

Three Practical Ways The Church Can Respond

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Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday and we are commemorating the 30th anniversary of Roe v. Wade which is the legislation that made abortion legal in the United States, in this same month in 1973. Since then we have killed over 40 million babies and today, a baby is aborted every 20 seconds which computes to 180 babies per hour, 4,000 per day. As tragedies go, this one is massive as more lives are lost every day in America through abortion, than were killed in the World Trade Center.

How did this happen? Al Mohler, the President of Southern Seminary in Louisville Ky., says it this way:

Roe v. Wade did not emerge from a vacuum. The inheritors of Christian civilization had been ransacking the culture for decades. Sexuality was celebrated as the driving force of entertainment and popular culture. As spirit of moral rebellion undermined the integrity of marriage and the family. A spirit opposed to all authority suffused the culture with a rebellion against any law that would inhibit personal choice, personal convenience, or personal fulfillment” Al Mohler, in Southern Seminary Magazine, Winter 2002

The rejection of God’s authority over his creatures is at the heart of the problem. We want to do what we want to do, whenever we want to do it with whomever we want to do it. This is human depravity beginning in the quiet rebellion of the heart and then looming large in public policy.

Three practical ways from the scriptures that the church should respond to this crisis... that continues every twenty seconds, even on this beautiful Sunday morning: Abandon, Expose and Rescue.

It is the Bible which tells us to Abandon, Expose and Rescue.

God leads His church through His Word. This is why we must, in times like these, keep a sharp focus on the exposition of scripture. Abortion is wrong because the Bible says it is wrong. It is important to remember that when we come to the subject of abortion, we are taken in to the area of the authority of God. Pro choice advocates are guilty of attempting to overtake God’s authority and replacing it with personal choice.

Last week in our Study of Ephesians 5:21-24, regarding headship of the husband, we stated that Satan hates the structure of Biblical order, authority and submission. He also hates childbearing and marriage and fidelity. The Bible teaches that he has rejected all authority and is at war with God. And this puts him in conflict with the family, which is God’s conduit for bringing glory to Himself throughout history. He is waging war with what is called in the Bible “the seed of the woman”, which is all mankind.

So, the call to arms regarding abortion comes from the entire Bible. In the Law, the Prophets, the Poetic books, the Pauline Epistles and the Gospels we find overwhelming evidence of the sacredness of life in the womb. The ways we should think, and the things we should do, regarding abortion also come from the book we have been studying, Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:8-11 Presents a twofold call contained in the words:

“Have no fellowship with the works of darkness, but rather expose them”, 5:11

First we are called to abandon works of darkness, which brings us to our first thing that the church must do to respond to the present crisis.

I. Abandon, Eph. 5:11 “have not fellowship”. This is a call to turn away from and repent of the world’s solutions.

Unfortunately, the statistics indicate that many church members continue to have abortions and pastors sometimes support them. We also have “pro-life” leaders (including President Bush) who still advocate abortion for situations involving rape and incest. This indicates that the church has much to do to speak to the world (and itself) to completely abandon the practice of abortion. Equal protection under the law means all under the law... not just those who have been conceived in a particular way. Children conceived by incest are no less human than those conceived under exemplary conditions.

The church needs to stand up and call for a complete abandonment of abortion, not a partial abandonment.

However, there is a dangerous thought that Christians often have: The idea goes like this: if I avoid the works of darkness it is enough. I don't do them. This is my Christian duty and it is enough".

But there is something more than avoidance that is necessary. We must expose the works of darkness.

II. Expose, Eph 5:11

v8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, walk as children of light".

Light makes things clear. Light exposes. This is the context of Paul's command to the Ephesian church in 5:11, "Expose them". It is important that we are truth tellers in the midst of a culture that constantly lies about life.

III. Rescue, Prov 24:10-12

"Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?"

So how do you involve yourself in the rescue of the unborn? Historically, the common answer among Pro Life ctivists has been threefold. Legislate, Litigate and Demonstrate Compassion. These three fit in with what Scripture directs us to do. See Prov 31:8-9, Psalm 82:3-4, Prov 24:10-12

The main idea in Proverbs 24:10-12 is that there will be times of danger for people in human history.

During these times, there will be people who rescue and there will be people who do nothing.

God knows who you are.

But the question before us today is: how can we work to rescue those who are being taken to their deaths? Here are five ways you can intervene:

1. Support Crisis Pregnancy Centers – Last year 44,165 Women walked into CARE NET facilities (700 around the country) considering abortion and decided to keep their babies. This is a small number, but it is still 44,165 babies (and mothers) saved. That is the approximate population of Chapel Hill, NC... saved every year through Care Net centers.

These efforts have cut the ratio of abortions to live births by 25%. When I was in Romania last year, I learned that Romania has the highest abortion rate in the world. One abortion for every live birth. They do not have crisis pregnancy centers. They do not have a pro life lobby. The results of these absences are evident.

2. Perform curbside protest and counseling at abortion clinics

This type of activity has gone out of style since judges have ruled against people involved. Fortunately, Randall Terry and the people involved in Operation Rescue have been recently absolved and previous judgments against them have been reversed. Anyone involved in this type of intervention should demonstrate the utmost respect for the people going into the clinics as well as a perfectly peaceable presence.

3. Take political action... Vote

Voting according to your Biblically informed conscience is critical. My position is that a candidate supporting the pro choice position disqualifies that candidate from public office. Yes, this is one issue politics.

John Piper notes how important single issues can be:

"No endorsement of any single issue qualifies a person to hold public office. Being pro-life does not make a person a good governor, mayor, or president. But there are numerous single issues that disqualify a person from public office. For example, any candidate who endorsed bribery as a form of government efficiency would be disqualified, no matter what his party or platform was. Or a person who endorsed corporate fraud (say under \$50 million) would be disqualified no matter what else he endorsed. Or a person who said that no black people could hold office-on that single issue alone he would be unfit for office. Or a person who said that rape is only a misdemeanor-that single issue would end his political career. These examples could go on and on. Everybody knows a single issue that for them would disqualify a candidate for office.

It's the same with marriage. No one quality makes a good wife or husband, but some qualities would make a person unacceptable. For example, back when I was thinking about getting married, not liking cats would not have disqualified a woman as my wife, but not liking people would. Drinking coffee would not, but drinking whiskey would. Kissing dogs wouldn't, but kissing the mailman would. And so on. Being a single-issue fiancé does not mean that only one issue matters. It means that some issues may matter enough to break off the relationship.

So it is with politics. You have to decide what those issues are for you. What do you think disqualifies a person from holding public office? I believe that the endorsement of the right to kill unborn children disqualifies a person from any position of public office. It's simply the same as saying that the endorsement of racism, fraud, or bribery would disqualify him-except that child-killing is more serious than those". From article: "One Issue Politics, One-Issue Marriage, and the Humane Society. See also "A Godward Life, Book I: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life, by John Piper (Sisters, OR" Multnomah Publishers, 1997), pp279-280)

Yes, it is appropriate to be a one issue voter.

4. Evangelism. There is nothing more effective in curbing abortion than to bring the gospel of grace to people. Their forgiveness will help them with their "Post Abortion Syndrome" problems and set them free to serve the living God.

5. Fasting and prayer

Legislative Status:

43 states have passed parental notification and consent laws. Which may have had a dramatic effect on abortion rates.

Minnesota and Texas are considering informed consent laws that would include information on fetal pain. Women beyond the 20th week of their pregnancy is would have to be informed that babies feel intense pain during the abortion procedure. In Texas, a woman who still opts to abort would have to agree to anesthetize her child before killing it". World Magazine, Jan 18, 03 p18

With no abortion ban in sight, pro lifers have adopted the strategy to save as many as possible.

During the 1990's there was an across the board 20% drop in abortions in the US.

Teen abortions are down 48% in North Carolina, possibly because of consent laws. States with consent laws have dramatically declining abortion rates for girls 17 and under. What is amazing is that in states without consent laws, abortion rates are down less than half the above number.

Where do we go from here?

First of all, I hope that we feel and see the wonder and awe at the matchless complexity of life and how beautifully God has engineered the world. His ways are not our ways. Our thoughts are not His thoughts. He is perfect. He is wonderful. We would be insane to prefer our ways above His.

Second, I would also like to see us brought to horror and tears. I must say that this week in my study, I cried over the tragedies connected with Roe v Wade, more than any time in my life of study. I would hope that this same horror would fill all of us as we consider the disregard for God and His authority. Horror and tears is the appropriate response.

The rebellion against God, is operating the factories of the culture of death. These factories, the abortion clinics, are churning out chopped babies everyday in America and around the world. All this for convenience that says, "I have better things to do than raise this child" and lust which says: "I will sleep with whomever I want whenever I want".

Third, I hope to leave us with a sense of the mercy of God and the power of the cross to forgive. To wash the bloodstained hands white as snow.. "though your sins be as scarlet, they will be white as snow"; to put the guilt from sin as far from us as the east is from the west; to know that God forgets our sins. To know the words of Jesus; "come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. For my burden is light and you will find rest for your souls".

It is for us as a church to confess our sins one to another and weep with those who weep.

Last, I pray that in response to these scriptural truths, we would rise up to personally protect the unborn.