



Transcript
For Faith & Family (Unedited)

RICHARD LAND with JOI WASILL

(Part 1)

RICHARD LAND: Today, we are happy to welcome Mrs. Joi Wasill to the broadcast to bring her insight and her experience to our discussion of the choices that are available to women who are facing crisis pregnancies. Joy, welcome to For Faith and Family.

JOY WASILL: Thank you, Dr. Land. It is good to be here.

LAND: Before we begin, tell us a little bit about your family.

WASILL: My son is ten and he is the joy and delight of our lives. He is our child through the blessed wonderful gift of adoption. His birth mother was nineteen and pregnant and she wanted him to have what she had had as a child growing up, which was a stable married mommy-daddy home. So, through her sacrificial love and selflessness, she chose the gift of adoption for our son and we are so thankful and blessed for her and for this gift of a child. My husband and I have been married for twenty-five years and our son is ten. My husband owns a business and we attend First Baptist Hendersonville.

LAND: Now, tell us a little about the ministry that God has called you to.

WASILL: Well, the ministry, Dr. Land, it is really interesting, because you actually birthed this ministry, whether you are aware of that or not, I am not sure. I was listening to your radio broadcast; this has probably been at least nine years ago. My son was an infant, he was attending pre-school, and one of the days that he was in pre-school, I rarely ever stayed home on those mother's-day-out days. It was errand-running day, get the groceries done, and the Wal-Mart shopping, and whatnot, and I happened to be home that day and it was the week of Sanctity of Human Life, and you were interviewing Janet Folger. And she spoke to me directly. It was actually God speaking through her. I had always been pro-life, I don't remember a time in my life when I didn't believe that the unborn child was a precious gift from God and I did what I thought I was supposed to do. I voted pro-life. I was very active in making sure that other people knew who the candidates were that supported life. I had a pro-life bumper sticker on the back of my car, and when we could, I sent in a donation to the right-to-life organizations. So, I really did think up until that day of listening to your broadcast that I was doing what I should do, as a pro-life Christian. That day, you asked Janet what could those listening to your broadcast do to help the cause of life. And I don't remember specifically what she said,

but her answer struck at the heart of my being and I knew that day that I had to do something, that God was calling me, that in honor of my son's birth mother's selfless decision, that I had to do something more than what I was doing and I think that day or the next day, I placed a phone call to the right-to-life offices here in Tennessee to ask what I could do. So, literally, it was your program that started my active involvement with the pro-life movement.

LAND: Well, wow! I didn't know that, thank you for sharing that. That means a lot. So, what did God call you to do?

WASILL: Well, I thought that God had called me to be on the front lines of the pro-life movement with the Right To Life Organization and I started a chapter in my county, Sumner County, Tennessee, and was very active and involved, and we had lots of wonderful events and educational outreach events. We had Gianna Jessen at our church to speak. We had Jill Stanek at one of the local schools. We did a lot of wonderful things, but what happened in the meantime, was my best friend's daughter, who was fifteen, found out that she was pregnant. And, walking through that crisis pregnancy with my friend and her daughter opened my eyes to a whole new reality that the high schools, and I am a former high school teacher, I had taken early retirement if you will, to be at home with my son, to be a stay-at-home mom, and I had no idea just how negative adoption is perceived in the high school community. And I had heard some comments as an adoptive mom from friends at church or friends in the community that would make comments that made me think that they thought less of my son's birth mother than they should have. They would say things like, well do you ever hear from his real mom? How could she give him away? Things like that and so, that always hurt me because I had never looked at it from the standpoint of the pregnant woman making that adoption decision until my friend's daughter, who was fifteen, she knew she wasn't ready to be a mother and the boyfriend was in terrible shape. They had broken up, and so she knew this was a chaotic environment in which to bring a child and so she made the decision very quickly in her pregnancy to choose adoption; chose a young couple that was not able to have biological children. They were going to have an open adoption, and they were going with her to doctor's visits, but all the while, she was sitting in classrooms with students who were saying, how could you give your baby away? No one does that anymore. Why don't you love your child? That child is going to be raised by strangers, how could you do that? So that by the end of the summer, when the child was to be born, she had changed her mind and I sat down with her and asked her what happened to change your mind? She said, well I was doing this because I thought it was best for him but everybody that I've been hearing from seems to think I am making a bad decision. And as a teacher, a former high school teacher, that broke my heart, because here she is, in the biggest crisis of her life and trying to make a good decision as a 15-year-old child, and to have teachers say those sorts of things, not only students, but teachers, and I just simply went to my former principle at my high school where I taught and I said, I don't know what I'm supposed to do, but it was the clearest sense of purpose I think I've ever had in my life, that I knew I had to do something. And he said, sure, come on in, and I began with one high school eight years ago this past September, strictly talking about adoption, going in and I called it "The Adoption Option," and we just talked about what adoption looks like, and we did

that for about two years and it grew rather slowly, schools across the area started hearing about this, and calling me and other teachers would call me and say, "I hear you do this program, could you come to our school?" And I realized after a couple of years that less than one percent of women choose adoption, and particularly in the teen years. If you are going into a high school and talking to them about the one option they are not choosing and you are not talking to them about the two that they think they know about, then you are really not doing a thorough job of educating them. So, after a couple of years, I started covering all three of the options. So, we cover parenting, we cover abortion, and we cover adoption.

LAND: This is Richard Land and you are listening to For Faith and Family and we are visiting with Joy Wasill, and she telling us about how God put a ministry on her heart and lead her to implement it. You started going into the high schools, first of all talking about adoption, and then talking about the other options that are available to pregnant women, abortion and parenting the child. Now, I want to go back to one statistic you just stated, less than one percent of pregnant teenagers choose adoption.

WASILL: Less than one percent of women of any age choose adoption.

LAND: Wow. That is stunning to me. You know, I was asked this question when I came to be interviewed for the Presidency of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, we had a couple of pro-choice trustees still left on the board and they were, as you might imagine, not terribly happy with the fact that I was probably going to be the next President of the Commission, and so they picked up on the fact that I was particularly close and am particularly close to my, then 15-year-old daughter. And they said, what if while you were here in Nashville your 15-year-old daughter were raped and she became pregnant through the rape back in Dallas, wouldn't you want her to have an abortion? And I said, well you've asked the question in a very personal way, so I am going to answer it in a very personal way. So I said, first of all, you are asking me to choose between my daughter and my granddaughter, I can't do that. I said my granddaughter has done nothing to deserve to die. Secondly, I know that if my daughter were to abort her first pregnancy at fifteen, she would be doing much more damage to her future reproductive health than carrying a baby to term, and I said, so I would hope that my wife and I would love our daughter and nurture our daughter through the pregnancy and then give up our granddaughter through a Baptist Children's Home for adoption to a Christian home. Well, I had several conservative trustees who were just horrified that I could give up my own flesh and blood, you know. I said, well, we would be doing that because we would be thinking about what was best for the child, not what is best in our own selfish interests, you know, that a child deserves to have the kind of home that our daughter grew up in, the kind of home that my wife and I grew up in. So, obviously, the resistance to adoption has grown, and yet, there are millions and millions of couples who want these babies. In fact, I preached on the life issue this last Sunday at the church were I am interim pastor in Kingsport, Tennessee, and afterwards, I had a couple come up to me with three children and they said, Dr. Land, we want you to meet our children. Their oldest daughter was adopted from a family member, an extended family member who had a pregnancy and gave up the baby for adoption, and the younger two are snowflakes.

They were frozen embryos that they adopted and had implanted and are perfectly beautiful looking children. It was really exciting. So, how many schools are you in?

WASILL: We are in thirty-eight high schools across Tennessee and we are happy and thrilled that God has just literally flung open the doors of the public schools. We are in public and private schools. We also just moved into the states of Mississippi and Alabama with this program. Last summer we were featured on an international pro-life television show that aired in one hundred million households and my phone started ringing asking, how do we do this program in our state? We even had calls from Australia. How do we do this program in our area? So I saw the need to develop a curriculum that could be implemented in a turn-key fashion that they could walk into a school and be able to do that, and that is actually what we have done. We have implemented a curriculum that now the states of Mississippi and Alabama are using their "Chose Life" license plate money to purchase this curriculum and I actually did training in Jackson, Mississippi two weeks ago for the crisis pregnancy centers of the state to be able to go into their schools and teach this program as we do it here in Tennessee. I will be going to Birmingham, Alabama in December to do the same for the state of Alabama.

LAND: Well, that's great. That is stupendous. Joy, tell us about how people can find out more information about this program. It is called...

WASILL: "Decisions, Choices, and Options—Facts about Teen Pregnancy." We do have a web site, it is decisionschoicesandoptions.org. They can actually watch a sample presentation. We do have video footage of us in a school doing the presentation. They can read a lot of the data, the contact information is there. They can contact me directly and I will be happy to speak with them about how to do this. We are actually talking with the state of Ohio in December; I am going up there to make a presentation for the Ohio Choose Life Organization.

LAND: Now, we have approximately 1.2 million abortions in this country every year. I think most people would be shocked to know how many of those are to teenagers.

WASILL: The statistic from the Alan-Guttmacher Institute, which is the research arm of Planned Parenthood, says that between 29 and 33% of teens choose abortion. So, if you have 750,000 teen pregnancies in a year, I think in 2002, there were about 230,000 teen abortions.

LAND: We have the dubious distinction in America of having the highest rate of teenage abortion in the world.

WASILL: And teen pregnancy in the world.

LAND: Well, that's an appalling statistic. Yet, we are told that secular sex education is the answer. The more sex education we get, the more teen pregnancy we get; unless it is abstinence education. So, what kind of response do you get? Do you talk to co-ed classes?

WASILL: We do.

LAND: What grades do you start with?

WASILL: We generally speak in the ninth grade classes because in the state of Tennessee, and in Mississippi, I have the curriculum requirements, the Wellness program is a required class to graduate.

LAND: Now, ninth grade is in high schools in most places now.

WASILL: Yes, it is high school. The Wellness Curriculum requires that the subject of reproduction, sexually-transmitted diseases, all of those sorts of topics be discussed, so we fit very nicely into a Wellness Curriculum, and most of the coaches that teach Wellness are more than happy to turn over this discussion to teen pregnancy to me. So we speak in the high school Wellness programs. Therefore, by the end of a school year, all of the ninth grade students in that particular school have heard this presentation. So, in the past eight years we have spoken to well over thirty thousand high school students, just in the Middle Tennessee area alone. We are in co-ed classes. Now some of the schools divide the girls and the boys out. It seems to work better in a co-ed class.

LAND: Why do you think that is?

WASILL: Well, the boys, at first I always tease them and say, go ahead and roll your eyes because we are going to talk about teen pregnancy today and I know you can't get pregnant. They are curious about this, because they have heard, they have seen, and one of the first questions I ask them is how many of you know someone who got pregnant as a teenager. And Dr. Land, you would be stunned to see every hand in the room goes up. They all know someone that had a crisis pregnancy as a teenager. So they are curious about it but they don't have that same instinctual curiosity about teen pregnancy that girls do, so they are curious but they are afraid to ask questions. So it is almost like, on the surveys that we take up at the end of the classroom, we ask them to tell us, what did you hear today that made you think which of the options facing a teen in a crisis pregnancy makes the most sense to you and why? They will write some very insightful comments about not realizing that if their girlfriend were to get pregnant that they might have to give up football or baseball because they would have to go get a job to support this child. So they really do think about it and they just don't feel they have the right to ask about it, I think.

LAND: So, when you go, you take models of show and tell. You take models of babies at various stages of development and that is new information to these young people, isn't it?

WASILL: Oh my goodness. It is amazing. I have been doing this for eight years and I never get tired of seeing their faces when those little fetal models are going around the room, one of the first things that we talk about before we even begin the discussion of how abortion is done, how the procedures are done, is we talk to them about fetal

development. Because they need to know, I have had too many of my former students come up to me now that they are in their thirties and they hear what I do, they know I don't teach what I used to at the high school, I am doing teen pregnancy programs, and they come up to me in Wal-Mart or O'Charleys or out in the community and tell me their abortion story right there on the spot. And what most of them say, and all of my friends who are my age that had abortions in their twenties or their teens, what they all say, is they didn't know. They didn't have the facts about fetal development. They didn't know that at 18 to 22 days after conception that baby has a heartbeat. They had never seen an ultrasound picture. Now these students have seen ultrasound pictures because we use 2-D and 4-D ultrasound in the presentation in PowerPoint.

LAND: What do they do when they see that?

WASILL: They love it, especially the 4-D because you can see those little babies jumping and sucking their thumb and flipping around and blinking.

LAND: I saw one the other day where two twins were poking each other.

WASILL: Right.

LAND: I mean, two twins, they were side by side, and one was poking the other one.

WASILL: They are fighting in the womb. But they love that part. But when they hold those little fetal models, we have 12, 20, 26, and 30 week fetal models that while we are describing what is going on with that baby developmentally, they are passing these through the room. Their faces are so sweet. Occasionally it is very difficult because I look out there and I see a girl with tears running down her face. Occasionally I will see a girl whose face turns white and then she starts crying. So, I know there are students in every class that I speak in that have already experienced abortion personally.

LAND: You know, that's the thing that we have to continually remind ourselves that in a society that is as abortive as ours has been, you can never assume that in any crowd where there are women, that there are not women who have had abortions, or where there are not parents who have pressured an abortion or paid for an abortion, or husbands who have insisted on an abortion. I mean, to me, when I was working as a volunteer as a crisis pregnancy center in Dallas many years ago, to me that was the most shocking thing. The most shocking thing was married women who were coming in to get abortions because their husbands were threatening to divorce them if they didn't get abortions, and these were their babies. I mean, I thought, this is a sorry excuse for a husband. That's why we always have to temper the abortion message with the fact that God is a God of love and forgiveness and healing, as well as a God of life and a God of righteousness and judgment, because there are lots of hurting people out there.

WASILL: What we do in that situation, we generally always refer to the local crisis pregnancy center whatever school or area that we are in, we have a table that has literature on it for the students to take with them, and included in that literature package

will be the local crisis pregnancy center's information. So if I sense that there are girls in the room that are having a great difficulty with this issue, then I will spend a little bit more time making sure that they understand there is a place for someone who has already made this decision to go to get help to deal with those emotions.

LAND: Right. And you know, I was at a crisis pregnancy center last week, they don't call it a crisis pregnancy center anymore, but it is a crisis pregnancy center, and they have as many women that they are seeing that they are counseling for post-abortion traumatic stress syndrome, as women that they see who come in with problem pregnancies. It is a tremendous ministry of helping these women to heal and in many cases share with them the Gospel. But, clearly, there is tremendous concentric circles of destruction that come from abortion. Now, when you talk about the option of keeping the baby, what do you tell them?

WASILL: Well, first of all, we have to correct their language. Because what I didn't realize, I knew that those comments that people made to me about my son's birth mother, why didn't she keep him? How could she give him away? Those comments hurt me, but I did not know how devastating those words are to a pregnant woman who is considering adoption. So one of the first things that we do is we give them a positive adoption language sheet and in that positive adoption language sheet, they are going to learn that there are certain phrases that we just don't use any more. We don't use the phrase, "keep the baby." We don't use the phrase, "give up for adoption," or "put up for adoption," because that doesn't accurately describe what these women are doing. They are not giving away their babies. They are making a plan for that child's life that is something they cannot provide for that child at that particular moment. So, it is really more appropriate to say, "making an adoption plan," as opposed to "giving up." When you say something like, "keep the baby," all of the girls that have gone through adoption tell us that what it makes them feel when you say, "keep the baby," is you are questioning whether they love that child or not, because if you loved it, you would keep it; and if you don't love it, you give it away. So, our language that we speak about adoption is very detrimental, it is very anti-adoption. I had never looked at it through the eyes of a birth mother until I met a birth mother.

LAND: If people want to see this chart, they can go to your web site?

WASILL: It is on the web site.

LAND: So, this is Richard Land, and you are listening to For Faith and Family. We are visiting with Joy Wasill about her ministry to go into schools and to present the adoption message and if you would like this chart on adoption, you can go to the web site, which is decisionschoicesandadoptions.org. Joy, so what do you tell them?

WASILL: Well, we tell them that the girls who are making these decisions and these are decisions that most women tell us are the hardest decision they ever have to make in their life, and it goes with them for the rest of their life. The consequences and the effects of this decision are going to affect so many people. So, we try to get them to see that, you

know, out of all three of these options, and we begin with the option of parenting. We talk about parenting first, because most teen girls are going to choose parenting. Fifty-seven percent of pregnant teenage girls choose parenting in 2009. So, we start with that option and we talk about it and we give them the statistics, and, Dr. Land, it is not politically correct to speak about the role of a father. It is not politically correct to discuss the impact of growing up in a home where there is no father present, but we are not doing any favors to these young women by not giving them this information. They don't typically like the information because we tell them the truth; 80% of teen moms are on welfare within five years after the birth of the child. Over 50% of babies that are parented by teen mothers are referred to social services agencies; 70% of teens that are in state alcohol and drug rehabilitation institutes come from fatherless homes, 71% of pregnant teenage girls are from fatherless homes. We have to share with them the facts that because they are bringing this child into the world, they can be a great mommy to that child, but the world that we live in today, they are not getting married. There isn't a father for that child and so we are seeing this rapid disintegration of our society due to the fact that children don't have a daddy anymore. So, we talk about the role of a father in a child's life.

LAND: I remember Mike Singletary, who is the head coach of the San Francisco 49er's, was an All-American at Baylor, really strong Christian minister, and he talks about going into prisons, he really has a prison ministry, and he always asks the question, "how many of you had a father who was involved in your life?" He said I have yet to have a hand go up. I have been doing this for ten years, he said, I have yet to have a hand go up.

WASILL: That is actually one of the statistics that I give the girls that has gotten worse in the eight years that I have been doing this program. When I started out eight years ago, the statistic was that 75% of all prison inmates in any prison in this country were from fatherless homes. That statistic is now 80%, of all prison inmates in any prison in this county are from fatherless homes.

LAND: Of course, that's because the illegitimacy rate is now up to 41%. Forty-one percent of all babies born in this country are born out of wedlock and 44% of children have lost their fathers by the time they are six.

WASILL: So we really don't do the girls any favor by not sharing with them the reality. Now, they are not going to see that reality on their nighttime TV shows that they are watching where there is a pregnant girl that has chosen to parent her baby. They are going to see the glamorous side of parenting and they are not going to see the reality. So we do have to give them that reality. What really surprised me, eight years ago when my friend's daughter was going through this, was even in the church, even Christians don't understand that what you said a few moments ago about your answer to the trustee, that is your flesh and blood, how could you allow your child to make an adoption plan for her baby? And most people just see that as too hard of a sacrifice to make, but yet, we are not talking about the implications for that child who is growing up in a fatherless home. That is one of the things I have really begun to see, is that the students are telling us on these

surveys that they turn in at the end of the class, they wouldn't want their child to grow up in the same type of home they grew up in. So, they are getting it.

LAND: Of course, these girls are disproportionately themselves from fatherless homes because one of the most devastating statistics about fatherlessness is the study at Duke that showed that girls who lose their fathers in the home before their sixth birthday are five times as likely to become sexually active before they are seventeen. So, they are much more disproportionately likely to get pregnant.

WASILL: Yes, 71% is the statistic.

LAND: Because they are desperate for that male relationship that they are not getting from an absent father.

WASILL: You know, I ask them that question when we are going over the statistics, I ask them, girls why do you think so many pregnant girls come from a fatherless home? And every class, every day, at every high school, the girls get it. Now, the boys will say something like, well, there's not a dad there to tell them how bad boys are or something like that. But the girls always get the answer. They always say, it is because they didn't have anyone to show them male affection and attention as a child. So, you don't have to be a PhD in psychology to know that. These 15 and 16-year-old kids know what it is like to grow up in a home without a dad. God brought me one of the most amazing gifts to this ministry about three and a half years ago. I was speaking in a classroom in a local school here and a pregnant girl walked in, in the back of the room, I saw her come in and she sat down. Afterwards she came up and talked to the adoption counselor who was with me that day from Bethany Christian Services and after she left, the adoption counselor told me she said, I think she is going to make an adoption plan. I didn't believe it, because teenage girls very rarely ever do that, and lo and behold, in September of that year, that fall, she called me and wanted to talk to me personally and thanked me for going into her school and telling her about adoption because she knew nothing about adoption, and her reasoning for choosing adoption is that she did not want her child to grow up in the same dysfunctional home that she had grown up without a father present, and she made that adoption plan for that child's benefit and she actually joined me in the classroom for three years and the students were able to hear from someone who had actually been the high school student sitting in the classroom hearing those negative comments about how could you give your baby away, and why don't you want to keep your baby. So she was a very powerful testimony to the beauty and the gift of adoption and when you think about it, it boils down to the spirit of abortion is death and destruction and mayhem and post traumatic stress disorders for women, death for the child, and parenting brings that child into the world through life, however, the quality of that child's life doesn't end up being exactly what we would want it to be. Adoption, the spirit of adoption gives that child life, stability, a home, a hope, a future, it is Jeremiah 29:11, and what really disturbed me in the early days of this program, and I guess in a way it really still does, is how we, as a church, and a Christians, don't really understand the spirit of adoption. That we need to be promoting adoption, and even crisis pregnancy centers, family research council about ten years ago did a study of crisis pregnancy

centers, and found that the majority of crisis pregnancy centers are not doing a very thorough job of educating their clients on adoption, because many of the women in the crisis pregnancy centers have a bias against adoption. Well, I could never let my daughter give away my grandchild, and that's very difficult for me to understand because the spirit of adoption is redemption and salvation. And I really don't understand why adoption has disappeared from the screen.

LAND: Well, I think it is the culture of narcissism. I think it is selfishness. I think that partially because of abortion and partially because of the narcissism of the boomer generation, you know I hate to knock on my own generation but, you know, most of us, one demographer said most baby boomers were the stars of their family and they never got over it. So, they think about me, me, me, me, me. They think, I couldn't give up my grandchild, instead of thinking about what is best for the child; what is best for the child. We have had some discussions on the program about things like, would you have experimental surgery to correct a birth defect that was going to cause muscular dystrophy, for instance, even if it was at risk of the baby dying or a heart defect, and my answer to that was, you have to put yourself in the position of the child. What would the child want you to do? Not what is best for me, or not what do I think is right, but what would the child want. You know, me, I'd want my parents to go for it. But, this is a tremendous ministry and I want to thank you. This is Richard Land and you are listening to For Faith and Family. We are interviewing Joy Wasill, who is the program director for Decisions, Choices, and Options. I have a lot more questions I want to ask and I suspect that our listeners have a lot more they want to hear the answer to as well. So, can you come back and be with us again tomorrow?

WASILL: I certainly can.

LAND: Wonderful.

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RICHARD LAND with JOI WASILL

(Part 2)

RICHARD LAND: This is Dr. Richard Land and you are listening to For Faith and Family. We are delighted to have with us again today, Joi Wasill, who is the program director for Decisions, Choices, and Options; a ministry that we were delighted to hear yesterday that for For Faith and Family had a small part in helping to birth. Joy, share with us, some people may not have been listening yesterday, share a little bit about how you got started in this and what you do.

JOY WASILL: Well, eight years ago my best friend's daughter, who was fifteen at the time, found out that she was in a crisis teen pregnancy and walking through that with my friend and her daughter, opened my eyes to the reality that high school students, teachers, and the adults that counsel and advise pregnant teenage girls often overlook that beauty and the gift of adoption. We are so worried about keeping these girls out of the abortion facility that we are afraid to even broach the subject of adoption with them. Even for a girl who chose adoption in the beginning, the language and the words that we use saying things like, "why don't you want your baby? How could you give your baby away?", meant for that young woman that she changed her mind to join the ranks of the single teenage mothers as a result of the words that were spoken to her. So, just a total lack of understanding about the spirit and the beauty and the gift that God gave all of us through adoption and gives many people through the physical adoption of children and I began a program in one high school eight years ago this past September that has now grown to thirty-eight high schools in the Middle Tennessee area and now is going into Mississippi, Alabama, and potentially Ohio in the spring. So we are very excited about the doors that God is opening for us to get into the public and private schools with this message.

LAND: Well, it is certainly one that is needed because you were sharing in the first day with us that how few girls choose adoption.

WASILL: Less than one percent.

LAND: And that the government health facilities are probably not even going to keep those statistics any longer because there are so few of them?

WASILL: That's what I read in an article that came out in the Washington Times just a few months ago; that the National Center for Health Statistics is not going to continue tracking domestic infant adoption because the numbers are so small, it is around 6,800 domestic infant adoptions per year and that is just a number that they consider to be statistically irrelevant and they are not going to track any longer.

LAND: Now, you go into the ninth grade and you share the various options of abortion and parenting and of adoption. Now, give us a précis of your rendition.

WASILL: We start with, we don't preach to them. We do mention and support and stand on the abstinence message. We don't have time to go into a full abstinence presentation so we do explain to them that abstinence is the only way that they can prevent the spread of STDs and it is certainly the only way that they can prevent a pregnancy from happening. So, many of the schools where we go, they have had an abstinence speaker in the week or two before we get there, so we are a perfect compliment and follow up to the abstinence message.

LAND: And you are in the Health Classes.

WASILL: Yes, in the Health Classes.

LAND: I guess it would be part of P.E.?

WASILL: P.E., Wellness, Health. Many of the times the Family and Consumer Sciences teachers, which is what we used to call in the old days, "Home Ec." they will come in there. Many of them have family and parenting classes, child development. Some of the schools actually have daycares on site for the teen mom's children. So, we have a variety of students but typically it is ninth grade wellness and it fits in with their curriculum because they are studying reproduction and those topics.

LAND: Okay. So, what do you tell them, it looks to me like if you are using these models you are presenting them with the personhood of the unborn baby pretty quickly?

WASILL: We are. They are presented with the statistics on parenting first, because that is the option that most girls choose, 57% of pregnant teen girls will choose to parent. So we reveal all of the reality of that option as opposed...

LAND: Share some of those realities with us.

WASILL: Well, they've all watched television and they see "Secret Life of the American Teenager" where there is a pregnant teen who has chosen to parent. On there they are seeing the glamorous side and it is no longer a stigma in any high school to be a teen mom. So, they are seeing all of the glamorous side and very few shows are giving them the reality. So we give them the reality of what life is going to be like for that teen mom, that 80% of teen mothers are on welfare by the time their child is five, those sorts of things. They also see that 40% of teen moms graduate high school, so that means 60% of teen moms do not graduate from high school. Less than two percent of teen mothers have a college diploma by age thirty. They see the reality and the effects of fatherlessness on the children because 92% of these teen moms, they are not going to marry the father of their child. So, that creates a whole issue of fatherlessness and we talk about the issue of what not having a father does in a child's life. Then we move into the abortion issue and cover that from the...

LAND: Back up a minute. This is Richard Land and you are listening to For Faith and Family and we are visiting with Joy Wasill. Joy, talk to us a little bit about some of the

impacts of fatherlessness. That is a taboo subject and yet, we have conducted a forty-year experiment in this country on whether or not fathers are optional accessories in the successful rearing of children and the answer is, they are not optional.

WASILL: According to the research, and we site federal government data, all of our statistics come from Federal Government organizations and agencies, 90% of homeless and run-away children come from fatherless homes, 71% of pregnant teenage girls come from fatherless homes, 63% of young people who commit suicide come from a fatherless home, 80% of all prison inmates, as you mentioned earlier in yesterday's program, 80% of all prison inmates come from a home where there is no father present. We are not doing these girls any favor by not letting them know the reality of life of how difficult it is to be a teen mom. Bristol Palin said it best, she said this summer in an interview that if teen girls know how difficult it is to be a teen mother, they would never have sex before marriage. It is very difficult. We want them to understand that. We don't want them to go into this not knowing what the reality is going to be for their child and for them not to graduate from high school, not to have that hope of going to college and making it through college, if less than 2% of all teen mothers, by the age of thirty have a college diploma, that statistic right there is screaming for attention. Then we move into the option of abortion because that is the second most chosen option, about 29% of teenage girls chooses abortion. We talk to them about fetal development. We very quickly show them through ultrasounds, through 2-D ultrasounds and 4-D ultrasounds what that fetus looks like and I even tell them what the word fetus means, because sometimes they think that means inanimate object or blob of tissue, I am not really sure what they think it means, but we do make sure that they understand and see very clearly. We have fetal models ranging from 12 weeks to 30 weeks that the students are able to see, to hold, to look at, and then we move into a discussion of how the procedure is done. We don't show them any pictures, we would never do that. They are traumatized enough just hearing how the procedure is done and I wish that you could see their faces when they are holding these fetal models and we begin the discussion of how the procedure takes place and exactly what happens to the baby in the procedure. They are shocked and one of the best things about this program that I have learned is that this generation is very pro-life. They come into the presentation pro-life and the leave even more pro-life. The students will say, I knew abortion was killing a baby, I knew abortion was wrong, I never knew how bad it was until today. So, once we have covered the surgical procedures and we cover the chemical procedures, the morning after pill, many of them have been led to believe that the morning after pill is a contraceptive. We go into the full discussion of how that pill works. We describe to them how UR-486 works. They are going to know after they leave.

LAND: For our listeners, who may not have had the benefit of your class, tell them how it works.

WASILL: Well, the morning after pill can be used as a contraceptive if you know some pretty important things: The date of your last menstrual period, the date you ovulated, and the date of unprotected sex. Most married women who are trying to get pregnant have a difficult time nailing that down. So if you know those three things, then it can work as a

contraceptive. What it really does is the chemical in the drug hardens the lining of the uterus, so that if there is a conceived embryo, it will not be allowed to implant in the woman's uterine wall. So that, therefore, would meet the criteria of a chemical abortion.

LAND: And at the risk of being very controversial, which this program would never do, that is the way most oral contraceptives work.

WASILL: Yes it is.

LAND: Oral contraceptives are very effective as a means of birth control, and the reason is, is they do interfere with ovulation, but, as a "safety" measure, and I use the term safety with quotations, they do have chemicals in them, many, not all, but most of them have within them chemicals which make it impossible for any fetus that is conceived to implant on the uterine wall. It works the same way that the IUD works. It becomes an abort efficient.

WASILL: Well, the girls are really surprised, and you can see it on their faces that they are very surprised when we described how the morning after pill works and they all know about it. Some of them will share their stories with us afterwards of taking that pill or UR-46. We were at a high school....

LAND: Indulge me here. You know, I'm an old guy. These are ninth graders.

WASILL: Yes they are.

LAND: These are ninth graders. Now, as a father and as a grandfather, let me say something to our listeners. You need to assume that your young people in the seventh and eighth and ninth grades are being given the opportunity and in many cases, being pressured, to be sexually active, and you had best assume that and you had best cultivate, talking to your children, to your grandchildren, to your nieces, to your nephews, about these issues. Don't think that they are not going to be challenged by this until they get to high school. We are talking about ninth graders. Your general impression is they all know about the morning after pill and many of them have taken it or thought about taking it?

WASILL: Yes.

LAND: And this is not in New York City. This is not in Los Angeles. This is not in Chicago. This is not in Miami.

WASILL: This is in the Bible belt.

LAND: This is in the buckle of the Bible belt. So, this is not your father's or your high school. It is a whole new ballgame. This is what I find stunning, and I have heard it before, I've seen it before, it just still, this not the high school you attended, folks. If you are over thirty, your high school has been moth balled when it comes to sex.

WASILL: We are actually told by so many students, I can't even begin to tell you how many students, and teachers tell us, we need you to do this in the eighth grade. Can you do this program in the middle schools? And we actually did a middle school Monday and Tuesday of this week, but as a rule, we have not been in the middle schools. We don't have the staff. We don't have the budget to do that. So, we haven't gone down into the middle schools yet, but we are being requested there. They are asking for us there.

LAND: I want to say to all of you who are in ministry, you youth ministers, you pastors, you need to get involved with your young people in your church in dealing with this. Now, do you have opportunities to go to churches? Do you do churches?

WASILL: We do. That is one of the beautiful things about this program, is we go into youth ministries at local churches and do this on a Wednesday night, a Sunday night. We are able in those situations to back up all of the government data with Biblical data. We are able to plug in God's Word into each of these three options and give them the ability to see how these choices play out according to scripture. I love going into church youth groups.

LAND: I find what you are doing so exciting; First of all, because it is so necessary. Secondly, we hear a lot about women in ministry. Well, you could not do what you do nearly as effectively if you were a man. This wouldn't work. But the fact that you are a woman and you can go in and do this is powerful. It is absolutely powerful. Now tell folks once again if they want more information about what you do or how they can help, what web site they can go to.

WASILL: It is decisionschoicesandoptions.org. (All words have an S at the end, there is no ampersand, and the word "and" spelled out). They can also reach me by telephone at 615-308-5372, and I will be happy to talk with anyone who is interested in the program who wants to know, how can I do this in my area. We were in Birmingham a few weeks ago and a youth pastor actually came up to me after a meeting and purchased the program and said, I want to teach this to my youth on Wednesday nights. So, it is very adaptable to any sort of environment, whether it is a public school Health class or a church youth group on a Wednesday night.

LAND: Well, I am stunned. I must confess, I didn't know this: Less than 1% of all crisis pregnancies end with an adoption plan.

WASILL: It is very sad, it is very sad.

LAND: Has it always been that way, or has it gotten worse?

WASILL: No. In the 70s, before Roe v. Wade, there were about 9-11% of all unplanned pregnancies ended with an adoption plan.

LAND: What happened to the rest of them?

WASILL: The rest of those crisis pregnancies ended with marriage, the young woman and the young man got married. I think back on my high school days and I am over forty, so that was a few years ago. I remember a couple of girls being pregnant in our high school but they all got married. So, marriage was more of an option then than it is now. Very few students get married today, less than eight percent. So, they either got married or they made an adoption plan. There were more maternity homes back in the seventies. Those have kind of gone by the wayside. And girls tell us, the ones that make the adoption plans, tell us how difficult it is to be in the typical American high school pregnant and making an adoption plan. Just simply because of all the negativity that they are receiving day in and day out.

LAND: So would it be a good thing to re-institute homes for unwed mothers, we would use a different name today, but a home. I knew two girls who got pregnant in my high school and they just disappeared. We found out later that they had been sent to a maternity home for unwed mothers and then they came back the next year without babies, so I assumed that they gave their babies up for adoption. Would it be better to try to, would that be a ministry to have group homes where girls could continue classes and carry their babies to term and be with girls of like mind who have done the same thing?

WASILL: It actually would be, and there are a few places where that is being experimented with.

LAND: It sounds like a wonderful opportunity for some churches.

WASILL: It certainly does. There is a place in Alabama that is doing that. Of course, the Liberty God Parent Home in Lynchburg, Virginia, through Jerry Falwell's Organization, they have a God Parent Home where the girls can go and live that are making adoption plans. So there are a few places that are doing that but there aren't very many. I think it needs to be revisited. Not necessarily in the way that you described it, and that is kind of the way I remember it, where the girls went away and then they came back and there wasn't a baby, and nobody talked about it, because that is really the image that most people have today of what adoption looks like. You would be surprised at these 15-year-old kids who weren't on the planet in the fifties, have a very 1950's image of what adoption looks like. They think it is very closed, that no one ever gets to see their baby again, and that they don't know the parents that are raising the child. They are absolutely astounded when we show them a clip of a girl talking to them about making an open adoption plan, where she actually sees the child every six weeks or two months and they get together on birthdays and Christmas and, or when they hear our story that we have a semi-open adoption with our son's birth mother and we send her pictures and letters and DVDs of his awesome football playing skills on Saturdays. We stay in contact with her. We love her. We don't keep it a secret. Why would we do that? We are very pleased and very proud that God chose to bless our family through adoption. So, they need to be educated on what adoption really looks like and we need to step away from that 1950's mentality because that did lead to girls feeling like they didn't have any power in the decision-making process and today, in an adoption plan, the birth mother is making all the decisions. She is choosing the family, she is choosing what type of adoption she

wants, if she wants an open or semi-open, and if she should want to have a confidential or closed adoption, she can choose that, but most girls don't. Most girls want to have some contact with that child. So, just educating them, and that is really what our program seeks to do, is to educate the students about how adoption really works, how it really looks, and they can hear that there is another option, because what often happens is they come into a crisis pregnancy as a 16-year-old thinking I either have to parent or I have to get an abortion. And they don't really like either one of those options, but they feel pressured into one or the other, whichever way they are being pressured. They feel that they are being pressured into abortion by a boyfriend; I have a girl who is eighteen that just gave birth this summer. Her boyfriend really pressured her into an abortion and she just couldn't do it. Of course, he didn't want to be a dad, and he has not stepped up to the plate. She did not consider adoption.

LAND: Is he older?

WASILL: She is eighteen.

LAND: Is he older?

WASILL: No, he was a year older, not much. But, you know, she never even considered adoption because she didn't know anything about it. I met her after the birth of the child. She has never been through this program. She has never heard the beauty of adoption through the program. So, you know, that's just one of the things that really strikes me, is that as a society, we have allowed adoption to literally be taken off of the table.

LAND: Well, I'm pumped up by what you are doing and we are going to try to do our best to not just share it with our audience on the radio, but we are going to do our best to share it with our audience through our print media. I thought one of the most powerful things about your presentation is when you talk about, the similarities and the differences between abortion and adoption. First of all, talk about the similarities.

WASILL: The similarities, and the girls are really surprised at this too, the girls in the classroom, the similarities between abortion and adoption in both of those very different outcomes, but both of those options can produce many of the same benefits for the girl who is pregnant. She can continue her education. She can continue to pursue career goals. She doesn't have to remain in a relationship with a boyfriend if she chooses not to. She can be free of the financial burdens of parenting, which all of those, if you go down that list; all of those are the reasons why girls choose abortion. But they can get the same outcome with a different option. They can get that very same outcome with adoption. The big difference and this is how I generally end my program, the big difference between abortion and adoption is one ends in death and one ends in life, and my friends who had abortions twenty years ago, don't have pictures of their children that they made an option plan for, on their desk at work.

LAND: Try that again, I'm sorry.

WASILL: That's okay. My friends' who made abortion decisions twenty years ago in their crisis pregnancies, don't have a relationship with that child as my son's birth mother has with him. My friends who had abortions twenty years ago don't have pictures of the child that she made an adoption plan for and his family on her desk at work, like my son's birth mother does. So there is a huge vastly different outcome in adoption and abortion. But many of the things that girls need in a crisis pregnancy can be achieved through adoption that they are seeking an abortion for. I think, as a Christian, that is where I really get upset that we have allowed Satan to take adoption off of the table, because adoption is redemption, it is about salvation and giving life, and giving hope and abortion is death and destruction, for both the child and the woman in many cases. We have just stood back and allowed adoption to completely fall by the wayside because of what you said earlier, because we are too narcissistic to say, well, that is my blood, that is my grandchild, and I would never let my daughter do that without thinking about the long-term consequences for that child, and it really is something that we need to wake up and talk about.

LAND: This is Richard Land and you are listening to For Faith and Family. We are visiting with Joy Wasill. She is the program director for Decisions, Choices, and Options. I found one of the most powerful parts of your presentation to be contrasting the differences with adoption and abortion. Could you do that for us?

WASILL: Yes. With adoption your child is allowed to live. With abortion your child dies. With adoption your child is allowed to live in a married stable, two-parent, mommy-daddy home. With abortion your child dies. With adoption you are able to stay in contact with your child, you are able to see that child grow up, you are able to watch the beautiful human being that that child turns into. With abortion you have the guilt, the nightmares, the what ifs, the wondering and questioning and guilt and doubting that goes along with what would have been, what could have been. The differences are just so stark between those two that it is amazing.

LAND: There is one that particularly struck me; with adoption you will remember giving birth. With abortion you will remember taking a life. If you have ever dealt with any women, and I have and you have, who are dealing with post-abortion traumatic stress syndrome, it is very real. It is very painful, and it is very devastating.

WASILL: I had one of my former students show up at my doorstep about six years ago after I had run into her randomly, and she ask me did I still teach at the high school. I told her no, and told her what I did, and right there instantly, her facial expression changed. Within a few days she called me and asked could she come over and talk. Within an hour she was at my doorstep and the moment she walked in my door, she burst into tears. And we sat at my kitchen table for three hours that day and I listened to her describe the nightmares and the terror and the regret that she had over taking her child's life at age eighteen, a fresh out of high school student who didn't see, and she sat that and she said, Mrs. Wasill, I have never even thought about adoption. She said it never even crossed my mind. How I wish I had known and that broke my heart for her and for that child, and for that family that would have given anything to have been the parents of that child. And we

don't talk about that. We don't talk about the empty arms, the aching arms. I have a friend and her husband who are driving up to East Tennessee today, their son's birth mother is going into labor this afternoon and this will be their third adoption attempt. Two previous ones have fallen through; the birth mothers have changed their mind, which can happen. But we are just not addressing the issue of adoption and I really think that that grieves the heart of God.

LAND: When you mentioned East Tennessee, they have the national memorial to the unborn in Chattanooga on the site of a former abortion clinic. And if you have ever been there, and you see these women come and place a plaque with their aborted baby's name on it, and grieve over it, you know the terrible devastating...you know, abortion is not a devastating event that ends. It is like a title wave that just keeps on going, it just keeps on going. Well, that sounds to me like an awfully good invitation. It is time to give the invitation. We've heard the message and you have done it powerfully. If you would like to be involved, if you would like to know how you can bring this ministry to your community, you can go to decisionschoicesandoptions.org or Joy give them that phone number one more time.

WASILL: 615-308-5372.

LAND: This is a program that needs to be everywhere in the country. Every high school in the country, every church in the country needs to have this. I want to thank you for letting God use you as his instrument to bring this ministry to fruition.

WASILL: Thank you, Dr. Land.