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A Voice they Don't Want to Hear

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Just a couple of weeks ago, a new voice was heard in the abortion debate — the voice of the fathers whose babies have been aborted. As *The Los Angeles Times* reported, these men have been gathering and telling their stories [[read my article here](#)]. And their stories are powerful.

That's clearly what worries abortion rights proponents. These men spoke of their grief, their loss, their guilt, and their shame. Some spoke of the forgiveness they had received through Christ and most spoke of their determination to tell the truth about their abortion experiences.

Look at this:

Jason Baier talks often to the little boy he calls Jamie. He imagines this boy — his son — with blond hair and green eyes, chubby cheeks, a sweet smile. But he'll never know for sure. His fiancée's sister told him about the abortion after it was over. Baier remembers that he cried. The next weeks and months go black. He knows he drank far too much. He and his fiancée fought until they broke up. "I hated the world," he said. Baier, 36, still longs for the child who might have been, with an intensity that bewilders him: "How can I miss something I never even held?"

All this has caught the attention of the hard Left and abortion rights advocates. This attention led to the February 4, 2008 cover story in *The Nation* — the flagship masthead of the hard Left. In "[Pity the Man](#)," Sarah Blustain takes her measure of the new movement:

Pity the man who conceived four babies with four women and suffered anxiety attacks and nightmares after all four, with his consent, were aborted. Pity the man who saw his soon-to-be-born baby on an ultrasound and instantly came to believe that he "had killed two of my own kids" through abortion. Pity the man who abused alcohol after his girlfriend aborted. Pity the man who suffered a nervous breakdown, depression, psychosis and nearly suicide after his girlfriend had an abortion despite his pleas.

And pity these men who, wittingly or not, are allowing their pain to be co-opted for political gain. Whatever the cause of their suffering, it is real and they deserve support. But they are also the new face of the antiabortion movement: Post-Abortion Syndrome—for men. In conferences and counseling, they're being wrapped in the fuzzy blankets of men's healing, but behind these men and their stories are the same crackpot research, coercive counseling and policy-by-anecdote that have defined the antiabortion movement's tactical emphasis on women's suffering after abortion. It's a maxim among the antichoice crowd these days that there are "two victims of abortion"; the men's PAS movement wants to take that to three.

A casual prochoice activist might dismiss this movement out of hand. After all, politically speaking there's no great constituency for men's PAS. The men's rights movement—which fights to improve men's standing in custody, child support and fatherhood-related issues, on which they say the law favors women—doesn't particularly embrace men's PAS: men's rights advocates are divided on abortion, and besides, some say, the pain of losing a child to abortion simply doesn't measure up to the pain of losing one's born children. Plus, the Supreme Court has definitively told men, including husbands, that they have no rights when it comes to abortion, which leaves antichoice activists no judicial openings to revive, for instance, spousal notification laws.

Still, it's clear that men's PAS is a syndrome whose moment has come. The first conference dealing with men's pain after abortion was held in San Francisco last fall, and the National Right to Life Committee included men's PAS in its annual convention last summer. Many counseling centers dealing with women's postabortion suffering now include resources for men, while activist groups are collecting men's testimonies about their postabortion suffering for use in the courts.

As Blustain sees it, the movement is just a sham — another political ploy by the pro-life movement. “This isn’t all just coincidence, and it’s not all about healing,” she claims. “Post-Abortion Syndrome has rocked the antiabortion world. It has given new humanity to a movement that even a decade ago seemed locked in violence and lacking in empathy. More important, by blaming abortion for divorce and child abuse, depression and drug use, sex addiction and suicide, it has given conservatives a very distinct culprit in the disintegration of American family values—and another argument for ending the thirty-five-year reign of *Roe v. Wade*.”

Blustain makes the interesting observation that some pro-life arguments have shifted from a focus on the fetus to a focus on the adult parties. She calls this the “softer side” of the movement. In any event, the voices of these fathers are voices she would rather not hear.

Here, in her own words, is what they fear:

Suddenly, using nothing but anecdote framed in scientific forms, a single abortion has not one victim, or even two, but three or four or five. And beyond that, millions of abortions have millions of victims: one in four women, and by extension one in four men, and one in four parents, and countless children, until society itself is a victim, filled with all sorts of personal and interpersonal tragedies of divorce, drug use and suicide from which we—all Americans—need protection.

Amazingly enough, she gets it.

