

# THE ROAD AHEAD

Posted on May 10, 2017

**Written by Karen Starnes** – *(Guest Writer)*

Life. As so many have stated before me, “Without Life, there can be no Liberty.” This sacred and precious gift pointed me to get involved in politics. I can’t pinpoint when I first heard about abortion, but it probably had to do with learning of Roe v. Wade. Like any child, I instinctively knew it was wrong. Through the years I heard stories of young girls faced with seemingly no other option, and sympathized with them. I heard things like, “There is nothing we can do because it’s the law of the land.”, and “It’s a blob of tissue, and won’t feel anything anyways,” influencing my developing mind to accept that it might be ok in certain circumstances.

Growing up, my family watched the news together and my parents talked openly to my sister and me about current events, morality, and the Lord. They believed that prayer changes things and they modeled trust and faith in God no matter how unfortunate things might have looked for our country or in tough times at home. A sign always hung in our entryway quoting the scripture from Joshua 24:15, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” We praised Jesus in the good times and bad at the Watson Home. I’m so grateful for my upbringing in church and a loving family. It’s something I have never taken for granted, and I remember nostalgically being proud of America during a time when it seemed everyone loved our president, Ronald Reagan

During my government class in High School I remember thoroughly enjoying a project assigned to research presidential candidates for the upcoming election and choose who you would vote for and why. I enjoyed watching the debates, reading newspaper articles, and was

fascinated by the process. It was incredibly disappointing to me to miss turning 18 in time to vote when Election Day arrived. I had met the love of my life, Joel Starnes by this time as well. He was raised a Rush Baby and had a solid Christian World View galvanized by attending Summit Ministries Summer Camp. Sometimes he challenged me to consider some things that my public school education had influenced me to believe about our government that were at odds with my Christian Faith and the historical facts of our founding.

Politics wasn’t a big part of my life except for the subsequent presidential elections for the next few cycles. I did run for student government and served on the First Year



Council, then was a Sergeant at Arms my Sophomore year at UMHB, but didn't continue on in subsequent years due to being so busy with nursing school and planning a wedding. I voted as soon as I was old enough and felt proud and grateful to be free to participate in the process.

My wake-up call that America was changing came September 11, 2001. I had just climbed into bed after a long night shift working as an RN on the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit when Joel called and grimly told me to turn on the T.V. I watched in disbelief and cried and prayed. Later that afternoon I startled awake to loud BOOMS shaking our tiny house; I thought surely it was the end and prepared myself. I soon realized it was the brave soldiers at Fort Hood running training exercises across Lake Belton. It was a sobering time that grew us up. Joel and I considered joining the military and prayed for direction. We both wanted to help our country in some way. My friend who was an AA flight attendant called me to tell me she and her dad, a pilot were safe, but stuck as all air traffic had been suspended.



Fast forward a few years. We had moved back home to the HEB area and had our first born son. Everyone knows how much that first baby changes you! He came into this world at 36 weeks and was delivered emergently. I had unknowingly developed HELLP Syndrome which I had learned in nursing school years earlier was one of the most dangerous complications of pregnancy where infant and maternal mortality rates were alarmingly high. The acronym stands for Hemolysis, Elevated Liver Enzymes and Low Platelets. Because my platelets were so low, I could not get a spinal or epidural due to risk of bleeding. I remember thinking, "but they are about to slice into me..." I don't remember feeling fear, but prayed and asked God to protect us. I wanted so badly to stick around and be Mommy to my son, and I didn't want Joel to be a widower at age 29. We both made it through the C-section with risky general anesthesia, and despite a few challenges both miraculously were discharged home after only 6 days. Some sweet friends even surprised us with a Limo ride home from the hospital. Knowing we had experienced a miracle a newfound greater appreciation for life developed and a deeper sense of its fragility. One thing we also carry with us is the fact that many who experience this complication are much earlier in their pregnancy. It happens as early as 20 weeks. In all my research about the topic, I have never heard of a doctor recommending an "abortion procedure" to rescue the life of the mother. The treatment is to simply deliver the baby as fast as possible and work to save both the newborn, usually preemie baby and its mommy. A standard abortion procedure would not only kill the baby, but be a riskier procedure for the woman. I am keenly aware of the argument made by Pro-abortion politicians that we must keep abortion on demand legal in order

to save the life of a mother experiencing complications, but I have yet to find a complication that would be remedied with abortion vs. swift delivery.

I learned more about the abortion procedure and the history of it first in nursing school and then through my brother-in-law's work with Priests for Life, Life Dynamics, and the documentary Maafa 21 he was involved in making. The truth about the founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger, the eugenics movement in America and the diabolical ties to racial hatred and targeting was the stuff of horror movies causing my convictions about Life without exception to deepen. I believe some of my traits are God ingrained in like a sense of truth and justice and a desire to act when called. Micah 6:8 is a go to verse for me and reads, "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." I also love His word where it says, "For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." Psalm 33:4-5. The entire passage of Psalm 33 is wonderful! Another passage that influenced me in my walk with Jesus is Psalm 139. Verses 13-18 say, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand-when I awake, I am still with you." Not only do the scriptures affirm how precious the unborn are to the Lord, they were words of deep comfort during a time when I struggled with my identity in Christ, and felt insecure and insignificant. Still, if those old dark feelings creep in, the Holy Spirit brings these life affirming words to my mind and I speak them out loud because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of the Lord.

After Clive was born I remember contacting my Congressman and President Bush urging and pleading with them not to bailout the banks. I was sorely disappointed in the decision to ignore the majority of the people. Joel and I were both engaged in listening to conservative talk radio and lively discussions regarding the massive growths in government while the people became more burdened and ignored. I took Clive in the



baby stroller down to the lawn of the City Courthouse in Hurst, TX to join the first Tea Party Rally armed with tea bags and letters for our Congressmen and the president. We were tired of over taxation with little to no representation for hard working average Americans. Thanks to social media I had seen a lifetime friend's mother posting about politics and the rally.

We tried for two years to conceive again and were overjoyed when we found out at only

two weeks along. We were a little nervous, but I had been thoroughly checked out by my doctor and an hematologist and declared healthy, with little chance of developing HELLP Syndrome again. So when the bleeding started at 9-10 weeks we were heartbroken and pleaded with the Lord to save our baby. I won't go into detail, but it was a painful time both physically and spiritually. Jesus walked with us through it, but I admit it was hard to understand why this sweet life ended. I cramped and contracted and delivered a tiny dead baby at home by myself. I have thought many times that is probably a similar experience to those going through an early trimester abortion. There are feelings of shame and regret and feeling like you did something wrong to cause this even when you didn't. I was crushed and struggled for a long time. It was in a season of feeling broken that I clung to my Heavenly Father like never before. He carried us and growth happened and even breakthrough in our marriage. We can testify to His compassion and as Psalm 34:18 states, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." He is "The Father of compassion and the God of all comfort." II Corinthians 1:3.



About a year later we conceived again and had a sweet baby boy Isaiah. His name means "Yahweh is salvation". My pregnancy with him and his delivery deepened my desire to grow closer to God and increased my love for Him. There are so many lessons I learned about God's love and mercy for me through caring for my babies. A mama's heart is beating for her kids and wants nothing but the best of everything for them. You love them so much it hurts and would give anything to keep them safe and free of suffering. You want to teach them everything because you don't want them to make the same mistakes you did. I felt so many times when speaking life to my babies my Heavenly Father would speak things to my heart things like, "See honey, that's how I feel about you."

I became aware of the Pro Life legislation Texas legislatures and Pro Life activists were trying to pass in Austin in 2013 through Facebook first I think, and heard about a call to come to the Capitol in support and prayer. I had already called my congressman, but felt like I could do more this time. A sweet friend felt the same so we got our hubbies to watch our kids and hopped on the road down to Austin. I had been to the Capitol a couple of times to visit and learn TX history, but had never gone in this capacity before. There were thousands in blue in support of women and babies all over the capitol grounds as well as thousand in orange there to protest. We waited in an incredibly long line to sign in as support for HB2. Then we attended a rally on the south steps. Protesters tried to drown out the truth, but truth was heard. I'll never forget the presence of the Lord being so strong and feeling so peaceful despite angry protesters all around us. I could almost see the spiritual warfare going on in the heavenlies....It

was tangible. When the rally officially ended we were still singing praise and worship songs while protesters descended upon us screaming and yelling hateful things. I wasn't afraid even when a lady got in my face and started screaming at me. We peacefully moved to the side and let them protest. My friend and I joined up with a group of ladies from church and Texas Eagle Forum and were led in prayer by Trayce Bradford. I was so inspired by these ladies and knew I want to stay involved in some way. The bill miraculously passed. It was a step towards victory in protecting life.

I'm only scratching the surface of how the Holy Spirit has been drawing me to be involved in government change. My prayer is to be a light, a servant of Christ and an instrument of peace and justice. Many times my involvement is not what I think would make a huge difference, but I feel compelled to obey and act when He calls. I know that all of us doing a little can make a huge difference! I'm a busy homeschool mom of two precious boys and now a sweet baby girl. He's brought me on a journey of finding my identity in Him alone and to a place where I can lay down fear of man to seek Him and boldly walk out who He has uniquely created me to be. It's such a pleasure to serve Jesus and although never perfectly, I'm learning to count it all joy when we face trials of many kinds. My God is faithful. He redeems and restores; He shines light in dark places and comforts those who mourn. He is a life giver, and wants us living life abundantly. Thank you for reading my story and I pray you are encouraged in some way through what I have shared.