

CBC Teaching Series – Tough Topics

Sanctity of Life – Beginning of Life

Sunday, 30 October 2016

“If the unborn is not human, no justification for elective abortion is necessary. But if the unborn is human, no justification for elective abortion is adequate.” Greg Koukl

I. Biblical and Theological Foundations

- 1. God’s original command to humanity is to be fruitful and multiply. That is our foundational task as people made in God’s image.**
 - a. Genesis 1:28
- 2. All humans are created in the image of God, regardless of context, even if that context is in utero. Each human life has value. And, each distinct life begins in the womb.**
 - a. See *Created in God’s Image* handout.
 - b. Psalm 139:13-16 – This verse seems to assert that life begins in the womb.
 - c. Luke 1:41 – John the Baptist leaped in the womb of Elizabeth. John was responsive and alive in the womb. Interestingly, John inside the womb responded to the pregnant Mary in a *different and distinct* way than his mother did. John, even in the womb, acted independently of his mother. This means he had personality and personhood when he was only 6 months in the womb. He was not ‘merely human,’ but a fully independent person.
 - d. Interesting to note: Some estimate that when John reacted to Jesus in the womb, Jesus was only 8-10 days beyond conception (when the Holy Spirit visited Mary). Implantation in the uterus occurs between 6-12 days after conception. So it is likely Jesus was not yet fully implanted in the uterine wall when John responded to His presence.
 - e. Genesis 25:2 – Jacob and Esau struggle together within the womb. They have personalities in utero (as any ultrasound tech can tell you).
 - f. Psalm 51:5 – David sees his (sinful) life beginning at conception. You must have personhood in order to be sinful.
- 3. Children are seen as a gift and a sign of blessing from God.**
 - a. Psalm 127:3-5
 - b. Luke 18:16 – God has a special affection for children.
- 4. Scripture recognizes that it is a punishable crime (sin) to kill an unborn human.**
 - a. Exodus 21:22-23 – In this important passage, killing an unborn child is considered a punishable crime. Notice that a life is taken for the life lost. The

Scriptures clearly see that the child in the womb is considered a life with value. Because this is an Old Covenant verse, we do not necessarily follow the same law/consequences for the crime. But we do see how God views the unborn life.

5. **We are not to sacrifice our children to an idol, whether that idol be a false god like Molech, or that idol be sexual liberty, independence, or convenience. God will judge this kind of life-taking.**
 - a. Leviticus 18:21, 20:1-5
 - b. Deuteronomy 19:10, 2 Kings 24:2-4, Proverbs 6:16-19 – God hates the shedding of innocent blood.
 - c. Ezekiel 35:6, Leviticus 26:27-29, 2 Kings 6:26-30 – God harshly judges those who shed innocent blood. Also, in Scripture it is a picture and sign of God’s horrific judgment when you see parents feeding off of their young for their own survival.
6. **The Gospel offers forgiveness to all people. Even those of us who have terminated a life. Abortion is not the unpardonable sin.**
 - a. Mark 3:38-29 – Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the only ‘unforgivable sin.’
 - b. Romans 6:23
 - c. 1 John 1:9
 - d. 1 Timothy 1:12-16 – Paul, a murderer, is forgiven in Christ.
7. **We all took part in the execution of the only truly innocent human to ever live. This is a sin far greater than an abortion.**
 - a. There has never been a greater sin than the execution of Jesus Christ. He is the only truly, perfectly innocent one, and we all, by virtue of our sin, had a hand in his execution. Christ died because we sin. – 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 5:8
 - b. All of us are guilty of all kinds of sin, worthy of condemnation and death (Romans 3:23, 6:23). But God has given us grace to those of us who have come to Him. As forgiven sinners, we cannot shame others or make them feel as if they are not welcome in our midst. – Luke 17:3-4, Matthew 6:14-15
8. **Anyone with a guilty conscience because of an abortion, or who is tempted to feel guilty because of an unplanned pregnancy, must hear from the church, loud and clear, that they are welcome, and that there is forgiveness for sins in the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
 - a. Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 3:3
 - b. The free offer of the gospel is complete and total forgiveness in Jesus. In Christ, we are no longer condemned. In Christ, our old sinful selves are put to death, and we are alive in His righteousness.
 - c. In Christ, God doesn’t see us as “that woman who had the abortion” or “that man who sinned with pornography” or “that man who failed his children” or “that girl who got pregnant as an unwed teenager.” If we are in Christ, remarkably, God sees us as His chosen, beloved, and precious child.

- d. Those who have sinned in this area may be tempted to be silent about it around church folk or in church. We must let all people know that the gospel offers freedom from shame. And we must be very careful not to become a shaming culture, but a culture of grace and forgiveness. – Matthew 7:1-5
 - e. We should all assume we know someone who has had an abortion, even if we are not aware of it.
- 9. However, we must recognize sin as sin. By refusing to admit the sinfulness of abortion, the pro-choice movement denies those who have had an abortion the opportunity of forgiveness and new life in Christ. Without confession of sin, there is no peace. And the pro-choice movement ultimately wars against confession of sin and the peace and reconciliation with God that come with it.**
- a. 1 John 1:8-2:1, Matthew 7:1-5
 - b. Where there is no repentance for sin, there is no chance for forgiveness in Jesus.
 - c. Where there is no forgiveness for sin, there is no clean conscience, renewed mind, or reconciled heart with the Lord.
 - d. While we must be careful not to shame others, we must also be careful not to conceal the sinfulness and consequences of sin. By speaking the truth of sin, and the truth of forgiveness in Christ, we lovingly offer the only real remedy for guilty hearts and minds.

II. Biological Considerations

- 1. When does life begin? When does an unborn child become a human?**
- a. The unborn child's genetic code is distinct from its mothers. It is not just an extension of the mother, but a biologically distinct organism. The distinct genetic code is established at conception, when the egg is fertilized by the sperm.
 - b. Medical textbooks and reference works agree that life begins at conception.¹
 - c. The unborn child has a beating heart by 5 weeks, arms and legs by 8 weeks, functioning organs by 10 weeks, and has bones and is almost fully formed by 11 weeks.²
 - d. "The changes occurring between implantation, a six-week embryo, a six-month fetus, a one-week-old child, or a mature adult are merely stages of development and maturation. The majority of our group could find no point in time between the union of sperm and egg, or at least the blastocyst stage, and the birth of the infant at which point we could say that this was not a human life." This is a statement from the First International Symposium on Abortion³

¹ Randy Alcorn, *Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments*, p. 52.

² http://www.babycenter.com/0_fetal-development-timeline_10357636.bc

³ John C. Willke, *Abortion Questions and Answers*, p. 42.

- e. “Physicians, biologists, and other scientists agree that conception marks the beginning of the life of the human being—a being that is alive and is a member of the human species. There is overwhelming agreement on this point in countless medical, biological, and scientific writings.”⁴
 - f. Some believe the fetus can feel pain at 20 weeks, though this is still under dispute.⁵
 - g. Depending on the state, abortions are legal either before 18-26 weeks, or before the fetus is considered viable outside the womb.⁶ Under this logic, seemingly the fetus is only truly human if it will be viable outside the womb.
 - h. Does a different level of development make someone a human? At what point is a fetus a human? Is there a line of demarcation? Some fetuses are more fully developed than infants no longer in the womb. If level of development is a condition for humanity, then what about those living humans who are not ‘fully developed’ (i.e. missing limbs, senses, etc.)? Must one be fully developed to be considered human?
 - i. Does degree of dependency determine whether or not someone is a human? Some might say that the embryo is not fully human because it is still attached to the mother. But infants remain dependent for life for quite a long time after they are born. No infant is fully independent. Many, many adult humans are totally dependent upon others to live, due to various conditions. Is someone who is not fully ‘independent’ not fully human? Surely the answer is no.
 - j. Does a different environment (i.e. womb) make someone not a human? Does someone become magically human when they exit the womb?
 - k. Conclusion: The unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. This is an undeniable fact. So when we kill the unborn, we do kill a human being.
- 2. What about those instances in which we know the child is going to die soon after birth?**
- a. There are certain instances in which we are certain the child will not live long after birth. This is both an “end of life” and “beginning of life” consideration.
 - b. No doubt these are trying circumstances, and a result of living in a fallen world. Regardless of the choice made by the parents, whether to carry the child to full term and delivery, or whether to end the life in the womb, there will be pain involved.
 - c. While Scripture calls us to value life, tells us each life is sacred, and tells us that we cannot murder, nowhere does Scripture tell us that we must prolong life wherever possible and in every circumstance.

⁴ Report, Subcommittee on Separation of Powers to Senate Judiciary Committee S-158, 97th Congress, 1st Session 1981, 7.

⁵ <http://www.livescience.com/54774-fetal-pain-anesthesia.html>

⁶ <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/01/a-look-at-late-term-abortion-restrictions-state-by-state/448098/>

- d. As the church, our role ought to be not to dictate or condemn the decision of the parents and doctor, but to give support in a tragic situation and choice.

3. What about various methods of birth control?

- a. A related question is how Christians should view contraceptives (those methods that prevent conception) and abortifacients (those methods that terminate a fertilized egg), and how to categorize each individual birth control method.
- b. If we establish that life begins at conception, then it would seem we must also, to be consistent, be opposed to any destruction of a fertilized egg, as that egg is an individual life.
- c. So, as Christians it seems we should be opposed to any birth control method that is clearly abortifacient. These include RU-486, and the combination of misoprostol and methotrexate.
- d. We should also be opposed to any scientific study or practice that involves the destruction of fertilized eggs, whether this take place in IVF, certain forms of stem cell research, human cloning, etc.
- e. Birth control pills are a gray area. There is still debate as to whether ‘the pill’ is an abortifacient, or whether it is a contraceptive.⁷ There is also uncertainty surrounding methods such as the plan B/morning after pill, Norplant, and Depo-Provera, NuvaRing, IUD, etc. The issue is whether or not the method prevents a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterine wall, thereby killing the life. Most of these methods both prevent ovulation and prevent implantation, and it is near-impossible to say which method of birth control is taking effect at any given time.⁸ Some will argue that pregnancy begins when the egg implants in the uterine wall, and not when the egg is fertilized.⁹
- f. There are of course birth control methods that are contraceptives, and not abortifacients, such as condoms, spermicides, sponges, and cervical caps.
- g. There are a myriad of complicated issues surrounding the use of various birth control methods, and the heart motive of those using these methods. We will have to use much wisdom and grace as to where we stand in opposition to a method, and where we leave matters up to individual consciences.
- h. That said, we may need to examine our hearts if we are collectively bending over backwards (including altering ourselves at the physiological and hormonal level), in order to avoid what God calls a blessing, mostly so that we may live in rebellion and opposition to His design for sexuality. This may reveal something about our societal priorities. Is our desire to celebrate life or to squelch it?

⁷ <http://www.lifenews.com/2014/07/21/6-resources-on-whether-or-not-birth-control-pills-cause-abortions/>

⁸ <http://www.lifeissues.org/2014/09/abortifacients-overview/>

⁹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/whats-abortifacient-disputes-over-birth-control-fuel-obamacare-fight/2014/01/28/61f080be-886a-11e3-a760-a86415d0944d_story.html

III. Sociological Considerations

1. Even those who defend the prochoice movement and abortion providers like Planned Parenthood recognize that what they are doing is killing a human.

- a. Noted atheist Christopher Hitchens recognized that abortion is the equivalent of murder.¹⁰
- b. Not all are deceived into abortion. Often there is full knowledge of what the ‘procedure’ entails. But sin hardens our conscience. The problem is not always lack of knowledge and data. It is often lack of righteousness in our hearts.¹¹¹²
- c. If we recognize that we are killing a human, then we must call abortion murder. If we are unsure, then we ought to be very hesitant to abort. Consider the chart below. These are the possible thought scenarios regarding abortion and personhood of the fetus.

Peter Kreeft’s Four Logical Abortion Scenarios

	You’re Positive	You’re Unsure
A Fetus is a Person	Abortion is murder	Abortion is manslaughter
A Fetus is not a Person	Abortion is fine	Abortion is criminal negligence

2. The prochoice movement knows they are killing humans. Their position is essentially that the unborn child isn’t as valuable as a human life outside the womb. Many insist the unborn is a human, but not a ‘person.’

- a. Mary Elizabeth Williams affirms that life begins at conception, and that an abortion is the taking of a human life. And she asserts that it is ridiculous to affirm that the unborn are not human. But her response to that truth is; “So what?” She knows the truth, and is still prochoice, because she considers the life of the mother far more valuable than the life of the child, even calling the life of the child “A life worth sacrificing.”¹⁴
- b. Hillary Clinton was recently strongly criticized by the prochoice movement for ‘mistakenly’ calling a fetus a person. Clinton stated that the unborn person does not have constitutional rights, and was then criticized by many for admitting the personhood of the fetus.¹⁵
- c. Other movements throughout history have made the distinction between a human and a person, such as; 1) in 1858 the Virginia Supreme Court ruled that, in the eyes of the law, a slave is not a ‘person;’ 2) in 1936 the Germany Supreme Court

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8HhTKzmqvas>

¹¹ <http://nymag.com/thecut/2015/08/the-big-secret-of-abortion.html>

¹² <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/trevinwax/2015/08/25/the-shrug-that-scares-me-to-death/>

¹³ <https://honeyandlocusts.wordpress.com/2012/09/03/if-you-dont-know-dont-shoot/>

¹⁴ http://www.salon.com/2013/01/23/so_what_if_abortion_ends_life/

¹⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/04/04/hillary-clinton-roundly-criticized-for-referring-to-the-unborn-as-a-person/>

refused to recognize Jews as ‘persons’ in the legal sense; 3) in 1928 the Canada Supreme Court claimed that the meaning of ‘qualified persons’ does not include women.¹⁶ We only make the distinction between human and person in order to then subjugate that person.

- d. Whose rights are most valued, the mother’s or the child’s, is central to the whole conversation. “After listening to all sides and running each perspective through the purifying filter of Scripture, I came to a conclusion. I concluded that the core issue in the pro-life vs. pro-choice debate is whose rights matter most. Is it the rights of the mother or the rights of the infant in her womb?”¹⁷
- 3. Who normally has abortions?**
 - a. In Kansas in 2015, teens had less than 10% of all abortions. Over 50% are from patients in their twenties, and almost 30% in their thirties.¹⁸
 - b. In Kansas in 2015, 60% of patients who had an abortion already had at least one living child.
 - c. In Kansas in 2015, 85% of abortion patients were unmarried.
 - 4. There may be some real opportunity for change in our culture, particularly with the advance of medical technology.**
 - a. Many who once defended the pro-choice movement are now prolife, or at least rethinking their position.¹⁹²⁰
 - b. Medical imaging is increasingly convincing many of the truth, that the unborn child is fully a human person. We should rejoice in this!
 - 5. The Christian, prolife position may not be popular, but there is reason to believe we are “on the right side of history.” This, however, is not sufficient reason for any cultural/theological stance. Our goal must be to be on the right side of God and His Word.**

IV. Common Objections

- 1. “What about the occasion when the mother’s life is in danger?”**
 - a. Of course this is a relatively rare situation. And when forced to make a decision between the life of the mother and the life of the child, the parents and doctors will have to make a difficult decision and live with that choice.
 - b. In these rare circumstances, we should not hold someone culpable for choosing one life over another. This is a difficult decision, not a sinful decision. And it is not a murder. It is thus categorically different from an elective abortion.

¹⁶ <http://www.slideshare.net/timchallies/abortion-making-the-case-38002921>

¹⁷ <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/bridging-the-pro-life-pro-choice-divide>

¹⁸ http://www.kdheks.gov/hci/abortion_sum/2015_Preliminary_Abortion_Report.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/ultra-feminist-founder-of-femen-brazil-declares-herself-pro-life-apologizes>

²⁰ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/08/10/i-don-t-know-if-i-m-pro-choice-anymore.html>

- c. However, by a large, large degree, we don't kill babies to preserve the life of the mother. This is truly not the issue in the abortion debate. Most often, abortions are performed in order to not significantly disrupt the life of the parents. Elective abortions are usually performed to avoid the stresses of parenting—which are real (even if God calls them a blessing), we must not be so naïve as to say that those who choose life are making an easy or simple decision—not for the essential health of the mother.
2. **“A woman should have the right to do whatever she wants with her body.”**
 - a. At the moment of conception, the child is now a distinct, individual human; not just a part of the mother's body. An additional life is created, and it's not just the woman's body with which we must be concerned.
 - b. Don't all laws tell us what we can or cannot do with our bodies? Is this not the whole basis of law, to helpfully restrict the immoral use of our selves/bodies (and also to promote healthy and moral choice)? No one has the right to do whatever they want with their body, free of consequence or restriction. This is true sociologically, legally, and theologically. We are not independently sovereign individuals, but live under boundaries.
 - c. No one has the right to do whatever they want with their bodies.
3. **“Planned Parenthood provides necessary medical care. Thus, to attack, eliminate, or defund Planned Parenthood is to attack medical care for women.”**
 - a. Any necessary health service that Planned Parenthood may provide (or may be believed to provide) is also provided by local hospitals or community health centers, which outnumber Planned Parenthood clinics.²¹
 - b. Most of Planned Parenthood's services revolve around STD tests, contraceptives, and abortions. They do not so much provide health care for women as much as seek to facilitate sexual liberty without consequence.²²
4. **“Only 3% of Planned Parenthood's services are abortions.”**
 - a. If only 3% of what I did in life was murder people, you would not call my ministry a helpful and good service. The 3% of Planned Parenthood's (or any clinic providing abortions) activity is horrific enough to deem it evil.
 - b. Even if this is true, the Weekly Standard found that “Planned Parenthood gets at least a third of its clinic income—and more than 10 percent of all its revenue, government funding included—from its abortion procedures.”²³ Abortions are not an insignificant part of what Planned Parenthood does.²⁴ Abortions are what keep Planned Parenthood in business.

²¹ <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/42178/planned-parenthood-womens-health>

²² https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/4013/9611/7243/Planned_Parenthood_Services.pdf

²³ http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/05/07/3_percent_of_planned_parenthood_s_services_are_abortion_but_what_about.html

²⁴ <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/10-numbers-you-should-know-about-planned-parenthood>

5. **“I’m against abortion personally, but it shouldn’t be illegal. We shouldn’t impose our morality upon others.”**
- a. Some say they believe abortion is wrong, but they think legislating against it is government overreach, infringing on individual rights.
 - b. But, we rightly legislate against murder. And no one claims legislating against murder infringes upon our personal rights to murder. If the fetus is a human, then abortion is simply murder, and we should have no reservation about legislating against it.
 - c. “Every system of law is a codified expression of morality. The only choice we have is what kind of morality will be imposed, not *whether* a morality will be imposed.”²⁵
 - d. The issue is not imposition. Fortunately, in our country none of us have the power to ‘impose’ our will upon all people, so we need not be worried about imposing our morality upon others. We aren’t given the authority to do so. All we are given the authority to do is *propose* a morality, which is well within our rights and privileges as citizens (and maybe within our obligation as Christians under God).
 - e. That said, there are complicating factors as to how we might go about penalizing abortions, and how the system will care for all the women who do choose life. These are serious considerations. However, our society’s insistence on abortion prevents the pursuit and provision of life-affirming alternatives. (Also, if our culture followed a biblical ethic of sexuality, none of this would be an issue. We are living the consequences of sexual sin, and finding that sin begets more sin.)
6. **“You’re a man and can’t have an opinion on a woman’s decision.”**
- a. This is a genetic fallacy; which is basically judging something as either bad/good or right/wrong solely based upon who says it. Truth is truth, regardless of whether it is spoken by Mickey Mouse or Elon Musk. The source is irrelevant, and an argument or truth claim must be based on its own merits, or lack thereof.
 - b. Exact personal identification is not a prerequisite to conversation, argument, learning, and correction. In other words, you don’t have to be just like me in order to speak truth into my life. A Korean woman might have something to teach to a Brazilian man, and vice versa.
 - c. This argument probably stems from women feeling the weight of historical oppression at the hands of men, to which we must be sympathetic. (Gen. 3:16)
 - d. It is worth considering that men are legally obligated to financially support their children. We rightly understand that both men and women are responsible for children, even if they are responsible in different ways, or more weight/responsibility falls on one party.

²⁵ Douglas Wilson, <https://dougwils.com/s7-engaging-the-culture/faqs-about-abortion.html>

7. **“If you’re pro-life on abortion, you also have to be ‘pro-life’ on war and capital punishment, in order to be consistent.”**
- By that logic, would it not also be true that if you are anti-war and anti-death penalty, then you should also be anti-abortion?
 - But the fact is that each of these issues are separate and nuanced. Capital punishment is *in theory* a punishment in response to and for a tried and convicted criminal, and war is *in theory* the potential death of willing combatants. These are a far cry from the execution of the defenseless unborn.
 - This is a distraction from the true question at hand (a red herring), which is whether or not abortion itself is wrong.
8. **“What if the pregnancy is caused by rape?”**
- This is obviously a tragic occurrence, and makes the choice for life all the more difficult. As Christians, we must in compassion recognize this unique and trying circumstance.
 - Still, one sin does not excuse another. Further sin only makes things worse, and we cannot justify the murder of a human because of a previous sin. And we have a God who regularly brings beauty and good out of evil.
 - Also, we must ask whether it is right that the sin of a parent be projected upon the child. Should the child have to pay with their life for the sins of the father?
 - Scripture speaks of all children being a blessing of God, regardless of origin.
9. **“Christians should just direct their focus on caring for women, children, the poor, etc. Christians should stop making such a big deal about abortion, and just focus on other social issues.”**
- This objection is just blame-shifting and redirection, a trick to make the church stand on trial for its perceived lack of compassion, instead of the culture stand on trial for its genocide of infants.
 - Fact is, the church *is* doing these things, and at a greater rate than the broader culture. The church always has been and always will be involved in these endeavors of mercy. Those who claim that the church has made issues like abortion their only or biggest concern are not looking at reality.²⁶
 - This does not negate the need for direct address of the systemic sin of institutionalized and promoted abortion. Both compassionate concern and vocal protest are needed in response to systemic sin.
 - We still must be sensitive to the fact that many on the pro-choice side accuse pro-lifers of only being concerned with the child while it is inside the womb. Once the child is outside, they say, pro-lifers are no longer concerned with the harsh realities of life; poverty, oppression of women, abandonment, etc.²⁷ To the extent that this is true, we must repent and practice the ‘true religion’ of James 1:27.

²⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/17/opinion/sunday/ross-douthat-do-churches-fail-the-poor.html>

²⁷ <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/bridging-the-pro-life-pro-choice-divide>

- e. “It is fine to tell Christians that they can and should help improve the conditions that lead to higher abortion rates. It is quite another to tell them that they should do this instead of asking the government to do its job and protect the lives of innocent children.”²⁸

10. “Pro-life legislation wouldn’t be fair because men can (and do) walk away from unwanted pregnancies, while women cannot.”

- a. This is another consideration we cannot take lightly. Men should take responsibility for their pregnancies.
- b. But we must note that Christians, and those who share a Judeo-Christian ethic, have been the very ones fighting for and promoting intact homes, marriage of one man and one woman, responsible and providing fathers, etc. Ironically, it is those opposed to Christian ethics who have, by various social agendas, sought to undercut the basic family structure that is necessary for equal responsibility to fall on both mother and father in child-raising.
- c. Also, ironically, it is the pro-choice movement and the sexual revolution that has itself truly enabled and encouraged men to be sexually active seemingly without consequence, penalty, or responsibility.
- d. The church ought to and will continue to promote responsible masculinity, first within its walls and also outside.

11. “Should we really penalize as murderers women who have abortions?”

- a. If we are calling abortion murder, then it would only seem consistent to treat woman who have abortions as murderers. But is this really what we want?
- b. This is a really tricky question, without immediate clear answers. Maybe we do need to recognize that abortion is a different kind of murder than killing a fully-developed and birthed human outside the womb. And it does seem best that the law would penalize these acts differently, recognizing that pregnancy is a unique human experience.
- c. Ross Douthat wonders if we ought to maintain the “approach to enforcement that largely prevailed prior to Roe v. Wade, in which the law targeted abortionists and almost never prosecuted women.”²⁹

12. “There are lots of causes of death pre-birth, such as miscarriage, failure to implant, etc. Why single out abortion?”

- a. This is partially why Christians also must be, and largely are, consistent when it comes to terminating unborn lives, for instance in IVF and stem cell research.
- b. But certainly, we can recognize the lack of personal, moral culpability in a miscarriage or failure to implant, which is natural death uncaused by human hands. We can also recognize the moral difference between such a naturally

²⁸ Cole Brown, <https://www.raanetwork.org/abortion-makes-us-say-silly-things-part-2/>

²⁹ Ross Douthat, http://mobile.nytimes.com/blogs/douthat/2015/08/25/pro-choice-questions-pro-life-answers-part-ii/?_r=0&referrer

caused death and a humanly caused death, just as we recognize no moral culpability in death caused by earthquake as opposed to a terrorist bombing or shooting.

13. This is by no means a complete list of objections and responses. For a fuller list, see Randy Alcorn's *Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments*.

V. What Should the Church Do?

1. Keep proclaiming the Gospel, and both the law and grace of the Gospel.

- a. We must keep calling evil, evil. The culture calls it choice. We ought to continue to call abortion what it is: the intentional killing of a defenseless human. We do not love our culture or our God by calling what is wrong good, or excusing a sinful act as a difficult but justifiable choice. – Isaiah 5:20
- b. We cannot shy away from letting people know that there is a holy God who will judge all unrighteousness. Remember that Jesus' message was one of repentance in light of the imminent kingdom. – Matthew 4:17
- c. We must, even more so, speak the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ, no matter how grave the sin. The holy God is also a compassionate God who brings healing and transformation to guilty sinners, wiping conscience and guilt clean.
- d. The Gospel allows (even requires) us to say that a sinful act does not have to be a condemning act. So when we call abortion sinful, we are not at the same time condemning the perpetrators of that act.
- e. For those dealing with the guilt and pain caused by abortion, the Gospel is the best and ultimate remedy.

2. Show compassion, mercy, and help to those in need, and partner with those organizations that specialize in providing this type of care.

- a. Look into volunteering with an organization such as Advice and Aid (<https://adviceandaid.com/>).
- b. Christians can also look into foster care and adoption. These are challenging endeavors not to be considered lightly, but they are also wonderful pictures of the Gospel and the God who adopts us as His children.

3. Remember who our fight is against, and pray.

- a. Ephesians 6:12, Romans 12:17-21
- b. Our fight is not against mothers making difficult decisions, under stressful circumstances, who have grown up in a sinful culture that promotes abortion, and who may or may not have any biblical or faith background.
- c. Our fight is more so against those who promote a culture of death, those who institutionalize abortion, deceive others into killing the unborn, and profit by their decisions.

- d. Ultimately, however, our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of the enemy. This is ultimately a spiritual war, therefore requiring much prayer.
- e. We must offer peace and kindness even to those we might consider enemies.

4. Should we seek anti-abortion legislation?

- a. Some will say you cannot legislate morality. However, all legislation is inherently moral. You cannot separate legislation from morality. The questions are 1) whose morality should be legislated, and 2) on what basis?
- b. It is also more than reasonable and right to assume that legislating against abortion will in fact decrease the number of abortions.³⁰ Surely this is a worthy goal.
- c. But should seeking this kind of legislation be a top priority of the church itself? We must conclude that our primary responsibility is the proclamation of the life-saving Gospel, over against any particular social agenda. We cannot let a social issue, as important as it may be, keep us from our primary mission of proclaiming Christ and forgiveness of sins.
- d. We must also consider that seeking power and legislation is not necessarily the best way to make cultural change. (See James Davidson Hunter's book, *To Change the World*.) Christians have often sought to change the world by seeking political power, both on the left and the right. There is a temptation and danger here, of which we must be aware.
- e. We must also ask ourselves; "How did Jesus and the Apostles carry out their ministry? Did they seek power positions of influence and control?" It seems the early Christian church was far more subversive in its method of cultural engagement, and ministered to the weak and needy more than it sought power. There may be something here for us to learn.
- f. Ultimately, because of our American context, there is much gray area and tension as to how to best carry out the ethics of biblical Christianity, influence the broader culture, and most importantly, proclaim the life-saving Gospel of Jesus.

5. We continue to teach and practice biblical ethics in regards to family, gender, sexuality, etc.

- a. The only way abortion would be fully eradicated would be if all people adhered to a biblical ethic of sexuality and life, where sexual intimacy was reserved for husband and wife, and all children considered a blessing.
- b. Such perfection is not possible in this sinful world, but the more we teach and practice this ethic, and the more the ethic of the church spreads, the more life will be valued, sexuality rightly expressed, and abortions diminished.

³⁰ <http://douthat.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/08/12/pro-choice-questions-pro-life-answers/>

- c. We must also ask ourselves honestly what right we have to rail against the non-believing world for their stance on abortion, when we as a church often practice a weak sexual ethic. Our desire for holiness and life must start within.
- 6. Remember the power and assured victory of Jesus Christ.**
- a. Revelation 21-22
 - b. “As we lament and protest Planned Parenthood, it may be tempting to despair, thinking we are powerless in the face of such well-funded and well-protected evil. But we cannot forget Jesus. All the royal rage and blood-thirst in the world could not stop God from accomplishing his purposes through the Messiah child... As we stand against the abortion industry, and the culture of death behind it, let’s point to Christ. He was here long before Planned Parenthood, and his kingdom will be here long after Planned Parenthood has been utterly forgotten.”³¹

VI. Resources

1. Blog Posts

- <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/abortion-and-the-gospel--2>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/i-thought-planned-parenthood-protected-family-values>
- <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/5-facts-about-planned-parenthood>
- <https://www.raanetwork.org/abortion-makes-us-say-silly-things-part-1/>
- <https://www.raanetwork.org/abortion-makes-us-say-silly-things-part-2/>
- <http://douthat.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/08/12/pro-choice-questions-pro-life-answers/>
- <http://douthat.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/08/25/pro-choice-questions-pro-life-answers-part-ii/>
- <http://www.lifenews.com/2015/10/16/planned-parenthood-turns-99-today-has-killed-7-million-babies-in-abortions/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/rhetorical-tear-gas-planned-parenthood>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/9-things-you-should-know-about-planned-parenthood-founder-margaret-sanger>
- <http://www.challies.com/articles/planned-parenthood-4-ways-to-respond>
- <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/10-numbers-you-should-know-about-planned-parenthood>
- <http://www.aul.org/main-report/>
- <http://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/why-a-personally-opposed-but-position-on-abortion-is-extremist>
- <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2015/08/19/the-7th-planned-parenthood-video-4-faqs/>

³¹ <http://www.russellmoore.com/2016/10/17/gospel-vs-100-years-planned-parenthood/>

- <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2015/08/12/the-6th-planned-parenthood-video/>
- <http://bruceashford.net/2016/7-pro-life-articles-and-books-you-should-consider-reading/>

2. Books

- Why Pro Life? by Randy Alcorn
- Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments by Randy Alcorn
- Counter Culture by David Platt
- Christian Bioethics by C. Ben Mitchell and D. Joy Riley
- The Case for Life by Scott Klusendorf
- Abortion by R. C. Sproul