

Planned Parenthood Results in Heartbreak—Not Relief—When Baby Dies

Tiny fingers. Tiny toes. Mommy's mouth. Daddy's nose. The birth of our first daughter should have been accompanied by tears of joy. Instead, we held her and wept, grief-stricken. She was not alive.

Our childbearing years were filled with both immeasurable joy and deep sadness. Over the course of six years, I was pregnant eight times, only one of which resulted in a live birth. Twice, I miscarried naturally. Twice after learning that the babies had died in my womb, I underwent D&Cs, a medical procedure during which the baby and uterine contents are evacuated. Three more times, the ultrasounds showed no heartbeats, and I was admitted to labor and delivery, where I gave birth to beautiful but lifeless babies. They were 17, 11 and 21 weeks.

During my induction with our first daughter Elizabeth, I was nervous, wondering if I could handle seeing a dead baby of 17-weeks gestational age. Upon delivery, that anxiety melted away. At 9 inches, she was much bigger than I had imagined. She had 10 fingers and 10 toes complete with 10 tiny fingernails and 10 tiny toenails. Her full lips so closely resembled her older brother's that I could picture how she would look as a smiling 4-year-old. She didn't look like a blob of tissue; she looked like a baby, my baby.

Eleven weeks pregnant with my second daughter, we discovered at a routine appointment that her heart had stopped. While my doctor typically performed D&Cs at that gestational age, I had so treasured the experience of birthing Elizabeth, I asked to be induced. My doctor obliged, and our 2-inch baby girl was

delivered that evening. The labor and delivery nurses stopped in to meet our daughter. She was the baby of earliest gestational age ever delivered on that unit, and the staff was truly amazed. Our daughter Abigail was very small, yet so perfectly formed.

I have watched the recent videos exposing Planned Parenthood's sale of baby parts with horror and heartbreak. I held my babies born at the same gestation as many in those films. I kissed their tiny faces, marveled at their miniature fingernails.

As Christians, we already know how God feels about the pre-born.

"You brought my inner parts into being; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will praise you, for You made me with fear and wonder; marvelous are Your works, and You know me completely. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in secret, and intricately put together in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw me unformed, yet in Your book all my days were written, before any of them came into being" (Ps. 139 13-16).

Thankfully, the medical community has made great strides in recognizing the significance of these little lives. Handprints, footprints, measurements, photos and other items are often given to parents as mementos, testimonies to the point that their child existed. Funeral options are explained; baptisms are performed. Some hospitals hold memorial services or maintain commemorative gardens. These practices and rituals point to the personhood of the child. They trumpet the fact that the baby lived. I talk more about this in my book *The Significant Life*.

However, babies of the same gestation are stripped of their personhood. They become a commodity, a budget line item. The 21-weeker stillborn in the hospital has her footprints and

picture taken. She is baptized and buried. Another 21-weeker is killed in a clinic. His parts are harvested and sold for profit. This should not be so! Is not personhood inherent? Why should it be granted based on whether a child is wanted or on where a child is born (or dies)?

Our culture is at odds with itself. The baby lost to stillbirth is granted the same rights and privileges as any human who dies, yet another child of the same age is not given the basic right to life. May we trumpet the cause of the pre-born child until eyes are opened to this senselessness! May we never stop contending for life until the same community that recognizes and respects the life lost to miscarriage or stillbirth offers the same reverence to the life at risk of abortion.

Amy Burton and her husband, John, are accomplished authors and public speakers. Amy has written two books on the subject of pregnancy and infant loss and has served as a volunteer with nonprofit groups that offer support to bereaved parents. She formerly worked as an instructor at a crisis pregnancy center in Detroit. She lives in Branson, Missouri, with her husband and five children. Learn more about John and Amy's ministry at .