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Reborn Babies – The Post Abortion Connection

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A recent 20/20 documentary entitled "Extreme Motherhood" has been the subject of much controversy and reaction. The Today Show, radio talk shows, blogs and even the BBC in Britain have recently aired programs on the unusual phenomenon of "Reborn Babies." The Reborns are incredible life-like reproductions of infants with the skin texture, weight, hair and other features of a real baby that are increasingly popular around the world with women of all ages. For improved realism, some manufactures feature dolls with life-like breathing and heartbeats.

The women who spend up to \$4,000.00 on their Reborn baby come from a variety of situations. Some may be infertile and long for the experience of caring for an infant. Others use them in response to personal grief as a replacement for children that have died or have moved away from home. One woman shared her joy at putting her doll in a baby carriage and showing him off to neighbors! Some have used them to offer elderly women in nursing homes an opportunity to express love and tenderness to a newborn.

All of this seems quite curious and bizarre at first glance. However, if we look at the number of women impacted by abortion around the world, perhaps this can help us to identify a deeper issue that may be nursing this phenomenon.

We know from our experience in Rachel's Vineyard with thousands of women mourning the loss of their children because of abortion, that many symptoms do arise from unresolved pregnancy loss. (See *Forbidden Grief – The Unspoken Pain of Abortion*) Connecting to one's missing children with love and tenderness is an essential part of a healthy grieving experience.

The obsession with "Reborn Babies" used by those who suffer from unresolved grief can be viewed as a form of complicated mourning – a response to years of holding back deeply repressed love and yearning for the baby that has died. But more importantly, we have observed that a mother's heart is made to love any

child that she carries in her womb...no matter what the situation or fear and pressures she faced when she made a decision to abort. After abortion her heart is wounded, the love for that child remains unexpressed and unfulfilled.

The Reborn Baby phenomenon is significant if understood within the context of a culture impacted by post abortion trauma. Nevertheless, without a connection to the real source of this pain, it is only a diversion from the deeper unresolved grief. A program specifically designed to address and resolve this unique loss can be found in Rachel's Vineyard weekends for healing abortion. Here women and men can grieve their children lost to abortion in an atmosphere of emotional and spiritual safety. Once they free their hearts to mourn their child and re connect to that child with love and tenderness, the trauma is no longer of obsessive interest. The acting out or undoing of love denied can be replaced by the sure hope in faith that they will once again hold their child in heaven.

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