



**MINISTERS
FOR LIFE**

A Minister's Guide to Abortion and Pro-Life Issues

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Preface

This resource guide was written as a capstone project of the William Wilberforce Leadership Fellowship. The fellowship is a year long leadership program through Students For Life of America. The fellowships purpose is to train college students to be effective leaders in the Pro-Life movement. All of the fellows are current leaders on their college campuses. The author of this resource guide was president of the Mississippi State University Students For Life chapter from August 2012 until his graduation in May 2015.

Purpose

Through the years the Catholic Church has maintained a strong unified stance on the abortion debate. Their members are mostly Pro-Life and the priests often speak on the issue openly from the pulpit. The Protestant churches, on the other hand, do not seem to be unified on the issue and rarely address it. Surprisingly, there are even some Protestant pastors who are actually Pro-Choice. It is my belief that many of these pastors do not to speak on the issue for two reasons: (1) they do not realize that the pre-born are scientifically and biblically just as much human as everyone else; and (2) they fear offending women in the congregation who might have had abortions in the past. Statistics show that one out of every three women have had an abortion. The odds of women in the congregations having had abortions is quite high. I believe that if pastors knew how to compassionately address the issue of abortion in a way that is comforting to the post-abortive and yet relays what scripture says about it, they could educate their congregations on the importance of being pro-life.

The purpose of writing this manual is twofold. The first is to help ministers become better educated on the issue of abortion from a scriptural and scientific perspective in order to know how to talk about abortion with their church. The second is to help ministers figure out how they and their church can help save lives and help pregnant women. The idea is to educate and then encourage ministers to take action. William Wilberforce, the famous evangelical British politician who worked tirelessly for decades to abolish the slave trade in England once said, "You may choose to look the other way but you can never again say that you did not know."

Author's note: In doing research for this manual, I came across a book entitled Deliver Us From Abortion, by Brian Fisher. Fisher is the director of the Christian pro-life ministry, Online for Life. Some of the sections of the manual are quoted directly from this book. All of the credit of those sections goes to him. All of those sections are indicated as his and are referenced. I highly recommend downloading or buying a copy of his amazing book.

Introduction

For the past 43 years abortion has been legal in the United States. The landmark Supreme Court decisions Roe vs. Wade and its sister case Doe vs. Bolton made it legal for a woman to get an abortion during all nine months of pregnancy (even up until the day of birth) for any reason. According to the Guttmacher Institute, there have been approximately 59 million abortions in the United States since 1973. This breaks down into roughly 3,800 abortions performed every single day in the US for the past 43 years. Many people view abortion as a political or religious issue. Religious people view it as too political, and political people view it as too religious. While it is both a religious and a political issue, at its very core, it is a human rights issue. Both scripture and science make it undeniably clear that the preborn inside the woman's womb is a complete living and whole human being from the moment of conception. People refer to the preborn child as an embryo, zygote, or fetus depending on its stage of development, but underlying all of that, it is a human being made in the image of God, just like you. In the past, the pro-life position has been mainly held by conservative Christians, leading many to scoff at them. But in the recent decades that sentiment has shifted with new advances in medical technology, such as ultrasound. These medical advancements have allowed scientist to view into the womb and see the preborn child developing. It is changes like this that have led many abortionists and abortion facility workers to quit their jobs and become pro-life. In several recent polls, it has been reported that the majority of Americans identify themselves as pro-life. Strangely, many of those polled also believe that abortion should be legal in most or all circumstances.

Why Should Ministers Speak About Abortion?

Why should ministers speak about abortion? That is a valid question. As men and women of Faith, who view the Bible as the word of God, we are called to stand up against injustice, to be a voice to those who cannot speak, to speak truth, and bring light and hope into this dark world. Those in ministerial positions are the ones on whom these responsibilities fall the most. Ministers are leaders of groups of believers, shepherds helping the Lord's children. If ministers are to be all of those things, why are they mostly silent on the worst human rights issue and injustice that this world has ever seen?

On March 19, 2015, North Carolina Pro-Life activist Patte Smith posted the following on her Facebook page:

"If pastors could see what we see, day after bloody day, year after bloody year. Thousands upon thousands of sexually immoral women and men, mothers and fathers, who profess to be Christians, bringing their babies in to slaughter.

The blood of millions of little lambs is on the hands of careless ministers, who refuse to preach, teach, counsel and carry out biblical discipline regarding the commandments of God and the sins of fornication and baby-murder.

This morning a man came to the killing place [abortion facility] with his lover to murder their baby past 20 weeks gestation! [the man was wearing a Christian shirt that said "Faith bigger than fears. Have faith in Him. Mark 4:35-41] He told the missionary who entreated him to have mercy on his baby: "I went to church Sunday and my pastor said: "Give it to God", so I'm giving it to God. I'm a Baptist and I go to church and I pray. God understands and forgives me."

There is no fear of God in their eyes!

When ministers fail to use the Law of God, they remove the three-fold weapon which is given to humanity.

RC Sproul observes:

"The church today has been invaded by antinomianism, which weakens, rejects, or distorts the Law of God. The Law of God is a mirror of God's holiness and our unrighteousness. It serves to reveal to us our need of a Savior. The Law of God is a restraint against sin. The law of God reveals what is pleasing and what is offensive to God. The Christian is to love the law of God and to obey the moral law of God."

AW Tozer warned:

"Any manipulation of the Scriptures to make them speak peace to the natural man is evil and can only lead to ruin. Yes, ruin and bloodshed. Mighty King, be pleased to grant us another Great Awakening. I beg You, dear Lord. Amen."

It is stories like Patte's and countless others who witness first hand every day the results of ministers not speaking out against violence and injustice and have neglected to help those in their congregations who are hurting and in need. People like Patte who dedicate their time to helping pregnant women see people every day that are in a crisis and are unaware of options other than abortion. A large portion of these people are professing Christians who attend church. These people are hurting, afraid, and often alone. They are ashamed of the mistakes they have made and feel like they have no one to talk to.

The Supreme Court & Abortion: A Brief Synopsis of Cases

Roe v. Wade (1973)

Relying on an unstated “right of privacy” found in a “penumbra” of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Court effectively legalized abortion on demand throughout the full nine months of pregnancy in this challenge to the Texas state law regarding abortion. Although the Court mentioned the state’s possible interest in the “potentiality of human life” in the third trimester, legislation to protect that interest would be gutted by mandated exceptions for the “health” of the mother (see Doe below).

Doe v. Bolton (1973)

A companion case to Roe, which challenged the abortion law in Georgia, Doe broadly defined the “health” exception so that any level of distress or discomfort would qualify and gave the abortionist final say over what qualified: “The medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman’s age—relevant to the wellbeing of the patient. All these factors may relate to “health.” Because the application of the health exception was left to the abortionist, legislation directly prohibiting any abortion became practically unenforceable.

Bigelow v. Virginia and Connecticut v. Menillo (1975)

Bigelow allowed abortion clinics to advertise. Menillo said that, despite Roe, state prohibitions against abortion stood as applied to non-physicians. Menillo also said states could also authorize non physicians to perform abortions.

Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth (1976)

The court rejected a parental consent requirement and decided that (married) fathers had no rights in the abortion decision. Furthermore, the Court struck down Missouri’s effort to ban the saline amniocentesis abortion procedure, in which salt injected into the womb slowly and painfully poisons the child.

Maher v. Roe and Beal v. Doe (1977)

States are not required to fund abortions, though they can if they choose. A state can use funds to encourage childbirth over abortion.

Poelker v. Doe (1977)

In Poelker, the Court ruled that a state can prohibit the performance of abortions in public hospitals.

Colautti v. Franklin (1979)

Although Roe said states could pursue an interest in the “potential life” of the unborn child after viability (Roe placed this at the third trimester), the Court struck down a Pennsylvania statute that required abortionists to use the abortion technique most likely to result in live birth if the unborn child is viable.

Bellotti v. Baird (II)* (1979)

The Court struck down a Massachusetts law requiring a minor to obtain the consent of both parents before obtaining an abortion, and insisted that states needed to offer a “judicial bypass” exception by which the child could demonstrate her maturity to a judge or show that the abortion would somehow be in her best interest. *In Bellotti v. Baird (I) 1976, the Court returned the case to the state court on a procedural issue.

Harris v. McRae (1980)

The Court upheld the Hyde Amendment, which restricted federal funding of abortion to cases where the mother’s life was endangered (rape and incest exceptions were added in the 1990s). The Court said states could distinguish between abortion and “other medical procedures” because “no other procedure involves the purposeful termination of a potential life.” While the Court insisted that a woman had a right to an abortion, the state was not required to fund the exercise of that right.

Williams v. Zbaraz (1980)

The Court ruled that states are not required to fund abortions that are not funded by the federal government, but can opt to do so.

HL v. Matheson (1981)

Upholding a Utah statute, the Court ruled that a state could require an abortionist to notify one of the minor girl’s parents before performing an abortion without a judicial bypass.

City of Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health (1983)

The Court struck down an ordinance passed by the City of Akron requiring: (1) that abortionists inform their clients of the medical risks of abortion, of fetal development and of abortion alternatives; (2) a 24-hour waiting period after the first visit before obtaining an abortion; (3) that second- and third-trimester abortions be performed in hospitals; (4) one-parent parental consent with no judicial bypass; (5) and the “humane and sanitary” disposal of fetal remains. The Court later reversed some of this ruling in its 1992 decision in Casey.

Planned Parenthood Association of Kansas City v. Ashcroft (1983)

The Court upheld a Missouri law requiring that post-viability abortions be attended by a second physician and that a pathology report be filed for each abortion.

Simopoulous v. Virginia (1983)

The Court affirmed the conviction of an abortionist for performing a second-trimester abortion in an improperly licensed facility.

Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (1986)

The Court struck down a Pennsylvania law requiring: (1) that abortionists inform their clients regarding fetal development and the medical risks of abortion; (2) reporting of information about the mother and the unborn child for second- and third-trimester abortions; (3) that the physician use the method of abortion most likely to preserve the life of a viable unborn child; and (4) the attendance of a second physician in post-viability abortions. The Court later reversed some of this ruling in its 1992 decision in Casey.

Webster v. Reproductive Health Services (1989)

The Court upheld a Missouri statute prohibiting the use of public facilities or personnel for abortions and requiring abortionists to determine the viability of the unborn child after 20 weeks.

Hodgson v. Minnesota and Ohio v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health (1990)

In Hodgson, the Court struck down a Minnesota statute requiring two- parent notification without a judicial bypass, but upheld the same provision with a judicial bypass. In the same decision, the Court allowed a 48-hour waiting period for minors following parental notification. In Ohio v. Akron, the Court upheld one-parent notification with judicial bypass.

Rust v. Sullivan (1991)

In Rust, the Court upheld a federal regulation prohibiting projects funded by the federal Title X program from counseling or referring women regarding abortion. If a clinic physically and financially separated abortion services from family planning services, the family planning component could still receive Title X money. Relying on Maher and Harris, the Court emphasized that the government is not obliged to fund abortion-related services, even if it funds prenatal care or childbirth.

Planned Parenthood of Southern Pennsylvania v. Casey (1992)

To the surprise of many observers, the Court narrowly (5-4) reaffirmed what it called the “central holding” of *Roe*, that “a State may not prohibit any woman from making the ultimate decision to terminate her pregnancy before viability.” However, the Court also indicated a shift in its doctrine that would allow more in the way of state regulation of abortion, including pre-viability regulations: “We reject the rigid trimester framework of *Roe v. Wade*. To promote the State’s profound interest in potential life, throughout pregnancy the State may take measures to ensure that the woman’s choice is informed, and measures designed to advance this interest will not be invalidated as long as their purpose is to persuade the woman to choose childbirth over abortion. These measures must not be an undue burden on the right.” Applying this “undue burden” doctrine, the Court explicitly overruled parts of *Akron* and *Thornburgh*, and allowed informed consent requirements (that the woman be given information on the risks of abortion and on fetal development), a mandatory 24-hour waiting period following receipt of the information, the collection of abortion statistics, and a required one-parent consent with judicial bypass. A spousal notification requirement, however, was held to be unconstitutional.

Mazurek v. Armstrong (1997)

The Court upheld a Montana law requiring that only licensed physicians perform abortions.

Stenberg v. Carhart (2000)

Nebraska (as did more than half the other states) passed a law to ban partial-birth abortion, a method in which the premature infant (usually in the fifth or sixth month) is delivered alive, feet first, until only the head remains in the womb. The abortionist then punctures the baby’s skull and removes her brain. On a 5-4 vote, the Court struck down the Nebraska law (and thereby rendered the other state laws unenforceable as well). The five justices said that the Nebraska legislature had defined the method too vaguely. In addition, the five justices held that *Roe v. Wade* requires that an abortionist be allowed to use even this method, even on a healthy woman, if he believes it is the safest method.

Gonzales v. Carhart (2007)

By a vote of 5-4, the Court in effect largely reversed the 2000 *Stenberg* decision, rejecting a facial challenge to the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, enacted by Congress in 2003. This law places a nationwide ban on use of an abortion method—either before or after viability—in which a baby is partly delivered alive before being killed. In so doing, the Court majority, in the view of legal analysts on both sides of the abortion issue,

opened the door to legislative recognition of broader interests in protection of unborn human life, and signaled a willingness to grant greater deference to the factual and value judgments made by legislative bodies, within certain limits.

Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt (2016)

This case is considered the most significant abortion case before the Supreme Court since *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* in 1992. In a 5-3 vote, the Supreme Court threw out two provisions in a Texas law requiring physicians who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital and requiring abortion clinics in the state to have facilities that met basic health code requirements comparable to an ambulatory surgical center. The court concluded that those provisions place a substantial obstacle in the path of women seeking an abortion, constitute an undue burden on abortion access, and therefore violate the Constitution.

What Does the Bible Say about Abortion?

Because the word "abortion" does not appear directly in scripture, some Christians feel the Bible condones or does not have a stance on abortion. While it is true that the word "abortion" does not appear in scripture, this does not mean that God has no opinion on it. After all, guns and cars are not mentioned in scripture, but that does not mean that it is okay if someone kills someone else with a gun or runs them over with a car. Those are both methods of killing people, as is abortion. It flows logically that if someone kills an innocent person with premeditation it is murder, regardless of what it is called. The Bible verses that do mention the life and value of the preborn combined with the fact that science has shown us time and time again that from the moment of conception the preborn are equal in humanity with other humans, it is logical that abortion should be considered. The following are verses reveal the Biblical view of various issues relating to abortion.

Bible verses about the humanity of the preborn

- "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born, I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." -Jeremiah 1:5
- Exodus 21:22-25 sets a punishment for a man who injures a pregnant woman and causes premature birth or death of the child. "If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."
- "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works and that my soul knows well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed, and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them" -Psalm 139:13-16
- Paul says that God "set [him] apart even from [his] mother's womb." - Galatians 1:15
- The twins in Rebekah's womb, "The children struggled together within her." - Genesis 25:22

- “When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe [John] leaped in her womb.” (The word “babe” or *brephos* used in this verse is same used to refer to the babies after they are born) -Luke 1:41
- In Psalm 51:5, David refers to himself in the womb as "I" and "me".
- Isaiah 49:1. He says, "The LORD called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me."
- John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit "while yet in his mother's womb". - Luke 1:15
- Job argues that it is God's work in the womb that compels him to not mistreat his servant. "Did not He who made me in the womb make him, And the same one fashion us in the womb?" - Job 31:13-15
- Amos condemns the Ammonites "because they ripped open expectant mothers in Gilead" -Amos 1:13
- Judges 13:1-7 Manoah's wife is told not to drink wine or strong drink because the child she was carrying in her womb was a Nazarite. The law applied to the unborn child in this case. The unborn child obviously is alive or it would not be required to keep the law.
- "In the womb he [Jacob] grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God." -Hosea 12:3
- "His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit . . . an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." - Matthew 1:18-20
- “But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace.” -Galatians 1:15
- The Lord Jesus Christ began his incarnation as an embryo, growing into a fetus, infant, child, teenager, and adult: "While they were there, the time came for the baby to born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son" -Luke 2:6-7

- "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for giving us through Christ every possible spiritual benefit as citizens of heaven! For consider what he has done—before the foundation of the world He chose us to become, in Christ, His holy and blameless children living within His constant care" -Ephesians 1:3-4

Verses that encourage a Christian to respond to the abortion issue

- "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter." –Proverbs 24:11
- "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." – Psalm 82:3-4
- "There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood..." –Proverbs 6:16-17
- Abortion destroys something that God is actively creating, and as Job 1:21 tells us, God alone has the right to give and take life.

God's view of children

- "Be fertile and multiply" -Genesis 1:28
- "Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate." - Psalm 127: 3-5
- "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven." -Matthew 18:10
- "But Jesus called the children to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'" -Luke 18:16
- "Your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost." - Matthew 18:14

On bloodshed and killing children

- The killing of children is especially condemned by God through the prophets. In the land God gave his people to occupy, foreign nations had the custom of sacrificing some of their children in fire. God told His people that they were not to share in this sin. They did, however, as Psalm 106 relates: "They mingled with the nations and learned their works...They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and they shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, desecrating the land with bloodshed" -Psalm 106:35, 37-38
- "Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings...Your festivals I detest...When you spread out your hands, I close my eyes to you; though you pray the more, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood! Wash yourselves clean...learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, and defend the widow" -Isaiah 1:13-17
- "The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up." -1 Samuel 2:6
- "You shall not commit murder." -Exodus 20:13
- "Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD." -Leviticus 18:21
- "The LORD said . . . 'Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. . . . by giving his children to Molech, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. . . . If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech . . . I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him . . .'" -Leviticus 20:1-5
- "Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the LORD your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed." -Deuteronomy 19:10
- "The LORD sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. He sent them to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed

by his servants the prophets. Surely these things happened to Judah according to the Lord's command, in order to remove them from his presence *because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done, including the shedding of innocent blood*. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to forgive." -2 Kings 24:2-4

- "The LORD said, 'What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.'" -Genesis 4:10
- "For God will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for *precious is their blood in his sight*." - Psalm 72:12-14
- "Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will give you over to bloodshed and it will pursue you. *Since you did not hate bloodshed, bloodshed will pursue you*." -Ezekiel 35:6
- "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live." -Deuteronomy 30:19

God's view of children who are handicapped or conceived by rape

- "The LORD said to him, 'Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?'" -Exodus 4:11
- "Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'? Woe to him who says to his father, 'What have you begotten?' or to his mother, 'What have you brought to birth?' "This is what the LORD says, the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: . . . do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands?" -Isaiah 45:9-11
- "Neither this man [who was born blind] nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." -John 9:3
- "Yet, to shame the wise, God has chosen what the world counts folly, and to shame what is strong, God has chosen what the world counts weakness." -1 Corinthians 1:27

- Jesus said, "When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." -Luke 14:12-14
- "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin." -Deuteronomy 24:16

Woman's body

- "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." -1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Forgiveness for those who have had abortions

- "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace . . ." -Ephesians 1:7
- "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins." -Isaiah 43:25

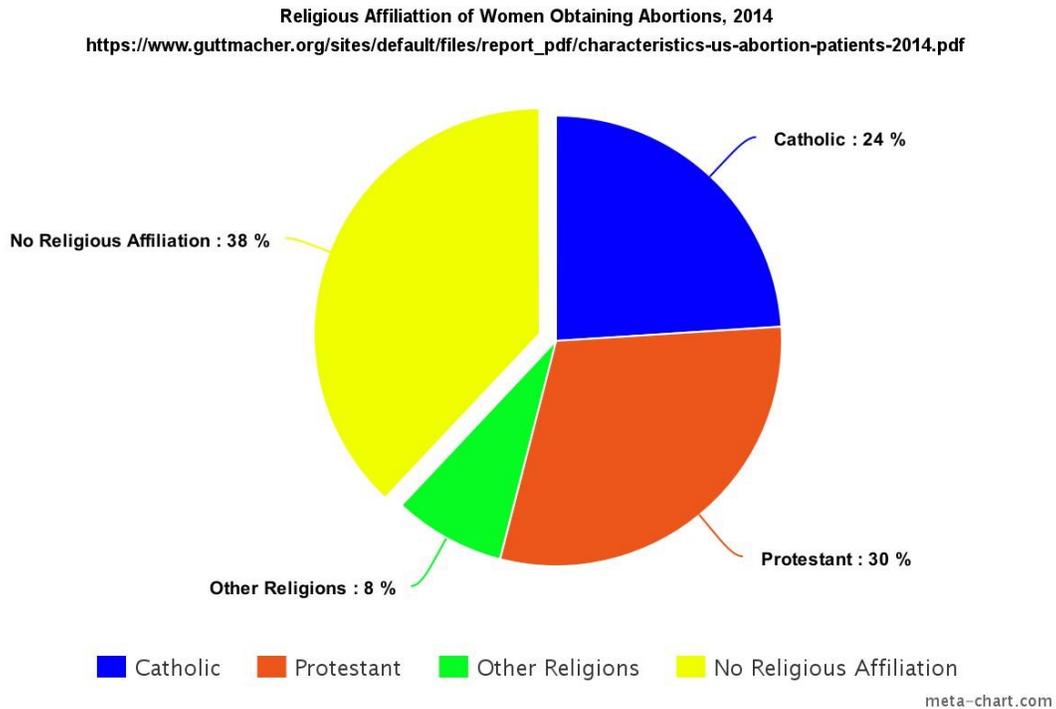
The early church on abortion

- "You shall love your neighbor more than your own life. You shall not slay a child by abortion. You shall not kill that which has already been generated." (*Epistle of Barnabas* 19.5; second century)
- "Do not murder a child by abortion or kill a new-born infant." (*The Didache* 2.2; second century catechism for young Christian converts)
- "The fetus in the womb is a living being and therefore the object of God's care" (Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians*, 35.6; 177 A.D.)
- "It does not matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. In both instances, the destruction is murder." (Tertullian, *Apology*, 9.4; second century)
- "Those who give abortifacients for the destruction of a child conceived in the womb are murderers themselves, along with those receiving the poisons." (Basil the Great, *Canons*, 188.2; fourth century)

- Jerome called abortion "the murder of an unborn child" (*Letter to Eustochium*, 22.13; fourth century). Augustine used the same phrase, warning against the terrible crime of "the murder of an unborn child" (*On Marriage*, 1.17.15; fourth century).
- The early church fathers Origen, Cyprian and Chrysostom likewise condemned abortion as the killing of a child.
- "The fetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being and it is a most monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light." John Calvin (16th century reformer)

Abortion and the State of the Church

In his book, *Deliver Us From Abortion*, Fisher says that abortions in church communities are rampant.

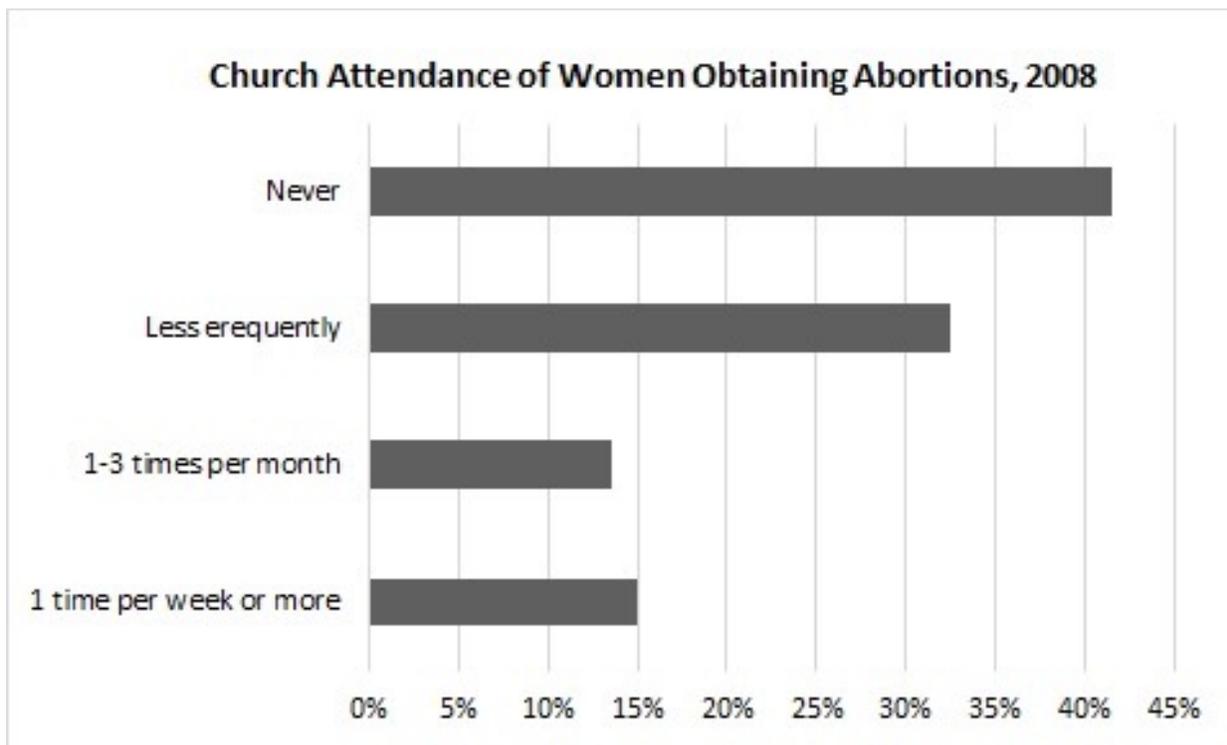


According to 2014 study by the Guttmacher Institute: Over half of the women obtaining abortions in 2014 reported a religious affiliation. Of those recorded, 24% were Catholic, 30% were Protestant, and 8% identified with some other religion. Only 38% claimed that they had no religious affiliation.¹

The fact that over half of the abortions performed in the United States are by professing Christians is a tragedy. This shows just how little that the church, as a whole, has done to educate or help people seeking abortion within their midst.

Although to claim a religious affiliation and to actually be a true believer in Jesus Christ can be two different things, the fact remains that most women who abort their children claim to be “religious” in some sense of the word.

¹ Jenna Jerman, Rachel K. Jones and Tsuyoshi Onda, 2016,” Guttmacher Institute, 1,6-7 , https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/characteristics-us-abortion-patients-2014.pdf



Frequent or regular church attendance is apparently linked to a lower likelihood of abortion, as Guttmacher reported:

In 2008, 15 percent of women having abortions reported attending religious services once a week or more, 13 percent attended one to three times a month and 32 percent attended less frequently; 41 percent never attended religious services. . . . Thus, tentative evidence suggests that women obtaining abortions attend religious services less frequently than all women.²

It's good news that church attendance appears to be a positive force for unborn children, but let's review a key point. If 15 percent of women who aborted attend a religious service once a week or more, another 13 percent attend one to three times a month, and another 32 percent attend at least once in a while, that means 60 percent of women who abort their children have at least some habit of attending church. In short, six out of ten women who abort claim to attend a church.

² Rachel K. Jones, Lawrence B. Finer, and Susheela Singh, "Characteristics of U.S. Abortion Patients, 2008," Guttmacher Institute, 10, <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/US-Abortion-Patients.pdf>.

We may be tempted to think that these abortions only occur in churches that are pro-abortion or are doctrinally liberal. The National Association of Evangelicals, representing over forty-five thousand evangelical churches and forty denominations, reports:

Eighty percent of unmarried evangelicals between the ages of eighteen and twenty nine have had sex. That's four out of five. Sixty-four percent have had sex within the last year. Unsurprisingly, there are natural consequences to ignoring God's good plan for sex. These single Christians are getting pregnant—30 percent of unmarried evangelicals have been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant.

What may be the hardest fact to swallow is that many Christians are choosing to abort. Thirty-two percent of all unplanned pregnancies among evangelicals end in abortion.³

Think abortion isn't an issue in your church? Think again."

This might be shocking to most pastors and church goers, but this is true. Abortion is happening in our churches. Fisher goes on to explain the lack of action in churches regarding abortion,

"Part of the reason so many churchgoers abort their children may be their church's nonchalance toward the abortion epidemic. It's an attitude shared by the public at large. Pew Research reports that a growing number of Americans regard abortion as not that consequential compared to other matters. Some 53 percent of Americans said in 2013 that abortion "is not that important compared to other issues," up from 48 percent in 2009 and 32 percent in 2006. Likewise, the percentage who think abortion is a "critical issue facing the country" fell from 28 percent in 2006 to 15 percent in 2009 and now rests at 18 percent.⁴

Pew's look at the church is fascinating and somewhat cryptic. Once again, regular church attendance is a key factor in how a person views the criticality of abortion. While 64 percent of churchgoers who attend weekly say abortion is a critical issue, just 33 percent of those who attend less often think abortion is important.

Likewise, religiously affiliated Americans are split on abortion. Some 60 percent of white evangelicals and Mormons want to see abortion criminalized in all or most cases. Jews

³ <http://www.nae.net/nae-newsletter-archive/spring-2012/1006-behind-closed-doors>.

⁴ "Roe v. Wade at 40: Most Oppose Overturning Abortion Decision," Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project, January 16, 2013, <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/01/16/roe-v-wade-at-40/>.

and white mainline Protestants take the opposite view. Almost 90 percent of Jews and 63 percent of white mainline Protestants want abortion legal in all or most cases. Half of both black Protestants and white Catholics support legal abortion in all or most cases.⁵

Regular churchgoers may indicate abortion is a critical concern, but that does not mean they are unified about whether or not it is right or wrong. Pew reports that those who attend worship weekly or more frequently are split on whether or not abortion should be legal. While 50 percent of Americans who go to religious services at least weekly support overturning *Roe v. Wade*, 44 percent of weekly attenders do not want *Roe* thrown out.⁶

That the church is not aggressively and agonizingly concerned about abortion should be of great concern to all of us. As John Paul II said, "Not only is the fact of the destruction of so many human lives still to be born or in their final stage extremely grave and disturbing, but no less grave and disturbing is the fact that conscience itself, darkened as it were by such widespread conditioning, is finding it increasingly difficult to distinguish between good and evil in what concerns the basic value of human life."⁷⁸

Many secular people see being pro-life as a conservative religious stance. Many religious people and pastors who are pro-life, do not speak openly about it for a number of reasons. Many pastors do not speak about it at the pulpit because they either see the issue as too political or they are afraid that they will offend people in the congregation. Abortion is a sin, and just like any other sin, it was paid for on the cross by Jesus and he forgives us for those sins. But just because those sins are paid for and forgiven doesn't mean that they shouldn't be addressed. Just like any other sin, it should be addressed. Although some might get offended if it is brought up from the pulpit, keep in mind that with any sin that is addressed from the pulpit, there will most likely be someone who is offended by it. Does that mean that we should not address sin from the pulpit? Absolutely not! Our goal as Christians is to strive to be more Christ-like, and pastors and church leaders are supposed to be the shepherds and teachers guiding their congregations to reach that goal. Pastors should address the issue of the sin of abortion and then talk about God's forgiveness, grace, and healing.

⁵"Public Opinion on Abortion," Pew Research Religion and Public Life Project, July 2013, slide 3. <http://features.pewforum.org/abortion-slideshow/slide3.php>.

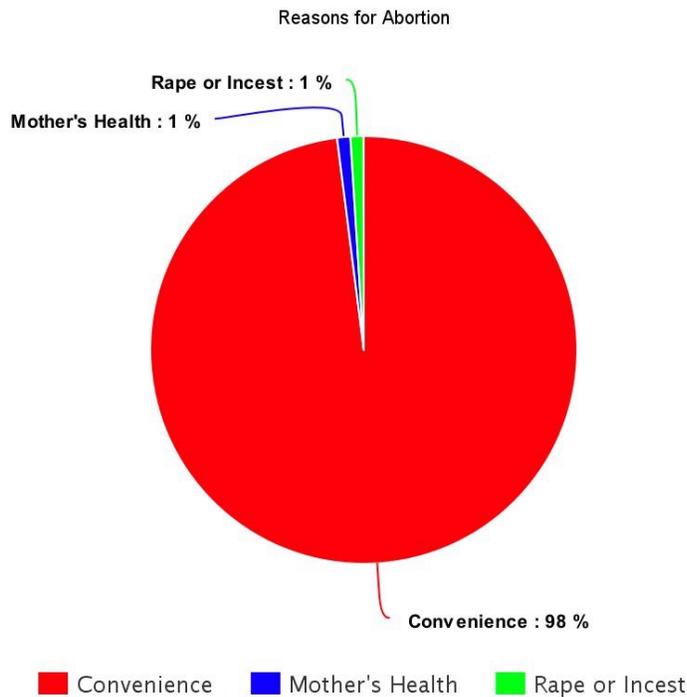
⁶"*Roe v. Wade* at 40: Most Oppose Overturning Abortion Decision," Pew Research, January 16, 2013, 3. <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/01/Roe-v-wade-full.pdf>.

⁷ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 4, www.catholicsociety.com.

⁸ Fisher, Brian. *Deliver Us From Abortion*. 2014. p 40-45

Why Do Women Have Abortions?

It is imperative, when discussing abortion from the pulpit, as well as anywhere else, that you do not talk about it in a way that condemns women who have had abortions. Many women who have had abortions had them because they felt that they had no other option. It is the believers' job to help these women realize that they have many different options other than abortion, options that will have a healthy and good outcome for both her and her child.



According to the Guttmacher Institute, 18% of U.S. women obtaining abortions are teenagers; those aged 15–17 obtain 6% of all abortions, 18–19-year-olds obtain 11%, and teens younger than 15 obtain 0.4%. Women in their 20s account for more than half of all abortions: Women aged 20–24 obtain 33% of all abortions, and women aged 25–29 obtain 24%⁹.

Contrary to popular opinion, only 1% of abortions occur because of rape; 1% or less of abortions occur because the mother's life is at risk¹⁰; and 98% of all abortion occur for a convenience (i.e. the child is unwanted or inconvenient)¹¹. In all those cases, and especially in those

social or convenience cases there are countless organizations and ministries that exist to help women in those situations such as crisis pregnancy centers, maternity homes, and foster homes.

⁹ <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/US-Abortion-Patients.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.abortionfacts.com/facts/8>

¹¹ Guttmacher Institute, "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives", September 2005, <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3711005.pdf>

Health Problems

The mother's life and the mother's health are usually two distinct considerations. A woman with toxemia will have adverse health reactions and considerable inconvenience, including probably needing to lie down for much of her pregnancy. This is a difficulty, but not normally a threat to her life. Hence, an abortion for the sake of "health" would not be lifesaving, but life-taking, since her life is not in jeopardy in the first place.

There are other situations where an expectant mother has a serious or even terminal medical condition. Her pregnancy may cause complications, but will not cause her death. If she is receiving radiation therapy, she may be told that the child could have handicaps as a result. It may be possible to postpone or reduce such treatment, but if it is essential to continue the treatment to save the mother's life, this is preferable to allowing her death or killing the child.

Efforts can and should be made that value the lives of both mother and child.

Life of the Mother

The rarest of reasons given for abortions is in the cases where the life of the mother is at risk. Many of these uncommon cases occur because of types of cancer and ectopic pregnancies. If the mother has a fast-spreading uterine cancer, the surgery to remove the cancer may result in the loss of the child's life. In an ectopic pregnancy the child is developing outside the uterus. He has no hope of survival, and may have to be removed to save his mother's life. These cases are not considered to be in the same category as elective abortions because they are medical lifesaving surgeries (often emergency surgeries) performed in hospitals rather than abortion facilities.

These are tragic situations, but even if one life must be lost, the life that can be saved should be saved. More often than not, that life is the mother's, not the child's. There are rare cases in later stages of pregnancy when the mother can not be saved, but the baby can.

Again, one life saved is better than two lost.¹²

¹²<http://www.abortionfacts.com/facts/8>

Rape

The rare cases where women conceive as a result of rape are the most difficult situations to discuss. Kristan Hawkins, President of Students for Life of America states, “While crisis pregnancies in cases of rape are indeed a very tiny percentage of all abortions committed, they still involve the taking of a life and a lifetime of complications, mentally and possibly physically, for rape survivors. It is estimated that pregnancy occurs in 5 percent of rapes. These women are then faced with the heart wrenching choice of parenting their child or having an abortion”. Hawkins goes on to discuss the adequate means by which these cases should be talked about, “The conversations will be hard, especially given the violent and personal nature of rape and sexual assault. [We need] to be compassionate and understanding of what these women have been through and continue to suffer. But abortion is not the answer to lessening that suffering. While the intention may be to ease her suffering, abortion, even in the case of rape, is a great injustice to the second victim, the baby, because he or she did not choose to be placed in this situation, either. Ultimately, we will ask the question: If both victims of this tragic situation can walk away with their lives intact, isn’t that the best option?”¹³

In a 2010 survey the Elliot Institute surveyed 192 women who conceived as a result of a rape. Of those victims, 70 percent carried the baby to term and either raised the child or placed the child for adoption, 29 percent had an abortion, and 1.5 percent had a miscarriage.

- 43 percent of these women said they felt pressured to abort from family or health workers.
- 78 percent of those who aborted had regrets and said that abortion was the wrong solution.
- None of the women who gave birth said they regretted their decision.¹⁴

Convenience/ Social Reasons

The largest percentage of women who obtain abortions cite various socioeconomic reasons. These reasons include, but are not limited to, lack of support from family or the child's father, lack of financial support, unemployment, and being in school. Many of these reasons can even lead a pregnant woman to believe that she is unfit for mother-

¹³<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/healthcare/217573-what-about-rape>

¹⁴afterabortion.org/2010/sexual-assault-and-abortion-survey/

hood. With this being the largest percentage of reasons why women get abortions, it is important to know how to help meet the needs of these women so that they can continue with their lives and give life to their preborn child. Many people believe that the government should help these women, and there may be some truth to that. But as believers in Christ we are called to help people in these situations.

In the Old Testament there are countless places where the saints are called to help those in need. Deuteronomy 15:11, Psalm 82:4, Leviticus 30:25, Proverbs 14:31, 19:17, 28:27, Isaiah 1:17 are just a few. In the New Testament there are also many verses about how the church (all believers) should help others who are in need. Such verses include, Matthew 25:35-46, Mark 12:31, Luke 12:33-34, Acts 20:35, Romans 5:15, 12:13, Galatians 6:7-9, Ephesians 4:28, Philippians 2:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, Hebrews 13:16, James 1:27, and 1 John 3:17-18.

Imagine this scenario: a pregnant woman approaches Jesus and tells him that she can't afford to give birth to her child. The medical bills, and costs of having a child are too much, plus her family is unsupportive and the child's father is out of the picture. What would Jesus tell her? Would he tell her to kill her preborn child? Absolutely not! As all the verses shown earlier reveal, the church should help these women.

In the previous chapters it was explained how the preborn children are just as much human as anyone else is. Try using any argument listed above for justifying an abortion to a situation where a woman is trying to justify killing her three year-old. A mother can no longer afford to feed or take care of her toddler, does that justify killing it? A mother has no support from the father or her family in raising her child, does that justify killing her toddler? A woman is in college and her child is interfering with her school work and her grades suffer, is it okay to kill the child? Do any of these situations justify the killing of an innocent three year-old child? Absolutely not. The entire abortion debate can be narrowed down into one question: what is the preborn? If it is just another part of the body or a "clump of cells" then removing it requires no more justification than pulling hairs off of your head or pulling teeth. But if the preborn are human, then it is wrong to kill them.

Below are a few suggestions for ministers to implement to help support women in those situations:

- Have a ministry that volunteers at the local Pregnancy Resource Center or Crisis Pregnancy Center.

- Create a fund for donations to be made to local Pregnancy Resource Centers or Crisis Pregnancy Centers much like what churches use to help missionaries overseas.
- Set up a scholarship fund to help women in the church who might find themselves in a crisis pregnancy.
- Refer women to a local Pregnancy Resource Center, Crisis Pregnancy Center, or maternity home.
- Volunteer and encourage church members to volunteer at the local Pregnancy Resource Center or Crisis Pregnancy Center.
- If a woman in that situation has material needs, such as clothes and supplies, host a baby shower inviting other church members.
- If a woman is in school and finds herself pregnant, look into Students for Life of America's "Pregnant on Campus Initiative", a program geared toward pregnant high school and college students that works to help them stay in school, raise their child, and know their legal rights as a pregnant student. Resources can be found at <http://pregnantoncampus.studentsforlife.org>.

The possibilities are endless as to how ministers and churches can help meet the needs of women in a crisis pregnancy. It is time that ministers and churches rise up to meet the needs of those women in the church and in the community.

What Does Science Say about Abortion?

As previously stated, most people see abortion as a religious or political issue, which is how it is portrayed in the news. Very rarely does the average person, politician, minister, or journalist look to see what science has to say on the issue. Politicians and the media usually claim that "nobody really knows when life begins," or the language often touted by pro-abortion advocates, "it should be left up to the mother and her doctor to determine this." Contrary to those popular claims, science tells us exactly when life begins. Embryology, the branch of biology that deals with the development of an embryo and the study of fetal development, is the area of science that discusses the issue of abortion and when life begins.

President and founder of Life Training Institute, Scott Klusendorf asserts that "The science of embryology is clear. From the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Therefore, every "successful" abortion ends the life of a living human being."¹⁵ Leading embryology text books confirm that life begins at conception. Keith Moore & T.V.N. Persaud write in their textbook that "Human development begins at fertilization when a male gamete or sperm (spermatozoon) unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to form a single cell - a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."¹⁶ This means that "a zygote is the beginning of a new human being". In *Before We Are Born: Essentials of Embryology*, Moore and Persaud say, "The zygote, formed by the union of an oocyte and a sperm, is the beginning of a new human being."¹⁷ In T.W. Sadler's *Langman's Embryology*, he states that "The development of a human begins with fertilization, a process by which the spermatozoon from the male and the oocyte from the female unite to give the rise to a new organism, the zygote."¹⁸ In *Human Embryology and Teratology*, O'Rahilly and Müller write "Although life is a continuous process, fertilization is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new genetically distinct human organism is formed when the chromosomes of the male and female pronuclei blend in the oocyte."¹⁹ Klusendorf says that "the unborn is distinct in the fact that it is different in kind from any cell of its parents. It has its

¹⁵ Klusendorf, Scott. *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture*. 2009. p 35,37.

¹⁶ Moore, Keith L. and Persaud, T.V.N. *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*. 1993. P2.

¹⁷ Moore, Keith and Persaud, T.V.N.. *Before We Are Born: Essentials of Embryology, 7th Edition*. 2007.

¹⁸ Sadler, T.W.. *Langman's Embryology*. 1995. p 3

¹⁹Müller, Fabiola and O'Rahilly, Ronan. *Human Embryology and Teratology, 3rd edition*. 1996. p 8

own unique and separate DNA from the parents. It is living because it exhibits irritability (reaction to stimuli), metabolism, and cellular regeneration. It is whole in the fact that it is not simply part of an organism; its cells work together in tandem toward the growth of a single entity, just like an adult human does."

To sum up the scientific case, renowned genetics professor, Dr. Jerome LeJeune, who is best known for his discovery of the link of diseases to chromosome abnormalities states that "After fertilization has taken place a new human being has come into being. It is no longer a matter of taste or opinion...it is plain experimental evidence. Each individual has a very neat beginning at conception."²⁰

Medical Textbook Quotes

In a [LifeNews.com](http://www.lifenews.com) article, the self-proclaimed pro-life liberal, Sarah Terzo, compiled a list of quotes from various medical textbooks that show, scientifically, when life begins. Terzo runs ClinicQuotes.com, a web site devoted to exposing the abortion industry. She is also a member of the pro-life groups PLAGAL and Secular Pro-Life.²¹ Here are some selections from her list of 41 quotes from medical experts and medical textbooks that prove human life begins at conception/fertilization:

- *"The life cycle of mammals begins when a sperm enters an egg."*
 - Okada et al., A role for the elongator complex in zygotic paternal genome demethylation, NATURE 463:554 (Jan. 28, 2010)

- *"Fertilization is the process by which male and female haploid gametes (sperm and egg) unite to produce a genetically distinct individual."*
 - Signorelli et al., Kinases, phosphatases and proteases during sperm capacitation, CELL TISSUE RES. 349(3):765 (Mar. 20, 2012)

²⁰ United States, Cong. Subcommittee Report on *Separation of Powers to Senate Judiciary Committee S-158*. 97th Cong., 1st Ssess. 1981

²¹ <http://www.lifenews.com/2015/01/08/41-quotes-from-medical-textbooks-prove-human-life-begins-at-conception/>

- *“The oviduct or Fallopian tube is the anatomical region where every new life begins in mammalian species. After a long journey, the spermatozoa meet the oocyte in the specific site of the oviduct named ampulla, and fertilization takes place.”*

-Coy et al., Roles of the oviduct in mammalian fertilization, REPRODUCTION 144(6):649 (Oct. 1, 2012) (emphasis added).

- *“Fertilization – the fusion of gametes to produce a new organism – is the culmination of a multitude of intricately regulated cellular processes.”*

-Marcello et al., Fertilization, ADV. EXP. BIOL. 757:321 (2013)

- National Institutes of Health, Medline Plus Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary (2013), <http://www.merriamwebster.com/medlineplus/fertilization>
- The government’s own definition attests to the fact that life begins at fertilization. According to the National Institutes of Health, “fertilization” is the process of union of two gametes (i.e., ovum and sperm) *“whereby the somatic chromosome number is restored and the development of a new individual is initiated.”*

-Steven Ertelt”Undisputed Scientific Fact: Human Life Begins at Conception, or Fertilization” LifeNews.com 11/18/13

- *“In that fraction of a second when the chromosomes form pairs, the sex of the new child will be determined, hereditary characteristics received from each parent will be set, and a new life will have begun.”*

-Kaluger, G., and Kaluger, M., Human Development: The Span of Life, page 28-29, The C.V. Mosby Co., St. Louis, 1974.

- An embryology textbook describes how birth is just an event in the development of a baby, not the beginning of his/her life.

“It should always be remembered that many organs are still not completely developed by full-term and birth should be regarded only as an incident in the whole developmental process.”

-F Beck Human Embryology, Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1985 page vi

- *“Although it is customary to divide human development into prenatal and postnatal periods, it is important to realize that birth is merely a dramatic event during development resulting in a change in environment.”*

-The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology fifth edition, Moore and Persaud, 1993, Saunders Company, page 1

- *“Your baby starts out as a fertilized egg... For the first six weeks, the baby is called an embryo.”*

-Prenatal Care, US Department Of Health And Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Division, 1990

- *“Thus a new cell is formed from the union of a male and a female gamete. [sperm and egg cells] The cell, referred to as the zygote, contains a new combination of genetic material, resulting in an individual different from either parent and from anyone else in the world.”*

-Sally B Olds, et al., Obstetric Nursing (Menlo Park, California: Addison – Wesley publishing, 1980) P 136

(Quoted in Eric Pastuszek. Is the Fetus Human? (Rockford, Illinois: Tan books And Publishers Inc., 1991))

- *“In fusing together, the male and female gametes produce a fertilized single cell, the zygote, which is the start of a new individual.”*

-Rand McNally, Atlas of the Body (New York: Rand McNally, 1980) 139, 144

(Quoted in Randy Alcorn “Pro-life Answers to Pro-Choice Arguments” (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 2000))

- *“Human life begins when the ovum is fertilized and the new combined cell mass begins to divide.”*

-Dr. Jasper Williams, Former President of the National Medical Association (p 74) (From Newsweek November 12, 1973)

- *“Biologically speaking, human development begins at fertilization.”*

-The Biology of Prenatal Development, National Geographic, 2006. (Video)

- *“The two cells gradually and gracefully become one. This is the moment of conception, when an individual’s unique set of DNA is created, a human signature that never existed before and will never be repeated.”*

-In the Womb, National Geographic, 2005 (Prenatal Development Video)

S.L.E.D.

The majority of arguments leveled against those who hold the Pro-Life position deal with the aspects of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency. Stephen Schwarz proposes the acronym SLED to sum up those four categories.²² Scott Klusendorf explains the acronym in detail:²³

Philosophically, there is no morally significant difference between the embryo you once were and the adult you are today. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant in the way that abortion advocates need them to be. The simple acronym SLED can be used to illustrate these non-essential differences:

Size: True, embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, but why is that relevant? Do we really want to say that large people are more valuable than small ones? Men are generally larger than women, but that doesn't mean they deserve more rights. Size doesn't equal value.

Level of development: True, embryos and fetuses are less developed than you and I. But again, why is this relevant? Four year-old girls are less developed than 14 year-old ones. Should older children have more rights than their younger siblings? Some people say that the immediate capacity for self-awareness and a desire to go on living makes one valuable. But if that is true, newborns do not qualify as valuable human beings. Infants do not acquire distinct self-awareness and memory until several months after birth.⁴Best case scenario, infants acquire limited self-awareness three months after birth, when the synapse connections increase from 56 trillion to 1,000 trillion.) As abortion advocate and philosopher Dean Stretton writes, "Any plausible pro-choice theory will have to deny newborns a full right to life. That's counterintuitive."

Environment: Where you are has no bearing on who you are. Does your value change when you cross the street or roll over in bed? If not, how can a journey of eight inches down the birth-canal suddenly change the essential nature of the unborn from non-human to human? If the unborn are not already valuable human beings, merely changing their location can't make them so.

²² Schwarz, Stephen. *The Moral Question of Abortion*. 1990. p 17-18

²³ <http://prolifetraining.com/resources/five-bad-ways/>

Degree of Dependency: If viability bestows human value, then all those who depend on insulin or kidney medication are not valuable and we may kill them. Conjoined twins who share blood type and bodily systems also have no right to life.

In short, although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal (and valuable) because they all have the same human nature.

How Should Ministers Talk about Abortion in Church?

As stated in the beginning of this guide, many people in situations such as a crisis pregnancy that are the result of sex outside of marriage think that ministers will be judgmental and condemn them for what they did. Their ministers may not actually be that way, but this just seems to be the consensus that many in society have about religious authority figures. Many young women in these situations feel ashamed and assume the worst. The guilt of their sins causes them to condemn themselves and because they know they have messed up they do not want to let anyone else, especially the head of their church, know.

From the Pulpit

Addressing abortion from the pulpit is something that is rarely done in churches. As previously stated, many ministers view this as "too political" or as "just another issue." Some ministers sadly just do not care. As seen in the beginning of this guide in the **Why Should Ministers Speak About Abortion** section, along with the biblical and scientific sections, Abortion is **not** just another issue. It is the biggest issue that the church is faced with today. Approximately 3,500 innocent preborn children are killed by abortion every day in America. According to the Guttmacher Institute, 1 out of every 3 women in America have had an abortion.²⁴ So, according to that, the larger a church is, the more post-abortive women there are in the congregation, not to mention young girls who will potentially get an abortion.

Therefore, the question is, how should ministers speak about abortion? Many non-church-goers feel ministers speaking about abortion is a hateful and judgmental action. They would assume the minister would be shaming those who have had abortions and telling them that they are going to Hell. There are, undoubtedly, some ministers who do act that way and say those things, but they are not following Christ's teachings. Christ found a way to address any sin and any issue in a loving forgiving way. Ministers can address the issue through a loving Biblical view, sharing the truth about abortion, but also affirming Christ's atonement for all sin.

²⁴ http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html

Personal Testimonies to Pastors

(Author's Note: I could go on for pages trying to explain the do's and don'ts of how to talk about abortion in church, but I thought that the best and most effective way to approach it was to have women who have actually had abortions to speak directly to you. I contacted two young women who have had abortions. Both women regret their abortions and have received post-abortive counseling, receiving emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual healing. They are both open about their abortions and tell their personal testimonies in hopes of preventing others from making the same mistakes they made and to encourage other post-abortive women to seek counseling.

The following are two letters written by post-abortive women to pastors, telling them about their experience and how, from their perspectives, they would want a pastor to talk about abortion in church.

A Letter to the Church

Apr 16, 15, 5:59 PM

Gwenyth Gaba

Richmond, Virginia

Dear Pastors,

I am writing you on behalf of an acquaintance of mine who asked what my point-of-view, as a post-abortive Christian woman, might be if you preached on abortion. In essence, what would I want you to say, not say, etc. Personally, I can easily package together some words that might guide this conversation, but, after I do (for the sake of structure), I will bring the conversation back to the main issue : our relationship with Christ. So, personally, I would ask that a pastor would speak on abortion informatively (know your facts!), gently (always speak with love), wisely (don't just put the spotlight on this singular sin or merely on the women of your congregation—I believe science would tell us that men had a part to play as well), firmly (never waiver from the truth or let fear of man keep you from speaking about the genocide our society so willingly accepts), personally (have a member of your congregation who is bold enough to speak about their experience, do so — they will have more authority and therefore influence on the subject than you will if you have not aborted a child), intelligently (use the multitude of abortion activist, short films, or powerful

speeches by nurses or doctors who once performed these abortions — have them, the ones in your community, come in and speak if necessary), humbly (sometimes it is better to ache for those women - to gently touch their wounds with your kind and hopeful words than to create some cure for their pain —use empathy as your instrument—also, if they are to reveal their darkest day, why shouldn't you lead in that way?), and preparedly (with groups already established to comfort those who need comforting and outlets for those who want to fight to end abortion).

This brings me to ask, how would you even breach this subject with your congregation? I mean, who is your audience? Is this a group of mature Christians who have been walking with Christ all their lives or newly adopted children of Christ? Regardless, most congregations, if they are doing what the Father says, are growing and that means a mixture of the both. This subject should be viewed as no different than any of the other truths in the Bible—it all comes back to Jesus. Jesus says multiple times in the Word, “you of little faith, why are you so afraid?” (Matthew 8:26), and that’s exactly what all sin grows from: fear. Fear that God won’t be enough. Fear that He won’t care for you and this baby. Fear that people will judge you. Fear that you don’t have what it takes to be a parent. Fear. Yet, there is no fear in love, and this conversation about abortion is really a conversation about all sin and it comes down to the question, “How is your relationship with Christ?” As in, where are you? How much do you rely on Him for everything? If not Him, then what? What did you do this week—this day that is driving you farther from the One and Only Savior? Abortion is a horrible deliberate act of murder, but it is also just as worthy of death as anger or slander or anything that goes against the Father’s will. Although you cannot be lukewarm on this subject, at the same time, you cannot demand that everyone be at the same level of understanding as one who has humbled themselves enough to see the deeper truths. It is very possible that new believers will be turned-off by this topic, but to not share the truth is only to perpetuate this fever of fear and suffer the church as a whole.

Ultimately, we should be putting what we learn in church into practice. I believe that was the point of our education; however, most of that information has been stored away and the key lost. Let us not do that with something as important as this genocide our society so readily accepts. This lie has run rampant and deep into the hearts of our brothers and sisters! That should anger and ache one’s spirit into action. Hence, every congregation should be

active in their crisis pregnancy centers, pro-life organizations; such as, Students for Life, Alliance Defending Freedom, National Right To Life, Americans United for Life, an important one for those that think this is political: Democrats for Life of America, and many others. However, it is not enough to just be educated on the facts but one must know how to approach these topics with family, friends, and complete strangers.

Yet, let us remember that when this topic is discussed within the church: sin is sin. The spotlight should not be waning down on the ones who have committed this sin (both men and women!), and it would be important to note that not just on every Sunday but ever day— throughout the day—one should be repenting and turning back to the path of life. This would be a good opportunity for the entire congregation to repent of sins they have committed. If there is going to be healing in the church—a movement in the church, it starts with the ones bold enough to humble themselves and live transparently.

So if a man or woman, seeking advice about abortion, comes to you, a pastor, ask him/her about their relationship with Christ. For it is in this response that you will better understand where their understanding of the truth lies. Help them voice their opinion of what Christ thinks about abortion. Have them back it up. If they cannot see how Christ chooses life, then it is your duty to tell them the truth. The greatest question you can ask to someone in this situation is, simply, “What is the preborn?” This is the central argument at hand. In the case of abortion, men and women are declaring they have the right to proclaim when a fetus is considered human, and, as Christians, how could anyone believe they have that authority when their own life hangs on our Savior, Christ? In essence, you should be prepared to share the truth with them. As in, you know the facts, the lies, the thinking behind the lies, and you know how to guide them back to the light. If they still cannot see the truth, come to them with another Christian as a witness to speak the truth once again, and if they still refuse to believe, then, as Jesus told the early church, bring it before the church. The church should be transparent so that nothing gets muddy and it remains pure.

However, this brings up another issue: is your congregation transparent enough to handle this level of vulnerability? Is this how you handle issues presently? If not, I would not begin to do so with this issue. That would be a large leap for the people and might devastate rather than heal your flock.

So, let's say this man and woman repent. They realize what they did was wrong, and they are broken about it. They will need empathetic people, people who have been through what they have been through or know how to relate to them, in order to process and find healing. In those groups, the post-abortive men and women who lead them might choose to do a certain Bible study, I have done the Surrendering the Secret Bible Study, which was helpful. However, there are many resources available. I would suggest letting someone who is post-abortive and has gone through that Bible Study to lead it. Also, reviewing the bible study to make sure it is theologically sound is an obvious factor.

Honestly, the last part is the most important. Once you shine light on the worst thing you have ever done in your life, there is nothing else the enemy can trip you up on to make you feel unworthy. Unworthy of life. Unworthy of Christ. The most helpful part of healing from this atrocious act is speaking out and not holding back. Be bold. Be active. Do something to take what was broken and be fearless in the eyes of man. Yes, I had an abortion when I was 19 years old. I killed my own baby when he/she was only six weeks old. I didn't give the child a chance in this world, I have murdered, but I am free. I had blood on my hands but they have been wiped clean with the blood of Christ. And the best part, pardon me if you don't agree with this theology, is I will see my baby again. I will hold him close, kiss his cheeks, and tell him with everything I can that I love him and he is wanted. I don't say this to have confirmation of forgiveness or for any other manipulative reason; I say this because I wait in anticipation with a heart changed. It happened for me and, by the power of God, it can happen for anyone.

Sincerely yours,

Gwenyth Gaba

(You can read further about Gwenyth and her story in "Courageous: Students Abolishing Abortion in this Lifetime" by Kristan Hawkins.

The following was written by Johanna Young, a post-abortive young woman who identifies as non religious/ agnostic. She offers a unique perspective for ministers.

As a post-abortive woman, I'd like to see more community support within the church for pregnant women, as well as more post-abortion healing support. Luckily the two churches my family attends-one Catholic and the other Church of Christ, both participate in supporting CPCs and the latter threw me a baby shower when I was pregnant with my son. However, I'm aware that not every church out there does that sort of thing and I'd like to see more of it because the support I received was a very positive experience. The issue of abortion, though, is one not many churches touch on. If someone is considering abortion, I'd like to think that the influence of a church community embracing and supporting a pregnant woman along the way would deter her from seeking that abortion. And for anyone who has had an abortion already and is suffering, then they should be able to feel that they have somewhere to turn for healing. I am not religious myself, but I have done a post-abortion bible study (through my local CPC- forgiven and set free) is and can see how someone who is religious and spiritual would benefit from doing something similar. When a woman comes forward to a minister or pastor and confides in them that they are either seeking an abortion or need abortion healing, then I suggest the same things that help in CPCs be made available at the church as well (such as that post abortion bible study or other form of literature about alternatives to abortion). I don't advocate graphic imagery, although I used to participate in that outreach method on the past. My experience out there talking to real people and gauging reactions has lead me to the conclusion that graphic imagery only drives a wedge further between "us" and "them". We will not get anywhere that way, nor have we gotten as far as we could have in the past 42 years since Roe, doing it like that. We don't know the personal beliefs of someone at any given church, so I strongly advise not providing literature that might potentially scare away an abortion minded woman from asking for help (such as graphic imagery). Literature should be on a more positive note- here are your alternatives, here are adoption agencies, here is the contact info for WIC and Medicaid, here is a list of OBGYNs in the area who accept Medicaid (in case anyone is low-income and is seeking abortion under the guise that they can't afford a child or the father left and they are forced into single motherhood). Providing resources like those mentioned above are things even pro-choicers attending the church can appreciate and support. Again- I emphasize the importance of providing positive and uplifting resources. We

want women to know that they are loved and that the church is a safe haven free from judgment (especially if they are pregnant and afraid of being judged for having had premarital sex or an extramarital affair or something- whether it is a sin or not, people make mistakes and the church should be a place of forgiveness and healing) as well as a source of emotional (and possibly financial) support- whether they are facing a crisis pregnancy or are suffering from the consequences of a past abortion. Who knows how many people hold back and hide their pregnancies and/or abortions simply because they are ashamed- with positive resources readily available at the church, church ministers and pastors with some knowledge of abortion/consequences/PAS, and maybe even a support group of post abortive church members- then people will feel more compelled to step forward and share their stories or seek help. And by the way, I keep mentioning women, but these things should be available also to fathers, grandparents, and anyone else involved. For example, if a single mom is living with her parents and receiving their support, then they should in turn be embraced by the church community and be offered emotional and spiritual support and advice as well. Or if someone is suffering from their female loved one's choice to have an abortion, then they may need and seek healing as well.

(Johanna has spoken for Feminists for Life and Silent No More Awareness. You can also visit www.feministsforlife.org and www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/ for information on more women involved in the pro-life movement and testimonies or post-abortive women.)

Call to Action

Ministers in the protestant churches have, for the most part, been silent on this issue. Ministers are often perceived as being judgmental and condemning rather than loving and helpful. This is not the first time that ministers have remained silent in times of great injustice. Over 6 million innocent Jews were killed in the Holocaust, but the majority of ministers and churches remained silent during that massacre. We look back on them with confusion, "why didn't Christians stand up against the slaughter of millions of innocent human beings who were made in the image of God?" I have heard many Christians say, "if I was there, I would have stood up against the Nazis. I would have laid down my life to save them!" It is not certain how many ministers or church members knew what exactly was going on in the concentration camps, but even those that did know mostly remained silent. Today most people would view those that knew but took no action as cowards. However, we are in the same situation now with abortion. Abortion has claimed the lives of over nine times as many innocents as the Holocaust. Picture the Holocaust happening nine times! Let that sink in.

Consider the following story told a number of years ago from an elderly German man who lived through the Holocaust:

I always considered myself a Christian. I attended a church since I was a small boy. We had heard the stories of what was happening to the Jews; but like most people in America today, we tried to distance ourselves from the reality of what was really taking place. What could anyone do to stop it?

A railroad track ran behind our small church, and each Sunday morning we would hear the whistle from a distance and then the clacking of the wheels moving over the track. We became disturbed when one Sunday we heard cries coming from the train as it passed by. We grimly realized that the train was carrying Jews.

Week after week that train whistle would blow. We would dread to hear the sound of those old wheels because we knew that the Jews would begin to cry out to us as they passed our church. It was so terribly disturbing! We could do nothing to help these poor people, yet their screams tormented us. We knew exactly at what time that whistle would blow, and we decided the only way to keep from being so disturbed by the

cries was to start singing our hymns. If some of the screams reached our ears, we'd just sing a little louder until we could hear them no more.

Years have passed, and no one talks about it much any more; but I still hear that train whistle in my sleep. I can still hear them crying out for help.

God forgive all of us who called ourselves Christians, yet did nothing to intervene.

Now ask yourself, do you want to be viewed as someone who knew about the murder of millions upon millions of innocent children and did nothing to help them? Or do you want to be one of those brave followers of Christ who stood up against evil and helped to save these children and their mothers, like the scripture tells us to do?

Further Reading and Resources

Abortion Recovery and Healing

- *Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace after Abortion*
-Synda Massa & Joan Phillips
- *Forgiven and Set Free*
-Linda Cochrane
- *Surrendering the Secret*
-Pat Layton
- *Worthy of Love: Finding Hope after Abortion*
-Shadia Hrichi
- *You're Not Alone: Healing through God's Grace After Abortion*
-Jennifer O'Neill
- *Breaking Free*
-Beth Moore
- Ramah International
www.RamahInternational.org
- Rachel's Vineyard
www.RachelsVineyard.org
- Project Rachel - National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation and Healing
www.noparh.org
- Abortion Memorial
www.AbortionMemorial.com
- Abortion Changes You
www.AbortionChangesYou.com

Pro-Life Basics

- *The Case for Life*
 - Scott Klusendorf
- *Deliver Us From Abortion*
 - Brian Fisher
- *Abortion: The Ultimate Exploitation of Women*
 - Brian Fisher
- *Why Pro-Life?*
 - Randy Alcorn
- *Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments*
 - Randy Alcorn
- *Abortion: A Rational Look at an Emotional Issue*
 - R. C. Sproul and Greg Bailey
- *Stand For Life*
 - Scott Klusendorf and John Ensor
- *Innocent Blood*
 - John Ensor
- *Unplanned*
 - Abby Johnson

Pro-Life Web Sites

- Online For Life
 - www.onlineforlife.org
- Students For Life of America
 - www.studentsforlife.org
- Pregnant on Campus Initiative
 - www.pregnantoncampus.studentsforlife.org

- National Right To Life

www.nrlc.org

- LifeSiteNews

www.LifeSiteNews.com

- Live Action News

www.LiveActionNews.org

- LifeNews.com

www.LifeNews.com

- National Right to Life

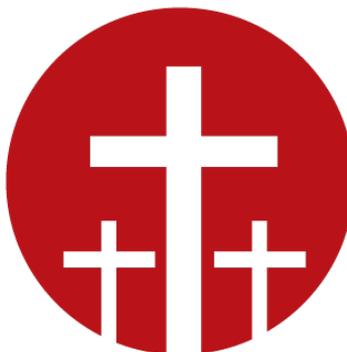
www.nrlc.org

- Abort73

www.Abort73.com

About the Author:

Nick Bell received his BA in Communication with an emphasis in Public Relations from Mississippi State University. He is also a graduate of Summit Ministries where he studied apologetics and worldview studies. While in college he was the president of his school's chapter of Students For Life. During that time, his group earned several national pro-life awards for their efforts in helping pregnant and parenting students in their community. He now works as a web manager and freelance photographer, while continuing to do ministry and pro-life work on the side. For questions or any other requests please feel free to contact him at nicksb92@hotmail.com.



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