

“I want to recommend Kim Ketola’s book *Cradle My Heart* to you. In working directly with the pro-life movement over the last few years, I have seen the incredible need for a book such as the one you hold in your hands. Through powerful, real stories, many of them from her own life, Kim graciously communicates the love and hope Jesus brings to hearts wounded by abortion. May God continue to bless and lead your ministry, Kim!”

—**Rebecca St. James**, singer, author, actress

“The estimated one in every five Christian women who have experienced abortion will experience the love of the Lord through this beautiful, insightfully written book. Kim relates stories of those with broken hearts who encountered Jesus, and she bravely shares her own experience of repentance and meeting his comfort and healing after abortion to deliver a personal, intimate, and hope-filled read and resource.”

—**Peggy Hartshorn, PhD**, president of Heartbeat International

“A compelling, powerful, honest account of accepting forgiveness and experiencing the miraculous, healing power of God. Kim uses clever, modern-day retellings of biblical encounters with Jesus that clearly illustrate his love and compassion, and she gives true-life testimonials that provide a deeper understanding of grief and its consequences. Biblical reflection and useful action steps help readers better understand God’s love and true healing. A powerful reminder that God wants to redeem pain in our lives and use it for his glory.”

—**Dr. Wess Stafford**, president and CEO of Compassion International, and author of *Too Small to Ignore* and *Just a Minute*

“With candid honesty, Kim Ketola helps readers heal from the suffering after abortion. Prayers and practical steps at the end of every chapter provide guidance in transforming hurt into hope. And thoughtful reflections and biblical insight help readers find Christ’s restoration the minute they open their hearts and give him permission to forgive and heal.”

—**Theresa Burke, PhD**, author of *Forbidden Grief*, and founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries

“Kim Ketola’s discerning creativity translates biblical stories into practical help for those struggling after abortion. Sharing her personal walk from shame to new life, she writes from the heart and offers hope, forgiveness, and help for strengthening faith in this awesome book!”

—**Georgette Forney**, cofounder of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign

“*Cradle My Heart* is like the steady hand of an empathetic physician doing heart surgery with truth and love. You bring the grief. Let God supply the grace.”

—**Rev. John Ensor**, author of *Answering the Call: Saving Innocent Lives One Woman at a Time* and executive director of global initiatives for Heartbeat International

“The emotional aftermath of abortion is rarely talked about with such honesty and compassion. As Kim courageously shares her pain and path to healing, you will be encouraged, filled with hope, and reminded that nothing separates you from the love of God.”

—**Linda Mintle (PhD, LCSW, LMFT)**, speaker, professor, and best-selling author of *Letting Go of Worry*

“With keen insight and courageous authenticity, Kim Ketola reflects on her haunting experience with abortion as a springboard to encourage others to process their similar experiences. Through dawning observations—as insightful as they are brief—Ketola puts words to the unspeakable and gives expression to the inexpressible. She encourages readers toward brutal honesty and liberating grace—or perhaps it is brutal grace and liberating honesty—to create chapters that insist upon scriptural reflection and prayerful response. No reader is too wounded or wretched or worldly or wise to gain something from this book. For no reader lives in a place untouchable by an encounter with the Lord of life.”

—**Douglas S. Huffman, PhD**, Professor and Associate Dean of Biblical & Theological Studies, Talbot School of Theology

“As a Christian psychotherapist who works with abortion-related trauma, I highly recommend this compassionate work that differentiates the need for spiritual from emotional healing, and moves the reader in a personal way from a place of shame to grace like no other book out there on this topic.”

—**Gregory Hasek, MA/MFT, LPC**, executive director of Misty Mountain Family Counseling Center; adjunct professor at George Fox University

“A powerful mix of Scripture, personal testimony, illustration, and practical action steps for each chapter. These insights show the power and love of Jesus to restore and give future hope. If I were still preaching, I’d order a case of these books and leave them in a semi-private place where women could unobtrusively pick up a copy—and I recommend my pastor friends do just that.”

—**Don Miles, EdD, MDiv**, mental health professional, pastor, and board member of Living Free Ministries

“*Cradle My Heart* shows Kim’s insight and heart of compassion through a beautiful parallel of biblical truth and practical application which will both comfort and encourage. Even after abortion, God’s grace increases all the more.”

—**Jimmy Ray Lee, DMin**, President of Living Free

“Two perspectives make this book meaningful: Kim’s empathetic personal journey to healing, and Jesus Christ’s grace and truth. Kim makes his encounters with the infirm and helpless both personal and relevant, sure to make a difference in many lives.”

—**Rev. James Lamb**, national executive director of Lutherans for Life

“I’ve known many tragic stories after abortion from the anonymous, who came to me in confession or for counseling, and some who attempted, or even tragically completed, suicides. Kim’s book will open the hearts of the children of God who need to know that our Lord loves all and forgives all who ask.”

—**Rev. Robert McKewin**, retired

“Well researched and scripturally rooted, *Cradle My Heart* is an excellent resource for any post-abortion ministry. Women who carry the cross of abortion will find a compelling and convincing read because Kim has been where her readers are. Her meditations remind us that Christ’s mercy is greater than our weakness, and so we find the courage to be at peace with ourselves and to help others on this painful journey.”

—**Father Frank Pavone**, Priests for Life



# cradle my heart

*Finding God's*

LOVE

*After Abortion*



Kim Ketola

Foreword by Ruth Graham,  
President of Ruth Graham and Friends

 Kregel  
Publications

*Cradle My Heart: Finding God's Love After Abortion*  
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Details in some anecdotes and stories have been changed, and in some cases are composites of real individuals whose true stories are representative of actual events, in order to protect the identities of the persons involved.

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*To my family,  
On earth as it is in heaven*

*In all their distress he too was distressed,  
and the angel of his presence saved them.  
In his love and mercy he redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them  
all the days of old.*

Isaiah 63:9

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## Opening Eyes and Hearts

When our Ruth Graham and Friends Conferences needed someone to address the abortion issue with sensitivity and grace married to biblical truth—someone not afraid to speak the truth or confront the hard questions, someone who knows firsthand the loving touch of God’s healing and restoration for her own life—Kim Ketola became that someone.

She has touched many lives at our events as she presents God’s truth with relevance regarding abortion. She is sensitive and loving, but doesn’t back down from the truth, even when it is painful. With gentle, loving discussion she addresses an issue carried far too long in shame and denial.

In *Cradle My Heart*, you will see this same spirit. You will experience release, and encounter wholeness that only comes from God’s forgiving touch. Too many people in our culture treat abortion as a political, medical choice. It is far more. Kim Ketola takes this issue away from politicians and doctors and elevates it tenderly to a spiritual level to open eyes and hearts to the amazing grace and redemption of a loving heavenly Father.

—Ruth Graham, author of *In Every Pew Sits a Broken Heart*,  
daughter of Billy Graham, and president  
of Ruth Graham and Friends



## At the Heart of Things

Abortion is such a hot-button issue. Politics, women's rights, privacy, and medical practice all come into play. But after you experience it, the questions become much more personal, much more pressing.

For me, abortion became a spiritual issue, a matter of the heart.

If you're reading this book after an abortion in your past, you may feel apprehensive: *Will I be judged? Will this really help me heal or make me hurt worse?* You don't want others to know. You may sense that Christians opposed to abortion would reject you for having had one (or perhaps more than one). Even if it's now years later, in your heart, you're still unsettled because of questions too difficult to face.

My most troubling question became this: *Where did my faith go?*

As a little girl and then as a young woman, I always believed in God, though I never fully understood all the teachings of the church. My young mind just didn't get it. I knew God required reverence in church. I learned to confess my wrongs. I prayed some, especially in times of trouble. But abortion brought the worst trouble into my life I had ever known, and I couldn't see how to set things right with God. My faith was so frail and fragile that, even though somewhere in my heart I always knew it was true, I just couldn't believe God loved me no matter what. Instead, I wrestled endlessly with my questions and my doubts:

How can I face myself knowing what I went along with or willingly chose?

Does God hate me?

Was it a baby? When does life begin?

How do I manage these painful feelings of shame and worthlessness?  
Can I be forgiven—and must I forgive?  
What about the baby in eternity? What about my eternal destiny?  
    What about heaven and hell?  
If I share the truth with others—won't they reject me because of  
    what I've done?  
Will this sorrow ever end?  
Is it really possible to just start over with God?

You may have other questions or strong emotions right now, such as deeply private feelings that even picking up this book was a difficult thing to do, especially if you feel you were coerced or forced to abort.

I can't know your situation. I do know from talking with hundreds of others who have experienced abortion too, that while there are no two stories alike, there are common feelings and shared sufferings. You'll find some facet of your story here. We find ourselves in each other's stories somewhere. Every story has helped me see the possibility of a glorious spiritual renewal in Jesus Christ. He brings the promise of hope. He gives new life. Our loving God has placed everything in Jesus' hands (John 3:35). This means he will even join you in your sorrow. He will cradle your heart in his love.

I found this to be true. Where once there was a spirit of despair, now there is a quiet faith. Where there was mourning, now there is praising for God's mercy. Guilt has given way to grace, and shame has melted into freedom to sing and shine and enjoy life to the full.

This freedom I've found can be yours too. I hope to help you grasp God's promise of this. I want you to start now by imagining a place of peace with him after abortion . . .

*Can you see it?* Every troubling question is answered and every longing for freedom from grief and guilt is satisfied. Here, you find forgiveness, family restoration, hope, and joy. Even after abortion, God gives new life.

It's so important to learn that you are not alone. You are not the only one.

In fact, one-third of women in their mid-forties have had abortions.<sup>1</sup>

Every year, more than 1.3 million women experience elective abortions. And nearly two-thirds of these women have some Christian religious affiliation.<sup>2</sup> Based on these statistics, I believe there are 8 to 10 million Christian women who, like me, never held the baby they thought they did not want, but now wish they could have known and loved.

The numbers are huge, but there is no comfort in knowing so many suffer, only in how many can be freed from abortion's scars as one-by-one we each find the comfort of knowing Jesus Christ. He is our champion, the captain of salvation (Heb. 2:10 NKJV). He comes in friendship, lending his power for living, offering his help in laying down our sorrow and struggles and pain, and extending his welcome into the full benefits of being in God's family.

I know it can be hard to find Jesus after abortion. But in every chapter of this book you will meet him at work helping people with struggles like yours: a man whose crippled faith lay dormant for decades, a woman thirsty for something or someone worthy of her worship, another woman whose sinful lifestyle led her horribly astray, a money-centered man who later gave it all away, a pair of loving sisters grieving a beloved brother, a disgraced leader whose honor was restored. These encounters and others show real people who met Jesus and walked away forever changed. He healed them all, and he heals us still.

For help in healing, you'll find three practical tools at the end of each chapter:

- **REFLECT.** Reading God's promises in the Bible will remind you of his love and providence, and the selections listed here will help you strengthen your faith and find confidence in reading his Word for yourself.
- **REQUEST.** A prayer helps you begin your own loving conversations with Jesus.
- **RESPOND.** Nurturing exercises and steps guide you to live in a healthy relationship with God every day—the very essence of all spiritual growth. There are even some suggested songs for you to sing as you start a whole new sound track of your new life.

So, are you ready to entrust Jesus with your heart?

The truth is Jesus already knows your every thought and everything about your past. He has heard your every secret and is intimately familiar with even your hidden faults—and he loves you. He loves you in spite of what you’ve done and because of who you are. He promises: “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Heb. 13:5), and “whoever comes to me I will never drive away” (John 6:37). And he asks simply this: *Are you willing to begin a new life now?*