

**ABORTION**  
**The Christian Faces the Issues**  
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In 1973 it's estimated that 1.5 million babies have been aborted in the United States. An average of three every minute. In major metropolitan areas now the United States the number of abortions exceeds the number of live births. This devastating carnage of human life has been called The Silent Holocaust and the Slaughter of the Innocents.

Tonight I want to look with you at four questions. How did this situation come about? Second, should we be concerned, alarmed? Third, what council does the scriptures give us? Fourth, what actions must be taken?

First, let's look at how the situation came about and give a brief history.

Just a few years ago, in 1966, there were only approximately eight thousand legal abortions performed in the United States. Abortions were given legally only in instances of rape or incest or in the event the mother's life was threatened by continuing with the pregnancy. Slightly over one third of the states by legislative action or judicial decree legalized abortion between 1966 and 1971. Most of the states legalized abortion for only very restrictive reasons. The state of New York governed by the late Nelson Rockefeller, a champion of the pro abortionist cause, became the first state to legalize abortion on demand. On January 23, 1973 the Supreme Court handed down its infamous Roe-v-Wade decision which allowed abortion on demand. This decision in one stroke eliminated all laws prohibiting abortions in the various states of the United States and its territories. The ruling also struck down all court limitations that up to that time had been placed on abortion.

The ruling came as a lightning bolt. It essentially apportioned pregnancy into three trimesters. Lest I become clinical in using the courts term I would like to more carefully look more consciously with you at the development of the child in the womb so that we can understand the term first, second and third trimester as it's applied to the unborn.

The moment the ovum is fertilized by the sperm the joined pairs of 23 chromosomes have already determined the child's sex, size, shape, color of skin, hair and eyes. And much of the child's intelligence and temperament. All in a single cell. The dynamite possibilities of personhood are all locked in that freeze frame of time of conception. The tiny heart begins to beat in the third and fourth week. The head and body as well as rudimentary eyes, ears and mouth can be seen in the four-week-old quarter inch baby. Brain functions can be detected in the sixth and seventh weeks. At eight weeks limbs with fingers and toes have begun to appear. At nine to ten weeks the child can suck its thumb and grasp with his hands. At thirteen weeks when most abortions usually begin the embryo is completely organized and a miniature child lies within the mother's womb. His or her fingerprints have been established at thirteen weeks for all time. The child can alter his position, respond to pain, nose and light and even have an attack of hiccups. From the thirteenth week on the child merely develops in size and strength.

The court ruled that in this first trimester, the time from conception to the being the miniature child the issue of abortion was solely in the hands of the mother and her doctor. Of course we realize with the modern methods of abortion that the whole idea of mother and her doctor is a charade because most abortions are not performed by the personal physician of the woman who

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is having the abortion. But in fact the abortion is performed by someone whose name she will not even remember because it's basically an abortion warehouse.

The supreme court ruled that in the first trimester of pregnancy when the child becomes the miniature child there could be no state or governmental prohibition of abortion.

During the second trimester of pregnancy, from the end of the third month to the beginning of the seventh month, the state could only enact laws, which regulated abortion in ways "reasonably related to the mother's health." The concern again of the court was not for the health of the unborn child. The concern was for laws relating to the mother's health from the beginning of the fourth month to the end of the sixth month. This meant simply that the state – meaning a state such as California – may determine who is qualified to perform the abortion and where the abortion may be performed. But given a qualified doctor and a qualified medical setting the mother was free to have an abortion during the second trimester of pregnancy through the sixth month.

Only during the third trimester coming into the end of the sixth month and the seventh month of pregnancy when the fetus was viable, a term that the court meant to interpret as capable of sustaining life on its own outside of the womb, when the fetus was viable then the state could pass a law forbidding an abortion if that abortion was not necessary to preserve the mother's life or health. In other words the baby could be aborted if the mother could prove that its birth would effect her life or health. However "health" may be interpreted as including the mental and attitudinal well being of the mother not just her physical welfare.

Thus the court's decision effective grants the right to an abortion even to the last day of pregnancy if the mother does not want to bear the child.

The same court which permitted abortion on demand stopped the construction of a 116 million-dollar dam in Tennessee because its completion carried the possibility of making extinct the snail darter, a three-inch fish.

A dramatic development is now taking place, which will most likely bring a steep rise in the increase in abortion. Thousands of man hours and millions of dollars have been spent on the development of a do-it-yourself abortion product, which does not have nauseous or other negative side effects. The drug if marketed will allow self-administered abortions during the first trimester of pregnancy to take place at home rather than requiring the mothers presence in a doctor's office or clinic. Major pharmaceutical companies have pressed ahead with research in this area.

There's of course the whole issue of orphan embryos, test tube embryos and that has been in the news this week with the death of a couple who have two embryos that are in a frozen state.

The United States congress has thus far shown an unwillingness to heed President Reagan's call for the adoption of a human life amendment which defines an unborn child as a person protected by the fifth and fourteenth articles of amendment to the constitution. Failing congressional and state action the only political home for change in America presently is in the appointment of new supreme court justices. Five of the present nine justices are past the age of 75. Therefore the

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president who assumes office January 20, 1985 may well have the opportunity to appoint justices who can reverse Roe versus Wade.

The second concern is should we be concerned and even alarmed? There are three major views being expressed today regarding abortion.

One position is that the unborn is not a human life and therefore no moral issues are at stake. Zygote and fetus displace the word "baby." The word "baby" is too personal and human. Some in the abortion movement have called pregnancy the most common "tumor" that women acquire. The development of a baby is simply tissue. One has no more moral compunction in excising a tissue than in removing an appendix.

A second view is that the unborn is a potential human life. And certain safeguards may be in order. The difficulty in this view is the ambiguity as when personhood or humanness takes place. Does personhood take place at conception? At quickening, when the mother first feels the baby? At viability, when the baby can survive outside the womb? Or at birth? This middle moderating position cannot clue in specifically as to when potential human life is at stake because the issue of personhood has not been defined. Viability, with modern research keeps being pushed back and back. Whereas viability used to be limited to maybe two months before birth, a premature baby could survive now I believe being pushed back into the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy.

The third view is that the unborn is a human life, a person in the full legal sense and entitled to the protection afforded all other human life. In Abortion and the Early Church Michael Gorman conclusively shows by references to patristic writings that early church fathers writing of the first three centuries of the Christian church that the church held unwaveringly to this position that the unborn is a human life entitled to full protection and weight of consideration. In fact the early Christians had to like the Christians today resist the abortion on demand attitudes and practices of a pagan culture. We treat the abortion issue wrongly if we think it's simply a modern issue. Any reading of Roman or Greek history will show that this is not the case. It was a tremendous issue for the early Christians. The abortion ethic for pre Christian non-Judaic Greek and Roman cultures is simply being reborn today in America. With a decline of Christian influence and Christian civilization abortion has come back with a veracity that characterizes it as occurring during the Greek and Roman pagan periods.

The pro-abortion mindset of ancient Greek and Roman culture went hand in hand with infanticide, the kill of *born* babies and euthanasia, the killing of the weak, the handicapped and the old. Abortion is the wedge issue in which other horrors seek to enter. If in this country we allow abortion to come in, I guarantee you that what happened in pagan cultures will come on the heels of abortion – infanticide and euthanasia.

The holocaust did not begin with the killing of the Jews. The holocaust began with an idea. An idea flowing out of the philosopher Hegel who lived 1770-1831 and Nietche from 1844-1900. Both by the way, started out their academic careers in training for the ministry. Hegel came to insist that there were no moral absolute values. In any given society there are competing views of right and wrong which he called thesis and antithesis, which by a rational process produced a rational compromise, called synthesis. Synthesis is what the majority of people regard as useful. Synthesis changes because as time goes along synthesis becomes a thesis and ultimately

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produces an antithesis and a new synthesis is later produced. People's values change. Morality is never fixed. It's always moving. Yesterday's wrong becomes tomorrow's right. New thinking replaces old thinking. The good is simply what is useful. Nietzsche went behind Hegel to say that the center of moral value is power. The rule of the strong which develops a better race from the Nietzsche point of view is the highest good. The chief evil becomes any protection of the weak. With these eyes, the German republic began its Program of annihilation of the Jews. Frances Shaffer and C. Everett Koop who is presently surgeon general of the United States detailed this process in their book Whatever Happened to the Human Race. This mindset and its effect on pre World War II Germany. "The first to be killed were the aged, the infirm, the senile and mentally retarded and defective children. Eventually as World War II approached the doomed undesirables including epileptic World War I amputees, children with badly modeled ears and even bed-wetters were killed. Physicians took part in this planing on matters of life and death to save society's money. Long before the killing and subsequent genocide against the Jews began, Germans were psychologically conditioned to accept it through propaganda which trumped that it would be a far better thing to spend money to build housing for newly marrieds than to keep sick and weak people alive. That was the idea that led to the Holocaust.

Just that same kind of thinking of economic convenience and personal convenience is what is at root in the abortion issue because children are costly in an economic an social and moral sense. The child in the womb is disposable therefore. It is no wonder that abortion has been called "the slippery slope." Abortion is the beginning of our slide to Aushwitz.

President Reagan writes in his book Abortion and the Conscious of a Nation. In this book he quotes what to him remains an unnamed noble laureate. Actually it was Dr. Frances Crick. He says, "No newborn infant should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment. If it failed these tests it forfeits the right to live."

A doctor who presided over a New York clinic that was the largest and earliest major abortion clinic in the nation that did 60,000 abortions a year in New York City has now become an anti abortionist. (He's not a Christian; he's an atheist.) He's written a powerful book called Aborting America. He quotes a faculty member at a western university who advocated calling the prenatal child Alpha. Alpha would have no more right to life than a newborn guppy. Alpha could be raised for the intentional purpose of slaughter in order to acquire its organs for transplant. Others have advocated that a born baby not be declared a human until three days to a week after birth in order to ascertain which babies are healthy and which are desirable for extinction.

Why cite these examples? Why bother with Hegel and Nietzsche? With Nazi Germany and the Holocaust? Because our society is doing the same thing. It is saying it is morally permissible to slay babies in the womb when one, they are not wanted; two, they re not convenient; three, they are not useful. These very same arguments apply to infanticide and euthanasia. They are not wanted, they are not convenient, they are not useful. They do not contribute to society.

We as Christians cannot afford to be what former interior secretary James Watt said at a prayer breakfast last August, We cannot afford to be the people who live in the villages next to the smokestacks of the Nazi crematorium and did nothing.

Should we be concerned, even alarmed? By all means!

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What insight does the scripture give us on the matter of the beginning of human life and abortion. The first five books of the scripture, the Torah, the law, were written by a man saved from infanticide. His parents resisted the awesome pressure of their day to dispose of their baby Moses. The prophets Isaiah, Isaiah 49:1-5 and Jeremiah, Jeremiah 1:5 are keenly conscious that the Lord formed them in the womb, knew, called and consecrated them in their prenatal state. Job in chapter 10:8-12 traces his continuity as a person back to God's clothing him and knitting him in the womb. David indicates that he has fallen heir to the Adamic inheritance of fallen human nature at conception. "In sin did my mother conceive me." That, by the way was not David's way of saying that intercourse was sinful but that in the act of conception he fell heir to the fallen human nature. But he goes on to celebrate God's intimate knowledge of his personhood in the womb in Psalm 139 "For you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth your eyes saw my unformed body."

Exodus 21:22-25 reflects further protection of the Mosaic law on a mother and her child who is inadvertently struck during a fight. If because being struck during a fight she gives birth prematurely and no injury occurs then the offender is fine. But if injury occurs the law of retaliation applies – eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

A critical exegetical question is whether the law of retaliation applied if the mother and the child is injured or just the mother without the child being injured. If the mother only, that is injury to the child would go unpunished. The lack of retaliation for injury to the baby stems not from the Bible's devaluing the baby's inherent worth. Rather it came because the attackers intent to harm was directed against the mother and not the child. Therefore lesser responsibility is involved because of non-intentionality. A key rule in the homicide passages in the Old Testament.

The New Testament bears witness that human life commences at conception and the unborn baby is human. The birth narratives of John the Baptist and Jesus traces their personhood back to within the womb. Jesus is conceived by the Spirit. To abort the zygote in Mary would have been to destroy the incarnate one. It was through conception that the word began his life as flesh. John the Baptist six months after conception and three months before birth, leaps for joy in his mother's womb at the arrival of Mary who had just become pregnant with Jesus. The six-month child in the womb John is already possessed with spiritual consciousness.

These scriptural examples establish the existence of human life from conception. Increasing evidence from the scientific community is corroborating this view. I especially note the book Right of Life. If you want to read a book that will give you a reverence for life read this.

Wilie eloquently speak on the beginning of human life from the moment of conception. "When at fertilization the 23 chromosomes from the sperm join 23 chromosomes from the ovum a new being is created. Never before in the history of the world or ever again will a being identical to this one exist. This is a unique being. Genetically totally different from the body of the father or the mother, independent, programmed from within, moving forward in an ongoing, self controlled process of maturation, growth, development and replacement of his or her own dying cells. The ultimate scientific fact that all must face and deal with it that nothing, no bits or pieces will be added to this living human from the time of fertilization until the old man or the old

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woman dies. Nothing except nutrition. Each of us existed in total at that moment. All that we have done since then is mature.”

John Powell wrote, “The greatest gift of God is the gift of life. The greatest sin of humans it would seem would be to return that gift ungratefully and unopened.”

The last question we want to face is what should we be doing? What should we as Christians be doing about the abortion issue?

I have a number of steps as I have pondered this issue.

First I think we need to use correct vocabulary. We need to make conscious choices to use the right vocabulary in referring to the abortion issue. The pro abortionists like Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia are using disinformation in their choice of language. The unborn baby is to them a “fetus.” While this term is medically correct, it is psychologically dehumanizing. Let’s use “baby, child, unborn child.”

Pro-choice sounds nice. Pro killing is the accurate term. The aborted baby certainly didn’t have a choice. Termination of pregnancy sounds human but it means one of four things: suction abortion where the baby is torn apart limb from limb and deposited in a jar as so much fetal waste material; D&C where the instruments cuts and scrapes the baby in bits and pieces from the womb; saline solution – where 16 week and older unborn babies are poisoned and burned through injection and delivered dead 24-36 hours later looking like a candied apple whose skin has been burned off; or an abortion where the child is removed surgically similar to a caesarian section, the aborted baby simply discarded in a stainless steel bowl. Termination of pregnancy is inappropriate. It is the baby who is being terminated, not the pregnancy. As Christians we need to call things by their real name.

Second, I think we as Christians need to be involved in the political process. Trough adoption of a human life amendment we can end legal abortions. We have a precedence for such an action in the adoption of the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution, which reversed the Dred Scott Supreme Court decision of 1857. The court ruled that a black person was not a legal person even though he had biological life. That decision in 1857 was not reversed in a day. Not reversed in a year. Not even a decade. But it was reversed. What the court once decreed about blacks it has now said about the unborn. We reject the view as Christians that a court made legal right is a moral right. It will take the same force of Christian conviction to reverse Roe versus Wade as it took for Christians of a century ago to reverse the Dred Scott decision. May the reversal occur without a civil war.

Christians are compelled to work for the defeat of all in the political life who are opposed to the human life amendment. The adoption of this amendment will not only prevent he legal killing of the unborn but also give needed protection against the killing of the weak, the handicapped, the elderly. That’s part of he provision of the human life amendment. Mother Teresa of Calcutta has rightly said, Abortion is a crime that kills not only the child but the consciences of all involved. We need to be involve din he legal process as Christian citizens.

A third approach we need to have as Christians is to recognize that righting a legal wrong will not solve the problem of sin. Pro-abortion attitudes are part of the secular humanistic culture and

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lifestyle system where emphasis is placed on Me First and I'll do what I want. Human life apart from God is in rebellion against God's authority in all areas.

Christians must engage in the political battle to change the law. But a change in the law will not change the human heart. Therefore we must give priority emphasis to spiritual solutions. What the world really needs is Jesus.

Fourth, we must not allow our anti abortion stance to be interpreted as anti choice or anti woman. These are disinformation terms that the pro abortionists have thrown out. We insist that a mother has no more moral or legal authority to kill the child in her womb than she has moral or legal authority to kill the child outside her womb. Abortion is not a matter of women's rights but a matter of human rights. The right of a child to live. President Reagan says this in his book by quoting a letter from a young pregnant woman, "In this society we save whales, we save timber wolves and bald eagles and coke bottles. Yet everyone wanted me to throw a way my baby."

Fifth, we need to be informed so we can give a reasoned response on our position on abortion and not just an emotional outcry. Although it is hard not to be emotional on this issue. We need to make a compelling intelligent response.

Sixth, we need to proclaim Christ's in the scriptures teaching that sexual intercourse outside of marriage is a sin. Sexual promiscuity is directly related to the abortion epidemic. The fastest way to end the murder is to return to personal purity.

Seventh, we must not only proclaim God's judgement upon sin but his mercy upon those who have sinned. Abortion is a quiet sin. Some Christian women in churches are struggling with the guilt and no one but God knows. Recognize that a sin has been committed. That's the first step. But we've got good news beyond that step. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all of our sin. Repented of sin is forgiven sin. All sin may be forgiven except the one that rejects the Spirit's witness of Jesus. As far as the east is from the west so far will God separate our sins from us. We need to announce God's mercy for those who have sinned.

Eighth, we need to give wholehearted encouragement and support to pregnant mothers married and unmarried. We should be active as Christians in the financial and spiritual and psychological undergirding needed to by unwed mothers. We must encourage to not complicate a wrongful sexual act with another wrong deed. But to match that wrongful sexual sin with the redemptive act of personal self sacrifice in bringing the child to birth. The baby within her wants life. Many adoptive parents want the baby she will bear.

We need special days at our church for the recognition of babies, of mothers and fathers. Festive moments when he life of a child is celebrated.

Finally, and always, we need to pray. 2 Corinthians 7:14 brings us the assurance that the humility, repentance and prayers of God's people can save a nation. If we have been ambivalent or silent on the abortion issue, it is time to repent. It is time for us to pray that the horrible cloud of ungodliness and inhumaneness settling upon our nation will be lifted. It is time to pray that a great spiritual awakening will come to America and that human life will be kept sacred and redeemed. [end of tape]