken into and vile statements were inserted all over the place, in Arabic. We are in the process of re-doing the site and, hopefully, making it more difficult to attack again from cyberspace. As of this writing, we managed to get some up and running, although only in Hebrew. The English will be included before too long (we hope), but the Hebrew will give you some indication of some of the things that are presented.

Please pass this on and drop us a note.

This Newsletter is sent to you with the hope and prayer that you will pass it on by photocopy and/or e-mail. If you know of any others who would like to receive information about ***A Future and A Hope***, please let them know about us or us about them and we will be happy to follow up with them.

We are also thankful to those of you who take the time to be in touch and to give us a word of encouragement as we press on in the Lord's service. "*[H]ow delightful is a timely word*" (Prov. 15:23).

Prayer Requests:-

- 1 - For health for our counselors and volunteers. It's been a tough year in this regard.
- 2 - For wisdom to counsel with love and grace, to help cleanse this land from the shedding of innocent blood.
- 3 - For finances to accomplish advertising and other projects.

With thanks and blessings,

Marvin S. Kramer
General Manager

*If you would like to help support this ministry in Israel, you may do so by sending a personal or bank check in any currency to: **A FUTURE AND A HOPE**, 6 Derech HaYam, Haifa 34741, Israel. Checks should be payable to: **A FUTURE AND A HOPE**. Alternatively, a bank transfer can be sent directly to our account at Union Bank of Israel Ltd., Account No. 11594-08, Bank No. 13, Central Carmel Branch 083, Swift Code: UNBKILIT, at 4 Mahanaim Street, Haifa, Israel. We will acknowledge every monetary gift with a receipt.*