

**VINE AND BRANCHES**

The Monthly e-Newsletter of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries  
November, 2005

Rachel's Vineyard is on the web at: [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org)  
Our national toll-free hotline is (877) HOPE-4-ME.

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*Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats for emotional and spiritual healing after abortion are held internationally. Rachel's Vineyard welcomes, women, men, couples, grandparents and abortion providers. Our retreats are held in both Catholic and Interdenominational settings. Rachel's Vineyard Ministries is a resource for clinical training, education, and healing models.*

*Rachel's Vineyard is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. All contributions are tax deductible. We work in close partnership with Priests for Life and Gospel of Life Ministries.*

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**Conference on the Rocks - Swept Away in the Flood**

Theresa Burke, Ph.D.

Earlier this year, I submitted a workshop proposal on post abortion trauma to a professional organization that specializes in bereavement. I was thrilled when the proposal was accepted and immediately made flight arrangements to attend the Conference. It seemed an appropriate place to share about grief reactions following pregnancy termination.

When I submitted the handouts for the seminar a few weeks ago, the contents apparently triggered symptoms of **cognitive dissonance** for a few professionals. What I had planned to teach was taking on a life of it's own as I witnessed classic symptoms of hyper-arousal, approach avoidance conflict and constriction along with a strong dose of Cognitive Dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon, which refers to the discomfort felt when there is a discrepancy between what you already know or believe, and new information or interpretation. Many studies have shown the generation of dissonance as a major obstacle to teaching and learning. Studies have proven that there is an intellectual wedge between learners' current beliefs and "reality."

Beyond this uncomfortable aspect of learning, dissonance can lead to two interesting side-effects: If someone is called upon to learn something which contradicts what they already think they know, particularly if they are committed to that prior knowledge, they are likely to resist the new learning.

If learning something is difficult, uncomfortable, or even emotionally painful, people will believe that the content of what they are learning is useless, pointless or valueless. Even worse, when individuals act as controllers of intelligence, they fail to give others permission to learn new information. Consequently, they are not in a position to alleviate the causes of human suffering for those who are struggling. In the deepest sense, cognitive dissonance frequently leads to a “cover up.”

The Education Director overseeing this organization gives us a good example of Cognitive Dissonance. The statistics offered in the handouts quoted from numerous professional Journals such as The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry; American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology; The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry; etc. were met with disbelief. The Director called me greatly alarmed: “THIS CANNOT BE TRUE!” she exclaimed. She was convinced that the statistics on suicide and other outcomes related to pregnancy termination were incorrect or fabricated!

Furthermore, she was agitated to see that on the Rachel’s Vineyard website we discuss the possibility of “*asking for God’s forgiveness!*” If someone is suicidal because of sadness and grief and lives in fear of God’s punishment, wouldn’t it be better to help them reconcile that experience with God, themselves and the child they long for?

We all know that losing a child through abortion can be the cause of agonizing grief, which in the worst cases, can lead to suicide. For others, without appropriate intervention and treatment, the loss can initiate symptoms of trauma that can last a lifetime. Yet, how can you treat a problem when we’re unable to examine its roots? There can be no healing for the broken heart and relief of symptoms without engaging in the enormous battle of naming, claiming and taming the truth.

Dissonance can lead to misperception or misinterpretation of the information, rejection or refutation of the information, seeking support from those who agree with one’s belief, and attempting to persuade others to accept one’s belief. The director was fearful that I had a dangerous bias... does anyone know what projection is? The seminar is not about politics or abortion rights – it’s about healing for those who suffer. There is no need to present the “other side.” That’s like a requirement to present statistics on all the people who are not dying of lung cancer because they smoke. Our treatment and education is intended for the patient who is suffering, not for those who seem to be healthy.

Cognitive dissonance was first investigated by Leon Festinger after doing an observational study of a cult which believed that the earth was going to be destroyed by a flood. The group believed in a prophecy that was supposedly transmitted by beings from outer space. They believed that they would be saved from the flood and would be evacuated in a flying saucer. Festinger was most interested in what happened to the members when the predicted events never came true, especially for the deeply committed members – those who had given up their homes, children and jobs to work for the cult. While fringe members were more inclined to recognize that they had made fools of themselves and to “chalk it off as experience,” committed members were more likely to re-interpret the evidence to show that they were right all along.

Festinger described what happened when the flood did not occur. Members of the group who were alone at that time did not maintain their beliefs. Members who were waiting with other group members maintained their faith. One group member reported receiving a message that indicated that God had prevented the flood because of the group's existence as a force for good.

The politics of abortion are bizarrely similar to a cult group that is intent on seeing itself as a force for good. Abortion supporters believe that we have the right to destroy our children and that we will be lifted up and evacuated from any moral or emotional consequences. They suggest that we can give up instincts, reason and sanity to defend those beliefs. Despite all emerging evidence to the contrary and the extensive damage reported by those who are suffering, some members of the group must maintain their belief in the goodness of abortion. Therefore they need to refute any evidence, which seeks to reveal the truth about those left behind in the destruction of this ideological *flood*, including the damage they don't want to expose in their own hearts.

We mistakenly assume that most professionals are aware of all these psychological tendencies. We also know that political "biases" are not compatible with professional conduct. We need to listen to our clients and help them deal with the feelings they struggle with – not the feelings we wish they had or did not have.

Unfortunately, my invitation was terminated just two days before the conference. I was informed that *it did not make any sense for me to come*. The handouts had not been included (Avoidance); only a few people had signed up anyway (justification) Indeed, they had gone ahead and canceled the presentation. (Constriction)

The more serious issue here is the ongoing professional neglect of this subject that is leaving thousands of women and men seeking recovery alone in their grief and misery – suffering much longer than they need to because of professional ignorance, denial and unresolved personal issues. Despite the resistance, we'll continue to do our best to educate professionals because those who do have the opportunity to hear our presentations, tell us it is the most informative and thought provoking educational opportunity they've ever experienced.

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“Spirit is the recognition of your intuitive understanding of freedom.”

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**A Note from the Pastoral Director**

When Jesus healed the ten lepers, only one came back to give him thanks. That story shows a deep tendency of our fallen human nature. We have to remind ourselves to thank the One from whom all blessings flow. That's why we have Thanksgiving. It reminds us that blessings don't come by chance, but rather come from a Person who decided from all eternity to love us.

On Thanksgiving we recall that our nation was founded on a vision, rooted in God, that we could be free. In the prayers for the Mass of Thanksgiving Day, we read these words about moving from bondage to freedom: “It has come to pass in every generation for all who have believed that Jesus by his death and resurrection gave them a new freedom in his Spirit. It happened to our fathers, who came to this land as if out of a desert into a place of promise and hope. It happens to us still, in our time, as you lead all people through your Church to the blessed vision of peace.”

That's what Rachel's Vineyard continues to do every day. Today, we thank the Lord for the grace of repentance, for the gift of healing, and for the privilege to help bring that healing to so many people.

Fr. Frank Pavone  
Pastoral Director

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As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him,  
rooted and built up in him and established in the faith,  
just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.  
Colossians 2:6-7  
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**Give Thanks to God by Sharing Your Blessings!**

This Thanksgiving we recall how Jesus cured the ten lepers, and only one came back to give Him thanks. We live out the Gospel by imitating the leper who came back. Let us remember to give God thanks and praise for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us. We can do this by sharing our gifts, talents, and blessings. One way to show our gratitude and service is by supporting our efforts with your prayers, works, and assisting us by sending a tax-deductible donation of \$1,000...\$500...\$100...or even \$25 to defray our training and retreat costs. Click here: <http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/support/support.htm> to contribute via credit card or Pay Pal or send an e-mail directly to me [t.burke@rachelsvineyard.org](mailto:t.burke@rachelsvineyard.org) and I will forward a postage-paid envelope.

Theresa Burke, Ph.D.  
Founder; Executive Director, Rachel's Vineyard Ministries

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**Book of the Month**

It would not be an exaggeration to call Barbara Mangini's novel *The Proving Grounds* a masterpiece of suspense and suffering, instructive education framed by inspiration and a spirit of courage. *The Proving Grounds* is fiction inspired by author Barbara Mangini's true story of her own battle with the pregnancy-related illness Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG). 18% of women with HG terminate wanted pregnancies making HG a leading cause of abortions.

This book is so striking, there is sometimes the sense that Mangini was not only circling high above the battlefields of a mysterious illness, marking every movement of every undiagnosed symptom, but that she was also a fly on the wall, reporting firsthand by incorporating her real life experience of having actually suffered from this illness. She seems to have a few other advantages at her disposal that give his book a tremendous sense of time, emotion and place, as well as an insatiable curiosity which compelled her to uncover the details of this illness and reveal useful medical information amidst the pages of drama and pathos. *The Proving Grounds* helps foster awareness of this debilitating illness that robs mothers of what should be a time of expectation and happiness.

The result is not only a masterpiece of creatively organized information on HG, but also an exploration of the fears and anxieties that accompany this illness which causes unspeakable confusion and alienation to those who've suffered it.

Barbara is an exceptional writer. Her book is a very readable. I actually had a hard time putting it down. The subject reverberates with immediacy and deserves a place on the bookshelves of pregnancy centers and those involved with post abortion healing.

*The Proving Grounds* is available on [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

For anyone who would like more information on HG, Kimber MacGibbon, a critical care nurse and a survivor of HG, has created a Web site for mothers with HG to visit for help. The address of the site is [www.hyperemesis.org](http://www.hyperemesis.org).

This book was reviewed by Theresa Burke, Ph.D. author of *Forbidden Grief – The Unspoken Pain of Abortion* and *The Rachel's Vineyard Healing Programs*

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**A letter from a New RV Site in Development**

It is with such joy and excitement I write to you. Our pregnancy center is forming a team for the interdenominational retreat program. We hope to be up and on your web site by Jan 2006.

It was a remarkable thing that I even came to find out about the Rachel's Vineyard Retreats. I went to a seminar in Greensboro, NC last year hosted by RV and was hoping to collect more info on Silent No More. But God had other plans. I was thrilled with all I saw and heard there about Rachel's Vineyard. I knew immediately that I had attended for other reasons. I kept in touch with people I met and went to my first retreat in Nov 2004. I like to say that "I was blindsided by God" in that encounter. I had gone to research a new program for my Center and instead had a powerful encounter with the Lord Jesus. I went back to my Center a deeply changed woman. I took my Executive Director to the next one in Feb 2005, and she too, experienced the power to heal and deliver as God's Word is presented. Immediately we realized God calling us to offer these to the many post-abortive women I am in contact with daily at our center.

I personally am in awe of the retreat. I wonder what it must have been like to hear the voice of God and write this Retreat. The things that I have seen occur at these retreats humbles me beyond words. The power to heal and change lives amazes me. It can only be paralleled to the original stories when Jesus was here walking among us. It is truly an encounter with the risen Savior, who we know is alive and well, ruling and reigning. Again, I appreciate your obedience in writing this and listening to God as He led you to the scriptures. God bless you and your family.

Your sister in Christ,  
Judy Hahaj  
PACE Coordinator  
Wilmington, NC 28403

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**Please continue to pray for these new Rachel's Vineyard Sites in Development:**

Steubenville, OHIO	AIM Pregnancy Help Center
El Paso, TX	Reverence for Life Ministry
Bloomington, IN -	Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Perth, Australia	Respect Life Office
Adelaide, Australia	(Interdenominational)
Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti, MI	(Interdenominational)
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	(Interdenominational)
Los Angeles, California	(Spanish Speaking Retreat)
Houston, Texas	
Vancouver, BC Canada	Post Abortion Community Services (Interdenominational)
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	(Interdenominational)
Quebec, Canada	(French Speaking Retreat)
San Angelo, Texas	
Lansing, Michigan	Diocese of Lansing
Wilmington, North Carolina	(H.O.P.E. Ministry of Life Line Pregnancy Center )

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May the strength of God pilot us,  
 May the wisdom of God instruct us,  
 May the hand of God protect us,  
 May the word of God direct us,  
 Amen.

St. Patrick

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**Prayer Request**

Please pray for Shelly Stone who just received a pancreas transplant. Shelly has been serving as the Executive Director of the Life Care Center in North Dakota. She is also the coordinator for Rachel's Vineyard Retreats and has been active in assisting RV sites in North Dakota and Minnesota. Shelly's daughter created a website to help keep everyone updated on Shelly's progress. Feel free to leave Shelly a message in the guestbook. Here's the link.

<http://www.caringbridge.org/cb/viewMyStory.do?method=executeInit>

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**Upcoming Training Opportunities:**

November 13 through 18, 2005 Rachel's Vineyard International Leadership Conference

Theme: "Becoming Fruitful Vines for an Abundant Harvest"

San Damiano Retreat, Danville, CA

**Rachel's Vineyard Ministries** is delighted to bring its annual National Leadership Conference to the West Coast. Hosted by the Diocese of Oakland's After the Choice Post-Abortion Outreach. The Rachel's Vineyard International Leadership Conference Workshops and Sessions are now posted on the website:

<http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/training/November05.htm>

Contact: Dottie O'Connor  
Coordinator of Christ the King  
(404) 233-2145 ext. 440

January 14 Regional Skills Building Clinic, Atlanta Georgia  
Contact: Mary Ann McNeil  
[pathmcneil@earthlink.net](mailto:pathmcneil@earthlink.net)

January 26-28 Lethbridge Alberta Canada Clinical Training  
Contact: Cheryl [lprolife@shaw.ca](mailto:lprolife@shaw.ca)  
Cheryl, Executive Director of Lethbridge and District Pro-Life

February 17 Clinical Training, Jacksonville, Florida  
Contact: Donna Augustine [daugustine3@msn.com](mailto:daugustine3@msn.com)

March 19-24 "From Grief to Grace - Reclaiming Sexual Integrity"  
Retreat and Facilitator Training for new program developed for those  
who have experienced sexual abuse.  
Malvern Retreat House, Pennsylvania  
Contact: Katie D'Annunzio (610) 354-0555 [katie@rachelsvineyard.org](mailto:katie@rachelsvineyard.org)

March 25 Post-Abortion Healing  
Archdiocese of Baltimore, Maryland  
Contact Denise Douglass [projectrachel@archbalt.org](mailto:projectrachel@archbalt.org)

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God, to redeem us at the deepest portion of our nature -- the urge to love and be loved—must  
reveal His nature in an incredible and impossible way. He must reveal it at a cross.  
At the cross God wrapped his heart in flesh and blood and let it be nailed to the cross for our  
redemption.

E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973)

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**Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Schedule (November - December)**

For a complete listing of future Rachel's Vineyard Retreats visit [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org)

**November 4-6, 2005** -- Rapid City, South Dakota  
Contact: [Carol Kling](mailto:Carol.Kling@rcv.org) 605 374 5639

**November 4-6, 2005** -- Providence, Rhode Island  
Local host: Life & Family Ministry, [Diocese of Providence](http://www.dioceseofprovidence.org)  
Contact: [Donna Warner](mailto:Donna.Warner@rcv.org) 401 421 7833 ext 115 days / 401 785 9625 evenings

**November 4-6, 2005** -- Omaha / Lincoln, Nebraska  
Contact: [Heather](mailto:Heather@rcv.org) 402-871-4812

**November 4-6, 2005** -- Chicago, Illinois  
Contact: [Catherine Rennert](mailto:Catherine.Rennert@rcv.org) 815 968 1157  
Location: Warrenville Cenacle

**November 4-6, 2005** -- Clarks Summit / Scranton, Pennsylvania  
Contact: [Denise Rowinski Mengak](#) 570 822 7118 ext 307

**November 4-6, 2005** -- Atlanta, Georgia  
Contact: [Mary Ann McNeal](#) 404 896 6521  
Contact: [Rachel's Vineyard Atlanta](#)  
Website: [Healing After Abortion](#)

**November 4-6, 2005** -- Fort Worth, Texas  
Note: Interdenominational Retreat  
Contact: [Betsy Kopor](#) 817 923 4757

**November 4-6, 2005** -- Ann Arbor / Detroit Area, Michigan  
Contact: [Beth Bauer](#) 734 878 2217 ext 214

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Asheville, North Carolina  
Contact: [Shelley Glanton](#) 828-670-8192 or 828-230-4940

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Madison, Wisconsin  
Local host: Office of Family Life / Diocese of Madison  
Contact: [Leslie Graves](#) 608 588 7834 or 608 279 2639 (cell)  
Contact: [Mary Mead](#) 608 221 9593  
[Click here](#) for brochure and registration form for this retreat

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Cherry Hill, New Jersey  
Contact: [Stephanie Claudy](#) 866 4 RACHEL

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Linden, New Jersey  
Contact: [Michelle Krystofik](#) 732 388 8211

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Litchfield, Connecticut  
Local host: Archdiocese of Hartford Project Rachel  
Contact: [Mary Hayden](#) 203 882 1326

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Mesa, Arizona  
Local hosts: St. Timothy and St. Thomas the Apostle  
Contact: [Karen](#) 480 329 6795

**November 11-13, 2005** --Launceston, Tasmania Australia  
Contact: [Anne Sherston](#) 0407 704 539

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Lexington, Kentucky  
Contact: [Peggy Feirstine](#) 513 851 4083

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Longbranch, Washington  
Contact: [Valerie Jacobs](#) 800 822 HOPE

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Dallas (English), Texas  
Contact: [Caryn Stevens](#) 214 544 2273

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Las Vegas (English/Español), Nevada  
Contact: [Kathleen Miller](#) 702 737 1672

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Rochester, New York  
Contact: [Betsy](#) 585 328 0648

**November 11-13, 2005** -- Knoxville, Tennessee  
Contact: [Catherine McHugh](#) 865 694 4971

**November 18-20, 2005** -- Youngstown, Ohio  
Contact: [Brenda Dama](#) 330 519 8838  
Contact: [Br. Vit Fiala](#) 330 799 1888

**November 18-20, 2005** -- Tampa, Florida  
Contact: [Emma Boe](#) 813 631 4370

**November 18-20, 2005** -- Billings, Montana  
Local host: Sacred Heart Renewal Center of Billings, Montana  
Contact: [Susan Gliko](#) 406 846 3509

**November 18-20, 2005**-- Arlington, Virginia  
Local host: Diocese of Arlington  
Contact: [Myriam](#) 703 729 7998

**December 2-4, 2005** -- Minneapolis / St. Paul, Minnesota  
Contact: [Nancy Blom](#) 952 882 2072

**December 2-4, 2005** -- Wichita, Kansas  
Local host: Rachel's Vineyard of the Diocese of Wichita  
Contact: [Yvonne or Lori](#) 316 269 4673 or 1-888-456-4673 (statewide only)

**December 2-4, 2005** -- Columbia / Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
Contact: [Joy Crimmins](#) 717 993 5450

**December 2-4, 2005** -- Edmonton and Rural Area  
Contact: [Marlene Javorsky](#) 780 424 4538 or 1 877 579 3223  
Contact: [Carla Houston](#)  
Note: Interdenominational Retreat

**December 9-11, 2005** -- Sydney, Australia  
Contact: [Julie Kelly](#) 02 9440 7980

**December 9-11, 2005** -- Greensboro, North Carolina  
Contact: [Martha Shuping](#) 336-287-8421

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