

By Paul S. Williams



Someone Pays a Price

When I was in my 20s, more than one set of relieved parents called or wrote to thank me for being there for their wayward child. I was working with Christ In Youth at the time, and I thought I was just doing my job. I had no idea of the deep gratitude those parents must have truly felt.

My own children are now in their 20s. All three are doing quite well, thank you. But the teen years were not always fun. We'll leave it at that.

For a very long time, I thought if you and your spouse did a good job as parents, you had nothing to worry about when it came to the choices your children made. I was quick to judge those parents whose children sowed wild oats by the bushel. But I was wrong. The children of very good parents do not always make very good decisions. And now I have a far greater appreciation for those who are at the right place at the right time, gently guiding, cajoling, nurturing, and restoring those who have lost their way.

An old friend. A college professor. A children's director. A young couple in their first full-time ministry. Those are some of the folks who were there for my children, providing the same encourage-

ment Cathryn and I provided to another generation 25 years ago. And I am profoundly grateful for the love they have shown to Jonathan, Jael, and Jana.

None of us survive on the faith of our parents. There comes a time when we must face the unanswerable questions ourselves, and draw conclusions that will chart the course of our lives. As we travel those turbulent waters, nothing is more important than fellow travelers on the journey. Not those who have to be there, like Mom and Dad, but those who choose to be there. They choose to love because they see something in us worth loving.

John Shea, in his book *An Experience Named Spirit*, tells of

an old nun with red tennis shoes who brought peace into the life of an incorrigible young man. No matter how hard he pushed her away, the old nun kept coming back. Shea says, "People do change, but someone always pays the price."

To the old nun with red tennis shoes, to the psychology professor at the Christian college, to the children's director, to my old friend and the young couple in the new church. To all those who have paid the price so the faith of another may grow and flourish, I say a heartfelt "Thank you."

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Seen & Heard

Compiled by S. J. Dahlman

The U.S. abortion rate has fallen to its lowest rate since the 1970s: 21.3 abortions for every 1,000 women age 15 to 44, according to a report released in January by the Alan Guttmacher Institute. The number of providers who performed surgical abortions also fell.

The study also reported that in the first six months of 2001, more than 37,000 abortions, about 6 percent of the total, were performed using pills such as RU-486. The Food and Drug

Administration approved the so-called abortion pill for use in the United States in September 2000. More than 130,000 women have used RU-486.

—*Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, January-February 2003; Associated Press

"Our current culture, to say it plainly, has largely stopped thinking of children as gifts from God and firstfruits of the future. . . . Children are now being **aborted in the**

flesh, because they have already been, in large measure, **aborted from the mind**. We deprive unborn infants of a future because they are inconveniences intruding on our chosen pursuits in the present. . . . Pregnancy is now widely regarded as something that married couples are expected to prevent until they, not God, decide that they are ready to have children."

—Patrick Henry Reardon, *Touchstone* magazine, January-February 2003