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EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS THROUGH SOJOURN
COMMUNITY CHURCH IN LOUISVILLE,
KENTUCKY, TO DEFEND THE
SANCTITY OF LIFE

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APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS THROUGH SOJOURN
COMMUNITY CHURCH IN LOUISVILLE,
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I dedicate this project to the staff and volunteers at BsideU for Life in Louisville, Kentucky. Thank you for your tireless efforts to defend the unborn and to show love to young women in crisis pregnancies. You glorify God through your efforts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Context	1
Rationale	3
Purpose	4
Goals	5
Research Methodology	5
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations	6
Conclusion	7
2. BIBLICAL SUPPORT FOR THE SANCTITY OF LIFE	8
Genesis 1:26-29: Man Was Made in God’s Image	8
Psalm 139:13-16: A Baby in the Womb Is a Person	14
Exodus 20:13: A Man Is Not to Take the Life of Another	21
Proverbs 24:11-12: Christians Are Commanded to Protect Life	23
Use of Old Testament Passages	25
Conclusion	26
3. HISTORIC, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE SANCTITY OF LIFE	28
Abortion Statistics and Methods	28
History of Abortion	33
Science and Fetal Development	37

Chapter	Page
Pro-Choice Arguments and Pro-Life Responses	42
Conclusion	47
4. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT	48
Project Planning	48
Implementation	57
Evaluation	61
Conclusion	64
5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT	65
Evaluation of Project's Purpose	65
Evaluation of Project's Goals	66
Strengths of the Project	67
Weaknesses of the Project	69
What I Would Do Differently	72
Theological Reflections	73
Personal Reflections	74
Sphere of Personal Involvement	76
Conclusion	79
Appendix	
1. PRE- AND POST-SURVEY	80
2. ABORTION CURRICULUM EVALUATION	84
3. COMPARISON OF PRE- AND POST-SURVEY RESULTS	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	87

PREFACE

Without the support and encouragement of many individuals, I would not be in a position to complete this project. I thank each of them for their unique contributions.

Thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Shane W. Parker. I cherish your encouragement and enthusiasm for this project, as well as our friendship.

Thank you to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and its faculty. Without your help and the opportunity to learn from you, I would not be receiving this degree.

Thank you to my family. I especially thank my wife, Kathy, for her unfailing love and support as I answer the call God has placed on my life. I am immeasurably blessed by my family.

Thank you to Sojourn Community Church for your support for this project and for giving me a forum for delivering its content.

Finally, I thank God for his provision and inspiration in the completion of this project. I pray that He will make the product of this project a valuable tool for the local church and that it will bring glory to Him.

Jim Tipton

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down its decision in *Roe v. Wade* legalizing abortion in the United States. Since that decision, over fifty-eight million babies have been killed.¹ Pro-abortion advocates thought the court's decision had closed the debate over abortion rights but that has not proven to be the case.² Over forty years after *Roe v. Wade* was decided, the nation is still split over a mother's right to abort her child.³

Many Americans have lived their entire lives in an era of legal abortion on demand. The sanctity of life is a familiar term, but one for which there is little evidence in our culture. Where is the church in speaking out in this war between life and death? Do Christians really understand the atrocities that are committed against the defenseless every day in our communities? How can the church equip its members to defend life?

Context

Sojourn Community Church (Sojourn) was founded in September 2000. Since then, the church has grown rapidly to the point where it now holds services at four separate

¹Albert Mohler, "57,762,169: The Number of Abortions Performed in the United States Since *Roe v. Wade*," *The Briefing*, January 21, 2016, accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2016/01/21/the-briefing-01-21-16/>.

²Albert Mohler, "The Resilience of the Abortion Issue Shows Americans Aren't Buying Pro-Choice Rhetoric," *The Briefing*, June 15, 2016, accessed June 15, 2016, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2016/06/15/briefing-06-16-16>.

³Lydia Saad, "U.S. Still Split on Abortion: 47% Pro-Choice, 46% Pro-Life," *Gallup*, May 22, 2014, accessed July 11, 2016, www.gallup.com/poll/170249/split-abortion-pro-choice-pro-life.aspx.

campuses across Louisville and Southern Indiana. Sojourn's mission is "to reach people with God's gospel, build them as his church, and release his church into the world."⁴

It is the third element of Sojourn's mission statement, to "release his church into the world," that is the focus of this project. Specifically, this project sought to equip and motivate the membership of Sojourn to actively and passionately defend the sanctity of life. Sojourn is the site where this project was implemented, but in reality, the project was designed to mobilize all churches to protect life. Sojourn, my home church, served as a test location to gauge the effectiveness of the project's content. Sojourn financially supports the ministry of A Woman's Choice Resource Center (now BsideU for Life), a crisis pregnancy center also located in Louisville, Kentucky where I served as Community Outreach Coordinator.

My responsibilities at BsideU for Life included building bridges between churches and the ministry, communicating BsideU for Life's vision and purpose to pastors and church leaders, and encouraging participation of churches and their members in the protection of unborn babies, in general, and in support of BsideU for Life's ministry, in particular. Although BsideU for Life is strong in many areas (a staff that is passionate in defending the sanctity of life, strong leadership, and widespread support from local churches and individuals), it also has great needs for more of the resources and support that has allowed it to be effective. The ministry's ability to help young ladies facing crisis pregnancies is constrained by the apathy among the community's Christians in speaking out for and protecting the unborn. This condition is not unique to Louisville. Crisis pregnancy centers like BsideU for Life see the effect of this willingness to tolerate abortion with passive opposition in the support it receives from Christians and churches in their communities. This includes both financial support as well as the time and talents of individuals.

⁴Sojourn Community Church, "About Us: Vision," accessed February 26, 2016, <http://sojournchurch.com/about/gospel-church-world/>.

BsideU for Life has been blessed to receive the support it has, but there is so much more that could be done to protect life if more churches and Christians joined in the effort. The church must be motivated to speak out against the taking of innocent lives; it must participate in the rescue of the unborn; and it must equip its members with a strong biblical foundation and informed understanding of the issue to defend a pro-life stance. I sought to fight the problem of apathy on the part of Christians in the pew through this project. I planned to develop a seminar and deliver it in eight one-hour sessions to a group of participants.⁵

The seminar's content included instruction on what abortion is (methods of abortion), the prevalence of abortion in the United States and the world (statistics), the history of how abortion came to be legal in the United States, arguments against pro-choice positions, and most importantly, what the Bible says about abortion, the sanctity of life, and our responsibility to defend those who cannot defend themselves. Practical ways for newly enlightened Christians to become active in the fight for life were also identified. Before the seminar, the understanding and attitudes toward abortion of a group of Christians were gauged, and after delivery of the seminar, understanding and attitudes were again gauged to see if change had taken place.⁶

Rationale

If one concludes that an unborn baby is in fact a baby, a person made in God's image, who is in a stage of life that is as essential and legitimate as any other stage of life, abortion must be seen as a terrible injustice and tragedy. The presence of abortion presents the church and individual Christians with an awesome opportunity and responsibility.

⁵Sojourn Community Church has been very supportive of BsideU for Life's ministry. This site was chosen for this project because it is my home church.

⁶My objective was to deliver eight one-hour sessions to at least twenty-five participants.

First, babies are being killed. Abortion is not an issue of intellectual curiosity and political compromise. It is an issue of life and death. The consequences of abortion are fatal for babies and often emotionally crippling for the parents. The church must not be silent. This seminar motivated Christians to speak out in defense of the unborn.

Second, Christians are commanded to defend those who cannot defend themselves. Proverbs 24:11 (NIV) says, “Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.” Certainly, unborn babies qualify as “those being led away to death” as their mothers choose to terminate pregnancies through abortion. The church must participate in the rescue. This seminar identified ways Christians can participate in that rescue.

Third, abortion has become a complicated political issue in America in which both those who identify themselves as pro-life, as well as those who identify themselves as pro-choice, are passionate in their beliefs, leaving no middle ground from which to seek compromise. For those who are pro-life, abortion is an issue of life and death and right and wrong; for those who are pro-choice, it is an issue of women’s rights and justice. Along with homosexuality and same-sex marriage, abortion has become a social issue that many Christians choose (whether consciously or subconsciously) to keep at a distance while focusing on less controversial and safer issues like education, substance abuse, and homelessness. The church must be a beacon of light and clarity in a sea of confusion and injustice. It must recognize abortion as a sin, emphasize the significance of the issue, and equip its members to defend the lives of the unborn. This seminar provided the biblical and informational foundation for that defense.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip members at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky, to defend the sanctity of life.

Goals

This project had three goals.

1. The first goal was to assess the current knowledge and attitudes toward abortion among a group of Christians through Sojourn Community Church.
2. The second goal was to develop a curriculum, to be delivered in eight one-hour sessions, on understanding and defending the sanctity of life.
3. The third goal was to increase knowledge and change attitudes toward abortion by implementing the curriculum.

Objective research methodology was used to measure the first and third goals.

Additional information relative to research methodology is provided in the next section.

Research Methodology

The first goal was to assess the current knowledge and attitudes toward abortion among a group of Christians through Sojourn Community Church. This goal was accomplished by administering a survey to a sample population of twenty Christians participating in the seminar.⁷ The results served as a baseline for comparison with results from the same survey administered at the end of the seminar. This goal was successfully accomplished when the group completed the survey yielding a better understanding of the group's knowledge and attitudes.

The second goal was to develop a curriculum, to be delivered in eight one-hour sessions, on understanding and defending the sanctity of life. The curriculum covered basic knowledge about abortion, what the Bible says about the sanctity of life and Christians' responsibility to defend the defenseless, and practical ways to defend life. The effectiveness of the curriculum was measured by a group of three ministry professionals familiar with pro-life issues who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, relevance, scope, and clarity of the curriculum.⁸ This goal was successfully

⁷See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

⁸See appendix 2. The team of professionals included a pastor from Sojourn,

accomplished when more than ninety percent of the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level.

The third goal was to increase knowledge and change attitudes by implementing the curriculum. This goal was measured by administering the same survey as was administered at the beginning of the seminar and comparing the results to those of the first survey. Successful accomplishment of this goal was a *t-test* for dependent samples that showed a statistically significant difference in the pre and post survey scores.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

Abortion and the sanctity of life are key terms that were used in this ministry project.

Abortion. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define a legal induced abortion as “an intervention performed by a licensed physician (e.g., a physician, nurse-midwife, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) that is intended to terminate an ongoing pregnancy.”⁹

Sanctity of Life. Sanctity of life means that all human life is special and deserves protection because man is made in the image of God. Man’s status as God’s image bearers sets man apart above all other living creatures in value.¹⁰

There were two delimitations on this project. The first delimitation was the number of people who participated in the seminar. Christians were invited to participate in the eight-week delivery of the curriculum with the objective of including at least

another pastor on staff at another church in Louisville, and the Executive Director of BsideU for Life.

⁹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “CDC Abortion Surveillance System FAQs,” accessed March 11, 2018, http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/data_stats/abortion.htm.

¹⁰R. C. Sproul, “The Sanctity of Human Life,” January 9, 2013, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/sanctity-human-life/>.

twenty-five adults who would participate and commit to attending all eight sessions. The other delimitation was the restricted number of sessions for delivery of the seminar. Eight sessions were chosen to balance the need for time to effectively communicate the information with the need to respect the time of the participants and to enhance the likelihood that participants would commit to attend all sessions.

Conclusion

The sanctity of life is an important issue for every person who believes man is made in the image of God. The Bible has much to say about the sanctity of life and Christians' responsibility to defend the defenseless. Chapter 2 establishes the biblical foundation for understanding that man is special because man is made in God's image, man is denied the right to take innocent life, and babies in the womb are lives that must be protected.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL SUPPORT FOR THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

The Word of God establishes that a baby in the womb is a person, made in the image of God, and as such is not to be killed but protected. The following four passages, addressed in a logical order, support this thesis: Genesis 1:26-29, Psalm 139:13-16, Exodus 20:13, and Proverbs 24:11-12.

Genesis 1:26-29: Man Was Made in God's Image

Biblical support for the sanctity of life begins with Genesis 1:26-29 where it is stated that man is made in the image of God. Man is unique among God's creatures not only because he bears God's image but also because he has been given dominion over the rest of creation.

The traditional Christian understanding of Genesis is that it is historical narrative, sprinkled with poetic passages.¹ The truth of God's creative act is essential to a correct understanding of who we are and who God is. Like the rest of creation, God created man to accomplish His sovereign purposes, but unlike the rest of creation, God created man to have communion with Him.

God said "Let us" make man in our own likeness. This formula differs from every other of His creations in that they all begin with His commands "let there be" or "let the." The creation of man was different and special. There have been many explanations offered for the meaning of "Let us." John Sailhamer identifies four categories of explanations: (1) it is a reference to the three Persons of the Trinity, (2) it is

¹John Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 10.

a reference to God and the angels, (3) it is an attempt to make an immediate distinction between God and man, or (4) it is a reflection of God's deliberate act of creation.² Sailhamer notes that there is no contextual support for any of these explanations except what is found in the next verse (v. 27) where it is stated that the singular man was created as both male and female. Sailhamer concludes, "Following this clue the divine plurality expressed in v.26 is seen as an anticipation of the human plurality of the man and woman, thus casting the human relationship between man and woman in the role of reflecting God's own personal relationship with himself."³ Such an understanding supports the first explanation that "us" refers to the three Persons of the Trinity.

Philip H. Eveson notes that the text "teaches that we are, in certain respects, like God. We are not gods, but there is something about us which makes us godlike."⁴ That godlikeness is further explained in an understanding of the terms "image" and "likeness."

Allen P. Ross observed that the Hebrew word used for "image" is used in the Old Testament to refer to the forms of idols, and the word for "likeness" describes similarity. He explains,

The term "image" has been variously explained as personality, nature (as body and spirit), or capacity for moral decision. It does not signify a physical representation of corporeality, for God is a spirit. The term must therefore figuratively describe human life as a reflection of God's special nature. . . . Consequently, humans have spiritual life, ethical and moral sensitivities, conscience, and the capacity to represent God.⁵

²Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 37.

³Ibid., 37-38. For arguments in support of the reference being to God and angels (category 2), see Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredericks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 64-65; and Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 27.

⁴Philip H. Eveson, *The Book of Origins: Genesis Simply Explained* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2001), 41.

⁵Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 112.

Victor P. Hamilton also notes a distinction between the words “image” and “likeness”:
“God creates humankind in *his image, his likeness*. Man is animal, but he is more than animal. Man is godlike, but he is less than God. ‘Image’ emphasizes man’s close similarity to God, while ‘likeness’ stresses that this similarity is not exact. God and man are not indistinguishable.”⁶

Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum disagree with an interpretation of “image” and “likeness” that centers understanding in man’s mental and spiritual qualities. They identify five historical views for the meaning of “image” and “likeness.” These views have been understood as referring to (1) man’s nature—“image” refers to qualities like personality and reason that make man like God, while “likeness” refers to supernatural qualities specific to those who are saved; (2) mental and spiritual qualities that man shares with God; (3) physical similarities between man and God; (4) man’s status as God’s representative on earth; and (5) man’s ability to relate to God.⁷ Noting that most Christians accept the second view of the meaning of “image” and “likeness” (mental and spiritual qualities that man shares with God), these authors object to this interpretation because it is inconsistent with grammatical analysis and historical context. The sequence of verbs suggest that the author of Genesis intended to communicate purpose. Gentry and Wellum write that a more correct translation reads, “let us make man . . . *so that* they may rule . . .’ An important exegetical point is at stake: the ruling is not the essence of the divine image, but rather a result of being made as the divine image.”⁸ Commenting on the historical context, Gentry and Wellum conclude that “image” should be understood as man’s position as God’s viceroy or servant-king in relation to the rest of

⁶Victor P. Hamilton, *Genesis*, Baker Bible Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 12.

⁷Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 71-72.

⁸*Ibid.*, 74.

creation, and that “likeness” describes the close relationship between man and God in such a way that man can be understood as God’s son.⁹

The key to Gentry and Wellum’s analysis is that the terms “image” and “likeness” as used in this passage refer to relationships of man to God and the world rather than to qualities inherent in man. They write, “In this sense the divine image entails a *covenant relationship* between God and humans on the one hand, and between humans and the world on the other.”¹⁰ Whether these terms should be rightly understood as communicating qualities inherent in man as a result of being made in God’s “image” and “likeness,” or, as Gentry and Wellum suggest, as communicating man’s respective roles to God and His creation, use of these terms in this passage clearly establishes that man has a special and unique relationship to God that is enjoyed by nothing else in His creation. Man can relate to God on mental and spiritual levels that nothing else in creation can, while as God’s representatives on earth, man enjoys a positional blessing and responsibility that nothing else shares. Man is special in God’s creation, both because of his capacity to commune with God, and because of his position as servant-king.

R. C. Sproul characterizes our relationship with God as follows: “Creation in the image of God is what sets humans apart from all other creatures. The stamp of the image and likeness of God connects God and mankind uniquely. Though there is no biblical warrant for seeing man as godlike, there is a high dignity associated with this unique relationship to the Creator.”¹¹ Humans’ lives have infinite worth because of who they are—image-bearers of God.

Just as He had done earlier with the birds and fish He created, God blessed man. He further instructed him to “be fruitful and increase in number.” Sailhamer

⁹Gentry and Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants*, 79.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹R. C. Sproul, “The Sanctity of Human Life,” *Ligonier*, January 9, 2013, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/sanctity-human-life/>.

observes that this command should rightly be seen as part of God’s blessing: “‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth.’ Thus, already the fulfillment of the blessing is tied to man’s ‘seed’ and the notion of ‘life’—two themes that will later dominate the narratives of the Book of Genesis.”¹² By reproducing, man enjoys the unique blessing of populating the earth with other human beings who are, themselves, created in the image of God.¹³

Wenham notes that the way God commands man to be fruitful is a further reflection of the special relationship between God and man. He writes, “God’s blessing on mankind is like that pronounced on the animals in v. 22. Like the animals man is to ‘be fruitful and multiply.’ But whereas v. 22 simply gives a command, this verse adds ‘and God said to them,’ thus drawing attention to the personal relationship between God and man.”¹⁴

God then commanded man to “subdue” the earth and to “rule over” all other living things. Eveson notes, “It was a common view in the ancient Near East that the king represented his god on earth and the king was described as bearing the god’s image. Here we are taught that not only monarchs but all human beings have kingly functions in that they bear the image of the true God and are his viceroys on earth.”¹⁵

These verses teach that (1) the Trinitarian God, the Creator of the universe, has made man in His own image—a status that allows man to share a special relationship with God no other in His creation shares; (2) God has blessed man—a blessing that includes the privilege of bringing to life other humans created in God’s likeness; and (3) God has made humans His representatives on earth, giving man dominion over all other living things. Clearly, God created man to occupy a privileged space in His creation and

¹²Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 38.

¹³Eveson, *Book of Origins*, 43.

¹⁴Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 43-44.

adorned him with a magnificence that should remind man of the true magnificence of our Creator.

Eveson lists some implications of the fact that man is made in God's image. One implication is that "though man (male and female) is a creature, he is a *special creature*. He is different from the other animals because he is like God. Man's whole being—body, mind and spirit—is a reminder of God."¹⁶ Another implication is that "every human being is of inestimable value. . . . Before God we acknowledge how inferior and undeserving we are, but as God's image-bearers we are never rubbish and we are never without significance. Every human being deserves to be treated with respect."¹⁷ Nigel Cameron recognizes the connection of man's position as the image-bearer of God with his value when he writes,

The starting point for a biblical understanding of human nature is the truth that human beings are created in God's image. It is clear from Genesis 1:26-27 that this applies to all those who are members of the human species. . . . The *imago Dei* is what makes us the beings we are and it is in place wherever there are members of our species. . . . If someone is a member of the human species, that person bears the divine image. Therefore, his or her life is sacred.¹⁸

A final implication Eveson identifies is, "[I]t is an affront to God to murder a human being created in God's image, and this crime deserves the ultimate penalty (Gen 9:6). James reminds us of the utter hypocrisy of praising God with one breath and in the very next cursing the one made in God's image (James 3:9)."¹⁹

For this discussion, the significance of man's status as the image-bearer of God is that man does hold a special place in God's creation, and because of that position, a

¹⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 45, emphasis original.

¹⁷Ibid., 46, emphasis original.

¹⁸Nigel Cameron, "What Does the Bible Say about Abortion?" in *The Apologetics Study Bible*, ed. Ted Cabal (Nashville: Holman Bible, 2007), 908.

¹⁹Eveson, *Book of Origins*, 46, emphasis original.

human life is sacred. In the debate over abortion, the question remains whether the life of an unborn baby qualifies as a human life. The next section addresses that question.

Psalm 139:13-16: A Baby in the Womb Is a Person

This chapter argues that the life of man, made in the image of God, is sacred; that a baby in the womb is a human being; and that God has prohibited the murder of one human by another. Few who hold a biblical worldview will challenge the first argument—that life is sacred.²⁰ Even those who do not hold a biblical worldview will be reluctant to challenge the value and worthiness of human life. As the next section will show, the Bible is clear that murder is a sin and outside acceptable behavior. Similar to the first argument, even those who do not hold a biblical worldview are very likely to agree that murder is unacceptable. It is the second argument—that the baby in the womb is a person—that is problematic for many. Therefore, for those who challenge or question the personhood of an unborn baby, the overall argument hinges on this truth.

The Bible does not provide us an explicit statement about when life begins. Neither does it explicitly say that abortion is a sin. In both cases, the truth of Scripture must be implicitly discerned by what the Scriptures do reveal. The sinfulness of abortion is derived and understood by analyzing Scripture’s teachings on the sanctity of life, the personhood of the unborn, and the prohibition against murder. Similarly, the personhood of the unborn component of that analysis is gleaned from Scripture’s revelation of the relationship between God and the unborn.

God described that relationship most clearly in Psalm 139. This psalm is a poetic song ascribed to David. Michael Wilcock claims that the term “Old Testament

²⁰Norman Geisler defines a worldview as “how one views or interprets reality. . . . It is the framework through which one makes sense of the data of life.” Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 785. The biblical worldview says one can know what God has revealed in the Bible and in nature. This understanding contrasts with the scientific worldview in which what one can know is restricted to only what can be proven through scientific inquiry.

poetry” is inadequate to accurately describe it: “It is such a personal and deeply felt expression of what the psalmist knows of God that we should want to describe it in simpler, more direct terms. As he himself might tell us, ‘It is about how God knows me, how he surrounds me, how he has made me, and how he tests me.’”²¹

Unlike most other psalms, Psalm 139 defies categorization into a particular genre like thanksgiving or lament.²² The text is divided into four stanzas: verses 1-6, 7-12, 13-18, and 19-24.²³ The first stanza addresses God’s omniscience, the second His omnipresence, the third His creative role in human life, and the fourth is a plea for God to address evil in the world and to guide the author’s life.²⁴ John Goldingay notes that “the psalm makes effective use of parallelism . . . [b]ut it uses the principle of parallelism in a much broader fashion as it keeps repeating its points in successive lines, using different imagery.”²⁵

The third stanza, verses 13-18, is the focus of this paper. This section describes God’s creative role in forming the baby in the womb and His already established knowledge of and relationship with the unborn person. The baby in the womb is already a person in the womb; God already knows it and has its days numbered and planned.

²¹Michael Wilcock, “The Message of Psalms 73-150,” in *The Bible Speaks Today*, ed. J. A. Motyer (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2001), 258.

²²Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73-150*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 278-79. Stephen J. Lawson categorized Ps 139 as a wisdom psalm. Stephen J. Lawson, *Psalms 76-150*, Holman Old Testament Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 333.

²³Clifford, *Psalms 73-150*, 280. James Luther Mays divides the psalm into two parts. The first, vv. 1-18, communicates praise, and the second, vv. 19-24, is a prayer concerning evil. James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1994), 425-26.

²⁴Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 16 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1975), 500-503.

²⁵John Goldingay, *Psalms*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 627.

The section begins with the revelation that God created David's "inmost being" and knit him together in his mother's womb. Steven Waterhouse argues that the Hebrew word translated as "created" in the NIV is better translated as "possessed," the way it appears in the KJV. He explains, "Unless you leave it as it stands, with the word 'possess' or 'own,' you miss the application. God **owns** the unborn."²⁶ Not only is God involved in the process of the formation and development, He owns babies in the womb. The Hebrew translated as "inmost being" in the NIV actually means "kidneys."

Waterhouse notes,

There are twelve times in the Hebrew Old Testament that the word kidney is used of humans. It never means the physical organ when it is used of humans. It does not mean the physical organ that cleanses blood that we generally associate with the kidneys. The Old Testament authors are thinking of kidney here in the same way we use "heart." They are thinking of the place where the innermost person resides, the place of thinking, the place of emotions, and the place of the soul. . . . You are talking about a soul. . . . Verse 13 is saying God, you owned me, and you developed my soul when I was within my mother. You will see the immediate significance of that point. . . . Some part of that which was created in the image of God and is holy is present from the very beginning, and God owns it.²⁷

Already, in the womb, God has given babies their souls. There are no qualifications or limitations concerning when that occurs; it is logical to conclude that it happens when the baby first comes into being, at conception. At least from that point forward, the unborn baby possesses a soul given to it by God, the baby's owner.²⁸ Lawson notes the beauty

²⁶Steven Waterhouse, *Life's Tough Questions* (Amarillo, TX: Westcliff, 2005), 125, emphasis original.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 126.

²⁸This assertion is an example of the implicit discernment required of the reader based on what the Bible reveals about the relationship between God and the unborn child. Not all will agree with this conclusion. Gerald Larue, *Sex and the Bible* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1983), 124, would disagree:

Of course the soul is an intangible mythic entity, an article of faith for whose existence there is absolutely no evidence. If one believes in the existence of the soul, then it is possible to argue that the soul enters the fertilized egg or that the soul does not become a part of the person until the infant emerges from the womb and breathes on its own. . . . [It is not] possible to argue that the fetus is a "person" on the basis of biblical teachings. The debate about abortion is centered in theological opinion and belief.

suggested by the text in describing God knitting the baby in the womb: ‘God knit him [David] like a skilled artisan would weave a beautiful tapestry. This work of creation was done in the mother’s womb, beginning nine months before he was born.’”²⁹

David praised God because he is “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Willem A. VanGemeran highlights the deeply personal language of “I” and “my” David used and observed, “God is concerned with the individuals whom he has formed for his purpose. Therefore praise is the proper response to God’s grace of discernment, perception, and purpose. . . . All of God’s ‘works’ are ‘wonderful,’ but the believer senses more than any other part of God’s creation that he is ‘fearfully and wonderfully made.’”³⁰

David returned to God’s involvement in his development in the womb by writing “My frame was not hidden from you.” God was there and He saw every moment of David’s development. David wrote this took place in “the secret place” and “in the depths of the earth.” These are both euphemisms for the womb.³¹ David Platt marvels at the intimacy between God and the baby in the womb: “Everything—everything!— revolves around what is happening in a mother’s womb, and Scripture is clear: that womb contains a person being formed in the image of God. . . . God reminds us in his Word that though an unborn baby is visibly hidden from us, he or she is not hidden from him.”³²

David then acknowledged that God had ordained and determined all the days he would live even while he was still in the womb. This verse reinforces our understanding that God knows us as a person in the womb. Not only has He created man as His possession there, He has already determined the number of days of his life. How can that

²⁹Lawson, *Psalms 76-150*, 334, emphasis original.

³⁰Willem A. VanGemeran, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 838.

³¹Lawson, *Psalms 76-150*, 335. See also Allen P. Ross, “Psalms,” in Cabal, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 907.

³²David Platt, *Counter Culture* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2015), 65-66.

be unless He knows the baby as a person? David’s body was still “unformed,” yet God already had plans and a purpose for David. Ross notes that this verse, “has much to say about how people must give human life in the womb the same loving care that God—whose Spirit gives life (2 Cor 3:3)—bestows upon it. The passage is poetry, but is still revealed truth. The passage also stresses the sovereignty of God more than any other Psalm; people are not masters of their own destiny, but are in the hand of the Lord.”³³

This third stanza of Psalm 139 concludes with a praise that marvels at the wonder and extent of the sum total of God’s purposes and thoughts. Lawson describes David’s sentiments: “These divine truths were precious to David, vast and beyond his human comprehension. If he tried to list these truths about God, they would outnumber the grains of sand on the beaches in the world, far past his ability to understand. When he awakens, his thoughts are still dominated with God. He cannot remove such towering thoughts about God from his mind.”³⁴

Regardless of the wonder of God’s role and involvement in the life of an unborn baby from the time of conception, some skeptics will admit that the baby in the womb is a life, as Psalm 139 teaches, but will deny that it is a “person.” Responding to the question “Does human life begin at conception?” one online respondent wrote, “Sure, but it doesn’t matter. Human life does certainly begin at conception, but human life isn’t particularly valuable. Rights come from personhood.”³⁵ Those who seek to deny that an unborn human being is a person attempt to equate “personhood” to some obscure quality that the baby will acquire only outside the womb. John Piper writes,

We can argue, I say, endlessly over what ‘full’ personhood is. But this we can say, I think, with great confidence: what is happening in the womb is a unique person-

³³Ross, “Psalms,” 907.

³⁴Lawson, *Psalms 76-150*, 335.

³⁵Debate.org, “Does Human Life Begin at Conception?” accessed July 25, 2016, <http://www.debate.org/opinions/does-human-life-begin-at-conception>.

forming work of God, and only God knows how deeply and mysteriously the creation of personhood is woven into the making of a body. Therefore it is arbitrary and unwarranted to assume that at any point in the knitting together of this person, its destruction is not an assault on the prerogatives of God the Creator.³⁶

The “personhood” objection is a challenge based on semantics. What does it mean to be a person? A person is a human. Those who argue that an unborn baby is not a person are really arguing that an unborn baby is not significant enough or worthy enough to claim life. It is an argument built on a foundation of a human’s utility. An unborn person’s abilities to think, act, and contribute to the welfare of others pale in comparison to those same abilities of persons outside the womb. It is an argument that can be used to support euthanasia and a denial of personhood for persons at the other end of the life cycle. For example, Peter Singer claims that “it is difficult to think of any morally relevant properties that separate human beings with severe brain damage . . . from other beings at a similar mental level. . . . Why should . . . being . . . a member of *our* species make it worse to kill that being than it is to kill a member of another species . . . ?”³⁷ The fault in this logic is that personhood is not a function of utility. Personhood is a function of who man is—persons made in the image of God; all, therefore, have infinite worth; all are persons who deserve dignity and protection. Few would agree that a young man in a coma no longer qualifies as a person, just because he has little practical utility.³⁸ Similarly, “personhood” should not be denied an unborn baby just because it is still developing and growing in the womb as it begins its journey of life.

Another objection to the truth of an unborn child’s personhood is a biblical challenge based on Exodus 21:22-25. In this section, God defined for Israel the penalties

³⁶John Piper, “Ten Reasons Why It Is Wrong to Take the Life of Unborn Children,” *Desiring God*, April 7, 1989, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/ten-reasons-why-it-is-wrong-to-take-the-life-of-unborn-children>.

³⁷Peter Singer, “Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective,” *Bioethics* 17, nos. 5-6 (2003): 528, emphasis original.

³⁸Randy Alcorn, *Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2000), 75.

for personal injuries. These verses address a situation in which two men are fighting, a pregnant woman is accidentally hit, and the woman “gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury.” In such a case, the offender must pay the woman’s husband whatever compensation the husband demands and the court allows. But if there is a serious injury, the penalty for the offense should match the injury. Some pro-abortion activists interpret the premature birth in this passage to mean a miscarriage. They argue that the comparatively lenient penalty proscribed for such an event and the judgement that the injury was not serious are evidence that God does not consider the value of an unborn baby to be equal to the value of a baby outside the womb.

The RSV actually translates the premature birth to mean miscarriage. Most translations (ASV, KJV, NIV, ESV, HCSB, NASB, NRSV), however, interpret the event in such a way that the baby is born alive. John Piper lists five reasons why these verses should be understood in such a way that the baby is not miscarried but is simply prematurely born: (1) the Hebrew verb used in these verses is not the verb used elsewhere in the Old Testament for “miscarry,” (2) the Hebrew verb that is used here is never used elsewhere in the Old Testament to mean “miscarry,” (3) the Old Testament uses words for the untimely birth of babies that die but those words are not used here, (4) the words that are used in this verse are used elsewhere in the Old Testament only to refer to babies that are born normally, and (5) verse 22 says “she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury.” It does not say “no further injury.” The logical reading is that “no serious injury” refers to the child and not the mother. If the woman miscarried, there would certainly be “serious injury” to the child.³⁹ Therefore, the challenge to the value of the baby in the womb based on this section of Scripture fails.

³⁹John Piper, “The Misuse of Exodus 21:22-25 by Pro-Choice Advocates,” *Desiring God*, February 8, 1989, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://desiringgod.org/articles/the-misuse-of-exodus-2122-25-by-pro-choice-advocates>.

The first two sections of Scripture analyzed in this chapter establish that man is a special creation made in the image of God and that a baby in the womb is a person—a life that is sacred and deserving of protection. The third argument is that man is prohibited from murdering another man. That truth is provided in Exodus 20:13.

Exodus 20:13: A Man Is Not to Take the Life of Another

In Exodus 20:13, God clearly prohibited the murder of another human being. It is the sixth of the Ten Commandments God gave to Israel through Moses on Mt Sinai. Over the previous three months, the people of Israel had experienced their exodus from Egypt, their miraculous delivery from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, God’s provision of manna and quail in the wilderness, and were now gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai. God communicated His covenant with the people of Israel through Moses. Three days later, God summoned Moses to Mt. Sinai and gave him His commandments.

The sixth commandment is included in a group of the last six that are sometimes described as “horizontal.” This grouping distinguishes them from the first four “vertical” commandments that govern man’s relationship to God. John D. Currid explains that the horizontal commands “lay down fundamental principles dealing with mankind’s duty toward itself—that is, how people are to treat one another.”⁴⁰

The sixth commandment is both short and succinct. In Hebrew, it consists of only two words which together mean “never murder.”⁴¹ Currid notes that the Hebrew word translated for “murder” is used forty-seven times in the Old Testament, and “in every instance but one it speaks of one human being killing another. It is never used of a person killing an animal. In addition, [it] is never employed in contexts of war, capital

⁴⁰John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus* (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2001), 44.

⁴¹Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 462.

punishment, or self-defense. Most often it denotes planned or premeditated murder.”⁴²

Although a few popular translations (ASV, KJV, RSV) translate the prohibited act as “kill,” many (NIV, ESV, HCSB, NASB, NRSV) translate it as “murder.”

Jesus later expanded on this commandment to include not only the physical act of murder but also angry thoughts (Matt 5:21-22). Currid writes, “Jesus’ interpretation of this law goes well beyond the physical act of murder. . . . It also ‘forbids murder of the heart,’ as Calvin puts it. Indeed, it is the hand that gives birth to murder, but it is the heart infected and inflamed with hate and anger that conceives it! (cf. 1 John 3:15).”⁴³

In the context of this paper, the sixth commandment clearly prohibits the murder of another human being. This prohibition extends to taking the life of any person, regardless of the person’s place in the human life cycle. It applies to the murder of unborn babies as well as to the murder of the aged. Life is sacred. Murder is prohibited. God, alone, has authority to give and take life.

Stuart observes that the prohibition of murder included in the sixth commandment is applicable today just like it was when it was written: “Little difference separates the practical outworking of this command today from its original application in ancient Israel. . . . [F]rom the point of view of the individual believer, the prohibition works exactly the same way: no unauthorized ‘private’ person or group has the right to end a human life.”⁴⁴ R. Alan Cole sums up the effect of the sixth commandment when he writes, “[T]he prohibition seems addressed in the first place towards killing of a ‘neighbor,’ a member of the same covenant-community. In any case, the sanctity of life, as God’s gift, is established: hence ‘blood-guiltiness’ is an awful reality, from the time of

⁴²Currid, *Exodus*, 45-46.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁴Stuart, *Exodus*, 463.

Cain onwards (Gen. 4:10).”⁴⁵ In a similar vein, George Bush concludes, “The scope and spirit of the injunction is therefore evident. As life is the greatest of earthly blessings, and the grand foundation of enjoying all others, God is here pleased to make known the sacredness which he would have attached to so inestimable a boon.”⁴⁶

Proverbs 24:11-12: Christians Are Commanded to Protect Life

Life is precious; an unborn baby is a person; it is a sin to murder another person. Abortion denies God’s sovereignty over life and death and it defies the clear teaching of Scripture. What should be the response of the church? An exegesis of Proverbs 24:11-12 reveals that the proper response is to rescue those who are being killed.

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of sayings, many written by Solomon.⁴⁷ The Hebrew word for “proverb” also means “taunt,” “oracle,” and “parable.”⁴⁸ The verses examined in this section are included in a group attributed to “the wise,” apparently a group of wise men with whom Solomon was acquainted or to whom he had access.⁴⁹ Proverb 24 begins with a warning about associating with the wicked, followed by endorsements of wisdom and knowledge, an admonishment against those who plot evil, and an assertion that those who falter in times of trouble are weak. The balance of the chapter that follows the verses examined in this section encourages the pursuit of wisdom and warns against wickedness and distress because of the apparent success of the wicked.

⁴⁵R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1973), 167.

⁴⁶George Bush, *Commentary on Exodus* (Grand Rapids, IL: Kregel, 1993), 276.

⁴⁷Herbert Wolf, “Proverbs,” in *The NIV Study Bible*, ed. Kenneth Barker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 935.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

The reader is commanded to “rescue those being led away to death” and to “hold back those staggering toward slaughter.” Who are those being led to death? Duane A. Garrett suggests they are either “literal prisoners who have been (presumably wrongfully) condemned to die,” or they are “people stumbling toward death because of their moral and spiritual blindness.”⁵⁰ Both explanations are applicable to the issue of abortion. Certainly, a baby in the womb whose life is about to be taken qualifies as a “prisoner” wrongly condemned to death. Parents about to terminate the life of their child, as well as pro-abortion advocates, are stumbling toward death because of their moral and spiritual blindness.

The proper response to abortion is the primary focus. Christians are told to “rescue” and “hold back” those condemned to death. Edward M. Curtis interprets these commands to mean that “God expects His people to respond to those who are in mortal danger. These verses apply to situations where a person has a casual awareness of a situation where a brother or sister is in danger or in great need and dismisses the need. It may also apply to situations where one should have known of the need.”⁵¹ Robert L. Alden claims that verse 12 is the Old Testament’s answer to the question “who is my neighbor?” He wrote, “Scripture answers here essentially the way the parable of the good Samaritan did—everyone is my neighbor regardless of how well I know him. I may wish to turn from someone who is in deep trouble, but the Lord will hold me accountable for how I respond.”⁵² Kidner warns that Christians can claim neither a lack of responsibility nor ignorance as a defense for failing to protect the innocent. He writes, “Avoidable responsibility . . . [is a] fair test . . . not unfair, of a man’s mettle. It is a

⁵⁰Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 199.

⁵¹Edward M. Curtis, “Proverbs,” in Cabal, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 953.

⁵²Robert L. Alden, *Proverbs: A Commentary on an Ancient Book of Timeless Advice* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 173-74.

hireling, not the true shepherd, who will plead . . . hopeless tasks . . . and pardonable ignorance . . . ; love is not so lightly quieted—nor is the God of love.”⁵³

There is no excuse for Christians to ignore the practice of abortion. They cannot claim that they did not know about it, that they did not know that it is a sin, that we they did not understand their responsibility to intercede, or that they did not understand that the command to intercede is directed to them. Certainly, not every Christian is called to counsel in a crisis pregnancy center or to stand on the sidewalk in front of an abortion clinic, but all are called to do something to “hold back those staggering toward slaughter.” God knows believers’ hearts and motives. He will hold them responsible.

Platt writes, “Abortion is an affront to God’s authority as Creator, an assault on God’s work in creation, and an attack on God’s relationship with the unborn. . . . Remember God’s character. He is the holy and righteous Judge of all who participate in it.”⁵⁴ Those who participate in abortion include those who abort their own babies, those who promote pro-abortion causes, those professionals who actually perform the medical procedures, and (especially important and relevant for most Evangelical Christians) those who turn a blind eye or deaf ear to the reality of its existence.

Use of Old Testament Passages

The thesis of this chapter has been supported with four separate sections of Scripture. All of the Scripture on which the argument is based comes from the Old Testament. Some may question the applicability of the arguments to our contemporary lives because they are based on Old Testament passages rather than the New Testament. The content of all the passages, though, are timeless in their application to the Christian’s

⁵³Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1964), 154.

⁵⁴Platt, *Counter Culture*, 69.

life. Certainly, the truth that man bears the image of God and holds a special place in God's creation did not change because of Christ's incarnation and sacrifice. Neither is the status of a baby in the womb changed by Christ's first coming. The prohibition of murder is a commandment that Jesus expanded in scope, rather than canceled in application. Similarly, there is nothing associated with the New Testament that would cancel our responsibility to rescue unborn babies that are about to be slaughtered. The Old Testament truths upon which the thesis of this chapter has been supported are as applicable today as they were when they were written.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The Word of God establishes that a baby in the womb is a person, made in the image of God, and as such is not to be killed but protected. Genesis 1:26-29 establishes that man was created in the image of God. Exegesis of these verses reveals the significance that man holds in God's creation. Human life is sacred.

Psalm 139 provides biblical proof that a baby in the womb is a person—just like a baby held in a mother's arms is a person. God formed the baby in the womb, He knows the baby in the womb, He has planned the days of the baby while it is still in the womb, and He owns the baby in the womb. An unborn baby owns the full personhood that any human being owns.

Exodus 20:13 is God's clear commandment that a human being is not to murder another human being. Only God has sovereignty over life and death.

Proverbs 24:11-12 establishes believers' responsibility to rescue those being led to death. Those to be rescued certainly include the babies that are being aborted, but

⁵⁵This project focused on four passages of Scripture to support the thesis, but additional passages are relevant to each truth. For further study on God's creation of man in His image, see Gen 5:1, 5:3, 9:6, Job 31:15, Pss 8:5, 100:3, Isa 45:18, Acts 17:28-29, 1 Cor 11:7, Col 3:10, and Jas 3:9. For further study on the personhood of the unborn baby, see Job 10:10-11, Ps 119:73, Isa 44: 2, 24, 46:3, 49:5, Jer 1:5, Eccl 11:5, and Luke 1:44. For further study on God's prohibition of murder, see Matt 5:21-22 and Rom 13:9. or further study on the Christian's responsibility to protect the unborn, see Ps 82:4.

it also includes their parents as well as others who view abortion as a choice of convenience. People also need to be saved from moral and spiritual death.

Taken together, these four sections of Scripture have much to say about the sin of abortion. Abortion is not a choice that should be made available to a mother. There are certainly arguments that make abortion appear to be a logical and even a moral decision for some. These include the emotional or financial inability of a mother to care for a child, the tragedy of an unwanted child, and the disruptive effects on lifestyle that parenthood can produce. None of these arguments can prevail, however, in the light of the reality that the abortion decision is not one of logic or convenience, but one of life and death for a child. The Bible is clear—human life is sacred; an unborn baby is a human life; humans are prohibited from murdering other humans. Abortion is a sin against God and man.

CHAPTER 3
HISTORIC, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ISSUES
RELATED TO THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

Christians will be better equipped and more motivated to speak and act against abortion if they are more knowledgeable about the issue. This chapter provides information on four aspects of abortion: (1) abortion statistics and a description of the methods used in abortion, (2) the history of abortion, particularly in the United States, (3) scientific information relative to fetal development, (4) and identification of common pro-choice arguments and appropriate pro-life responses.

Abortion Statistics and Methods

An understanding of abortion statistics, as well as the methods used in aborting babies, will illuminate the issue for Christians and focus attention on the problem. The following statistics provide an overall picture of abortion's prevalence in the United States and Kentucky.

Abortion Statistics

Eighteen percent of pregnancies in the United States end in abortion.¹ By age 45, 30 percent of women in the United States will have aborted a child.² The following

¹Sarah Hurtubise, "CDC: 18 Percent of All Pregnancies Now End in Abortion," *The Daily Caller*, accessed February 11, 2017, dailycaller.com/2014/11/28/cdc-18-percent-of-all-pregnancies-now-end-in-abortion/.

²R. K. Jones and J. Jerman, "Abortion Incidence and Service Availability in the United State, 2011," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 46, no. 1 (February 2014): 3-14.

table compares abortion data for the United States with that part of the data represented by Kentucky.³

Table. Abortion statistics

Statistic	United States (%)	Kentucky (%)
Percent of abortions by unmarried women	85.5	86.2
Percent of abortions by women's age		
19 years old and younger	10.7	12.4
20-24 years old	32.2	31.9
25-29 years old	26.7	25.4
30 years old and older	30.4	30.3
Percent of abortions by race		
White	38.0	NA
African-American	36.0	NA
Hispanic	18.3	NA
Other	7.7	NA
Percent of abortions by baby's gestational age		
8 weeks or less	67.0	61.7
9-13 weeks	24.5	27.1
14 weeks or more	8.5	11.2

Note. All data is from 2014; excludes California, Maryland, and New Hampshire

There were 652,639 abortions performed in the United States in 2014.

Compared to the national picture, the incidence of abortion is lower in Kentucky. In 2014, the Kentucky rate of 4.0 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44 compared favorably to the 12.1 rate for the United States, but it still represented 3,442 lost lives.⁴

In summation, abortion is an issue that involves primarily young, single women of diverse ethnicities. Most abortions (91.5 percent in the United States and 88.8

³Tara C. Jatlaoui et al., "Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2014," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed March 13, 2018, https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/ss/ss6624a1.htm?s_cid=ss6624a1_w. See CDC report for method of data retrieval and limitations.

⁴Ibid.

in Kentucky) occur within the first thirteen weeks of pregnancy. The abortion rate in Kentucky is substantially less than that in the total United States.

Abortion Methods

Abortion methods are categorized as either medical or surgical. Medical abortions are performed by administering a combination of drugs that separates the placenta from the wall of the uterus and then causes contractions that expel the dead baby. The drug that causes detachment of the placenta is mifepristone, also known as RU-486. This drug was approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in abortions in 2000. After the placenta is detached, misoprostol is administered which causes the contractions that expel the baby.⁵ The process takes several days. The mifepristone pill is taken orally on the first day and three days later, the misoprostol is administered in the vagina. Cramping and bleeding will then accompany expulsion of the baby.⁶ The Food and Drug Administration's guidelines allow this abortion method to be used within the first nine weeks of pregnancy. In 2014, 32.1 percent of abortions in the United States were medical abortions.⁷

Another medical abortion method involves the injection of methotrexate, a powerful drug used in the treatment of cancer. Methotrexate attacks the tissue that would otherwise become the placenta. Because of the drug's effect, the baby is deprived of food and oxygen and dies. Several days later, another drug is administered to expel the baby from the woman's body.⁸

⁵Brian Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion* (Dallas: Brown Christian Press, 2015), 12-13.

⁶UCSF Medical Center, "Medical versus Surgical Abortion," accessed February 7, 2017, https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/medical_versus_surgical_abortion/.

⁷Jatlaoui et al., "Abortion Surveillance." 1

⁸National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund, "Abortion Techniques," 1, accessed February 7, 2017, www.nrlc.org/uploads/factsheets/

There are numerous methods of surgical abortion. During the first trimester of pregnancy, a method that utilizes suction (known by numerous names) is common.⁹ Depending on how well the baby is developed, this method involves the insertion of a vacuum tube into the cervix and the baby is either torn from the wall of the uterus or is dismembered and sucked out into a collection jar.¹⁰ The suction method is used during the third to fourteenth weeks of pregnancy.

Another common method used later in the first trimester and in the second trimester is Dilation and Curettage (D&C). D&C is a procedure performed to address a number of medical issues including miscarriage and abnormal bleeding caused by growths in the uterus.¹¹ When used to abort a baby, this method involves the abortionist first inserting a curved scoop into the uterus through the dilated cervix. The abortionist then cuts the baby into pieces, scrapes the wall of the uterus, and removes the parts of the baby.¹² In order to prevent infection, a nurse reassembles the baby's parts to make sure no part of the baby's body was left in the uterus.¹³

FS04AbortionTechniques.pdf.

⁹“Suction Aspiration/Vacuum Curettage” in National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund, “Abortion Techniques”; Francis J. Beckwith, “Suction Abortion,” in *Politically Correct Death: Answering Arguments for Abortion Rights* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 46-47; and Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 9; “Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA)” and “Aspiration” in American Pregnancy Association, “Abortion Procedures,” accessed February 7, 2017, <http://americanpregnancy.org/unplanned-pregnancy/abortion-procedures/>; and “Suction Curettage Abortion,” in UCSF Medical Center, “Medical versus Surgical Abortion.”

¹⁰“Suction Aspiration/Vacuum Curettage.” See also Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 9.

¹¹WebMD, “D and C (Dilation and Curettage,” accessed March 13, 2018, <https://www.webmd.com/women/guide/d-and-c-dilation-and-curettage#1>.

¹²National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund, “Abortion Techniques.”

¹³Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death*, 46.

Dilation and Evacuation (D&E) is an abortion method used between the fourteenth and twenty-fifth week of gestation.¹⁴ In D&E, an abortionist inserts forceps into the womb through the dilated cervix and twists and tears the baby's body apart and removes it. Depending on the baby's age, its skull may have to be crushed for it to be removed.¹⁵

Abortion methods used after 20 weeks of pregnancy include "Instillation Methods" (also called "Saline Abortion").¹⁶ Beckwith quotes the description of this method made by former Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, M.D.: "A long needle is inserted through the mother's abdomen directly into the sac, and a solution of concentrated salt is injected into the amniotic fluid. . . . The outer layer of [of the baby's] skin is burned off by the high concentration of salt. It takes about an hour to kill the baby."¹⁷ The mother usually delivers the dead baby a day later. It is thought that babies can feel pain as early as the eighth week of gestation when the baby's neurological development begins; it is even more likely after thirteen and a half weeks when this development is complete.¹⁸

Other abortion methods used after the twentieth week include Labor Induction and Hysterotomy. Labor induction, including Prostaglandin, is similar to an induced delivery of a full-term baby. In prostaglandin abortions, the uterus is caused to contract so vigorously by drugs that babies have been decapitated.¹⁹ Hysterotomies are like

¹⁴Emedicinehealth, "Types of Abortion," accessed February 7, 2017, http://www.emedicinehealth.com/abortion/page4_em.htm#types_of_abortion; and Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 9.

¹⁵National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund, "Abortion Techniques."

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death*, 47.

¹⁸Ibid., 47-48.

¹⁹Ibid., 47.

caesarean sections, except that babies are removed and allowed to die rather than saved.²⁰

One additional abortion technique, Partial Birth Abortion, is now illegal but notable because of its invasive nature. In this method, the baby is delivered except for its head. The abortionist then penetrates the base of the baby's skull with scissors, enlarges the hole, and then sucks the contents of the brain from the baby's skull using a catheter. The baby is then extracted.²¹

History of Abortion

The practice of abortion has a long history.²² This section first analyzes how Christendom has responded to abortion throughout history, and then briefly describes how the practice has evolved in the United States.

History of Abortion and the Christian Church

The first-century church was born in a cultural context that endorsed and practiced not only abortion, but also infanticide, exposure, and abandonment of babies.²³ Recipes for abortifacients have been documented from that time in the cultures of Greece, Persia, China, Egypt, and Arabia.²⁴ Abortion was also prevalent within the Roman Empire and there were no regulations against it.²⁵ Michael J. Gorman writes, "Both Plato

²⁰Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death*, 47. See also National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund, "Abortion Techniques."

²¹Christopher Kaczor, *The Ethics of Abortion: Women's Rights, Human Life, and the Question of Justice* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 51-52.

²²Karen Swallow Prior, "How Should the Christian Live?" in *The Gospel & Abortion*, ed. Russell Moore and Andrew T. Walker (Nashville: B & H, 2017), 48.

²³John Ensor, *Answering the Call: Saving Innocent Lives One Woman at a Time* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012), 84.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Kristin Luker, *Abortion & the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 12.

and Aristotle recommended family limitation by abortion (if necessary), and the declines in population of the Roman Empire at the time of Augustus and again Hadrian were probably due in part to such action by the rich and poor.”²⁶

Although the church was formed by both Jews and gentiles in such an abortion-affirming environment, the part of its heritage from Judaism affirmed life. The Jews loved their children and considered it a religious duty to reproduce.²⁷ Abortion violated those convictions. Jewish opposition to abortion is documented in the *Sibylline Oracles*, a collection of Jewish writings from the first two centuries, as well as in the writings of the Jewish scholar Philo and the Roman historian Tacitus.²⁸ It was from such convictions that early Christians took a counter-cultural stance in opposing abortion.

Numerous documents of the early church denounce abortion. Included in these are the *Didache*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*.²⁹ The writings of early church fathers (Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Athenagoras) also support the sanctity of life.³⁰

In the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, leaders of the church continued to speak out against abortion in their writings. They include Cyprian, Ambrose, Minucius Felix, Jerome, Zeno, Augustine, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom.³¹

²⁶Michael J. Gorman, *Abortion & the Early Church: Christian, Jewish & Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1982), 15.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 34.

²⁸Dennis Di Mauro, *A Love for Life: Christianity's Consistent Protection of the Unborn* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 3-4.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 11.

³⁰See Ensor, *Answering the Call*, 85; and Prior, “How Should the Christian Live?,” 51.

³¹See Di Mauro, *A Love for Life*, 14-18; Gorman, *Abortion & the Early Church*, 58, 66-73; and Ted Byfield and Virginia Byfield, “Christians Argued for Years Over Unborn Life but Today Science Confirms Their Conclusion,” *Alberta Report News Magazine* 25, no. 38 (1998): 34.

Two official councils of the church—the Council of Elvira (AD 305) and the Council of Ancyra (AD 314)—also condemned abortion.³² After the official Christianization of the Roman Empire by Constantine (AD 313), the first laws against abortion were passed.³³ During this period, church opinion began to divide on whether the abortion of an early pregnancy, before the baby is “formed,” is murder. Augustine and Jerome argued that a fetus does not become a human until “quickening,” the time when a mother can feel the baby move in the womb.³⁴

During the Middle Ages (AD 500-1500), church leaders and writers who spoke out against abortion include Caesarius, John the Faster, Ivo, Gratian, Bernard of Pavia, and Thomas Aquinas.³⁵ Aquinas believed that a baby does not receive a soul until after 40 days for boys and 80 days for girls.³⁶ Canon law accepted this view.³⁷ The understanding that life begins somewhere between conception and birth came to be known as “mediate animation.”³⁸

Leaders of the Reformation also defended life. Protestant leaders who wrote against abortion include Calvin and Luther; leaders of the Catholic reformation who affirmed life include Vincent de Paul and Ignatius of Loyola.³⁹ This was the state of

³²See Di Mauro, *A Love for Life*, 14; and Gorman, *Abortion & the Early Church*, 65.

³³Gorman, *Abortion & the Early Church*, 63.

³⁴See Luker, *Abortion & the Politics of Motherhood*, 12-13; Di Mauro, *A Love for Life*, 16; and Byfield and Byfield, “Christians Argued.”

³⁵Di Mauro, *A Love for Life*, 19-22.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 22.

³⁷*Roe v. Wade*, 410 US 113, 134 (1973).

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹See Ensor, *Answering the Call*, 93-95, and Di Mauro, *A Love for Life*, 25.

Christian thought on abortion when America was beginning to be formed through immigration from Europe.

History of Abortion in the United States

The population of America was first governed under common law, the law of England that reflected the decisions of judges.⁴⁰ Under common law, abortion was allowed until the time of quickening.⁴¹ In its decision in *Roe v. Wade*, Justice Blackmun wrote, “The significance of quickening was echoed by later common-law scholars and found its way into the received common law in this country. Whether abortion of a quick fetus was a felony at common law, or even a lesser crime, is still disputed.”⁴² Common law rules continued in America until the nineteenth century.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were no statutes in America that addressed abortion; at the end of the century, every state had passed laws forbidding abortion at any point during gestation.⁴³ What caused this reversal? The primary drivers were medical professionals. Luker refers to this effort by physicians as the first “Right-to-Life” movement in the United States.⁴⁴ The American Medical Association’s Committee on Criminal Abortion encouraged states to pass laws prohibiting abortion, which all states did by 1900.

Despite these new laws, abortions continued to be performed throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In 1934, a White House conference claimed that

⁴⁰Laurence H. Tribe, *Abortion: The Clash of Absolutes* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), 28.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²*Roe v. Wade*, 11.

⁴³Luker, *Abortion & the Politics of Motherhood*, 14-15.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 14.

approximately 700,000 abortions were being performed each year.⁴⁵ Because women were needed to work in factories, the government looked the other way during World War II when women openly sought and had abortions.⁴⁶

The mid and latter parts of the twentieth century saw a confluence of factors that culminated in the legalization of abortion. Among these factors were the sexual revolution of the 1960s, the birth of Planned Parenthood, the splintering of thought on abortion among medical professionals, new concern for social and psychiatric considerations relative to abortion, the feminist movement, a new emphasis on personal rights (that excluded the rights of babies in the womb), and the growth of liberalism.⁴⁷ As Karen Pryor writes, “Abortion as we know it—rampant, legalized abortion-on-demand—has existed [in the United States] for just two generations.”⁴⁸

Science and Fetal Development

What does science contribute to the conversation—particularly, can science answer the question of when life begins? Unfortunately, the answer is no. Science can reveal much about how human life comes about but judgements about when that life begins are influenced by the worldview, presuppositions, and political agenda of the judge. The question is fertile ground for arguments based on personal moral beliefs clothed in strategic semantics.

⁴⁵Albert Mohler, “Planned Parenthood: 100 Years of Searing the American Conscience on Abortion,” *The Briefing*, October 17, 2016, accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2016/10/17/briefing-10-17-16/>.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid. See also Luker, *Abortion & the Politics of Motherhood*, 40-56; *Roe v. Wade*, 16; and Tribe, *Abortion*, 36.

⁴⁸Prior, “How Should the Christian Live?,” 47.

Science of Fetal Development

The 40-week human gestation period is commonly divided into the first, second, and third trimesters of pregnancy.⁴⁹ Development of life from zygote, to blastocyst, to embryo, to fetus occurs during the first trimester. The second and third trimesters involve the growth and development of structures established within the first trimester.⁵⁰

The physical events involved in the creation of human life begin before fertilization. Males produce 1,000 sperm every second (100 million each day) in preparation for fertilization of a female egg. Most of these sperm die before or during the arduous journey to the female's fallopian tubes where fertilization takes place.⁵¹ A female's egg cells are present before the female is born. During each menstrual cycle, one egg is released from the ovary.⁵² The female's egg cell is called an oocyte or ovum.⁵³ In the fallopian tube, only one of the male's sperm fertilizes the ovum by penetrating the ovum's outer covering. The head of the sperm is held in place by the ovum while a hole is created in the ovum that allows the sperm and egg to fuse.⁵⁴ The product of this fusion or fertilization is a one celled zygote.⁵⁵ The zygote combines 23 chromosomes from the

⁴⁹The first trimester covers the first twelve weeks of pregnancy, the second trimester covers weeks 13 through 27, and the third trimester covers week 28 through birth. WebMD, "Pregnancy—Baby Development," accessed February 16, 2017, www.webmd.com/baby/tc/pregnancy-your-first-trimester#1.

⁵⁰Keith L. Moore and T. V. N. Persaud, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*, 7th ed. (Philadelphia: The Curtis Center, 2003), 7.

⁵¹D. S. Plyler, *No One Else Like You* (n.p.: D. S. Plyer, 2014).

⁵²John L. Merritt and J. Lawrence Merritt, II, *When Does Human Life Begin?* 3rd ed. (Kenmore, WA: Crystal Clear Books, 2012), 35.

⁵³Moore and Persaud, *The Developing Human*, 16.

⁵⁴Plyler, *No One Else Like You*.

⁵⁵Moore and Persaud, *The Developing Human*, 16.

female with 23 from the male to form a new unique person.⁵⁶

As the zygote divides, it moves into the uterus and becomes a blastocyst. The blastocyst attaches to the wall of the uterus, a process called implantation. The time between fertilization and the beginning of implantation is six days.⁵⁷ Completion of implantation takes a couple of days. By the eighth day, the blastocyst, which is now called an embryo, begins receiving a flow of blood from the mother that provides nutrients and oxygen.⁵⁸

During the second week, the embryo begins to form.⁵⁹ During the third week, the early processes that provide the space for the skeleton and central nervous system take place. Blood vessels, the heart, and the thyroid gland also begin to form.⁶⁰ By the end of the fourth week, the whole embryo, though still very small, is present. It has organs, a digestive tract, and a developing head including eyes, ears, and mouth.⁶¹ The heart has formed all four chambers and has begun to beat.⁶²

During the fifth and sixth weeks, the head and limbs continue to develop.⁶³ The cerebral hemispheres of the brain appear after four and a half weeks, and the embryo responds to touch after five and a half weeks.⁶⁴ In the seventh week, the eyelids, ears,

⁵⁶Plyler, *No One Else Like You*.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Merritt and Merritt, *When Does Human Life Begin?*, 36-37.

⁵⁹Ibid., 56.

⁶⁰Ibid., 5, 72-75.

⁶¹Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death*, 44.

⁶²Moore and Persaud, *The Developing Human*, 5; and Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 6.

⁶³Moore and Persaud, *The Developing Human*, 5

⁶⁴Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 6.

wrists, and fingers develop and the bones of the jaw and collarbone harden; in the eighth week, genitalia, elbows, and knees appear and the kidneys begin to produce urine.⁶⁵

Brian Fisher writes, “Experts estimate the 8-week-old embryo possesses approximately 90 percent of the 4,500 body parts found in adults. . . . Incredibly, this highly complex 8-week embryo weighs about one-tenth of an ounce and measures slightly less than 1¼ inches from head to rump.”⁶⁶

The end of the eighth week is the end of the embryonic period and the beginning of the fetal period—the baby is now called a fetus.⁶⁷ During the ninth and tenth weeks, the fetus’ genitalia and facial features continue to develop.⁶⁸ The head moves back and forth, the jaws open and close, fingerprints form, and the fetus sighs, stretches, yawns, and sucks its thumb.⁶⁹ In the final two weeks of the first trimester, the fetus’ lips, nose, and arms are completely formed, and taste buds are in place.⁷⁰

Science and When Life Begins

Again, science can reveal (to a point) what physically happens inside the female body to produce life, but it cannot establish objectively when that life begins. That determination is made by the one who observes the process. Tommy Mitchell, a physician concludes,

Even though the names arbitrarily change throughout this process and certain milestones in development are evident, the process set in motion at the moment of conception is a continuous chain of events. In this sequence, groups of cells multiply

⁶⁵Moore and Persaud, *The Developing Human*, 6; and Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 7.

⁶⁶Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 7.

⁶⁷Moore and Persaud, *The Developing Human*, 7.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁹Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 7-8.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 8.

and develop into specific body parts with amazing precision and a remarkably low rate of error, considering the complexity of changes that must occur. *However, at no time in this process is there a scientific point at which the developing individual clearly “becomes a person,”* any more than a baby becomes more human when it walks, talks, or is weaned. These milestones in zygote, blastocyst, embryonic, and fetal development are simply descriptions of anatomy, not hurdles met in the test of humanness. From a scientific point of view, the words are arbitrary and purely descriptive.⁷¹

So, if science cannot determine when life begins, is it irrelevant to the issue of abortion? Of course not. Not only does understanding the process by which babies are born help people in making their personal decisions about when life begins, it also helps them evaluate the opinions of others. Elements of our culture have defined the beginning of life to be at numerous points along the continuum including conception, implantation, quickening (when the mother can feel the baby move), viability (20-26 weeks), the end of the first and second trimesters, birth, and even after birth.

Those who consider conception to be the beginning of life see the fertilization of the egg and the resulting production of a brand new genetic entity with its own unique DNA as persuasive. Edwin C. Hui identifies several genetic arguments that support conception as the beginning of life: (1) the genetic uniqueness of the zygote, (2) the continuity of the unchanged genetics in the individual from zygote to full grown adult, and (3) the zygote’s ability to self-develop given normal growth and birthing processes.⁷²

Some people believe life begins when the fertilized egg is implanted in the uterine wall. Physicians John L. Merritt and J. Lawrence Merritt argue that until that time, genetic imprinting (how genes in the zygote from the mother and father are finalized) is

⁷¹Tommy Mitchell, “When Does Life Begin?” *Answers in Genesis*, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab2/when-does-life-begin&vPrint=1>, emphasis added.

⁷²Edwin C. Hui, *At the Beginning of Life: Dilemmas in Theological Bioethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 60-61.

still going on and the genetic identity of the zygote is not established until the time the blastocyst is implanted in the uterus.⁷³

Another view is that life does not begin until viability—when the baby can survive outside the womb. This is the position reflected by the United States Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*.⁷⁴

Still others deny that life exists until a baby is born. The director of the only abortion clinic currently operating in Louisville opined, “God put his *breath* into Adam, and that’s what gave him life. Fetuses don’t have lungs. I like to think the soul isn’t there yet, that it comes when we take that first breath.”⁷⁵

Given the diversity of opinions based on the facts of science, what can be gleaned from this information? Life begins as early as conception, as late as birth, or at some point in between. Science cannot establish when that beginning point is.

Having learned more about abortion from biblical, historical, and scientific perspectives, how can one use this information to help answer pro-choice arguments? The following section suggests how pro-life advocates can respond effectively to these challenges.

Pro-Choice Arguments and Pro-Life Responses

When people take pro-life stances in our culture, they can expect to be challenged. Randy Alcorn has identified 39 specific pro-abortion arguments.⁷⁶ It is prudent that pro-life advocates are prepared to answer these challenges. Advance

⁷³Merritt and Merritt, *When Does Human Life Begin?*, 42.

⁷⁴*Roe v. Wade*, 164-65.

⁷⁵Josh Moss, “Salvation,” *Louisville Magazine*, March 2014, 53.

⁷⁶Randy Alcorn, *Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2000), 7-22.

preparation will give pro-life advocates confidence in defending their views and allow them to be more effective in communicating their beliefs.

Space limitations preclude an exhaustive examination of all the many arguments that may be faced. Fortunately, there are many excellent resources to help the pro-life advocate to prepare responses. Any of the resources cited in this section can be accessed for assistance. Three arguments have been chosen, those that I have encountered most in my experience working for a pro-life crisis pregnancy center.⁷⁷ There are two strategies that can be used to simplify many of the discussions.

Strategies for Simplifying Abortion Discussions

Many arguments from pro-abortion advocates are not arguments supporting abortion but emotional arguments attacking pro-life advocates. These are called *ad hominem* arguments. *Ad hominem* means “to attack the man.”⁷⁸ Instead of attacking a person’s views, the pro-abortion advocate attacks the motives, behavior, or character of the person holding those views.

Beckwith explains why *ad hominem* arguments are unacceptable: “This [*ad hominem*] is a bad form of reasoning because it ultimately does not refute the person’s argument. . . . The only time an *ad hominem* argument is not a bad form of reasoning is when a person’s credibility in a relevant area is important in ascertaining the truth, such as in the case of expert or eyewitness testimony in a criminal trial.” People can simplify many of these encounters by not allowing themselves to be distracted by *ad hominem* arguments. Establish the irrelevancy of these assertions and bring the discussion back to

⁷⁷Between January 2013, and March 2017, I served as the Community Outreach Coordinator for BsideU for Life, a crisis pregnancy center in Louisville, KY. During my time there I often served in the parking lot of the center, located next to an abortion clinic, inviting women on their way to get an abortion to, instead, come into our center to talk to a counselor about the options available to them.

⁷⁸Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death*, 87.

the core issues. The task is to respond to pro-abortion arguments—not to defend pro-lifers.

The most important insight in simplifying discussions and responding to the arguments of abortion advocates is understanding that most of these arguments can be defused by answering one basic question: “What is it in the womb?” The answer, as is evident from the cumulative examinations of Scripture (chapter 2), history (chapter 3), and science (chapter 3) is “It is a baby.” The importance of combatting pro-abortion arguments with this truth has been recognized by many pro-life authors.⁷⁹ David Platt writes,

The key question that we all must answer—and the question that determines how we view abortion—is this: What is contained in the womb? Is it a person? Or is it merely an embryo, a fetus? Virtually every other question and every single argument in the abortion controversy comes back to this question: What, or who, is in the womb? And once this question is answered, everything else comes into perspective.⁸⁰

Certainly, many pro-abortion advocates will disagree that the baby in the womb is a baby but focusing the discussion on this key question will avoid extraneous arguments that, on their face, sound reasonable but when clarified by this key question fall apart. Following is a demonstration. A pro-abortion advocate may say, “Many women cannot afford to have a baby.” A response, assuming the contents of the womb is a baby, might be, “If the woman had a one-year old and decided she could not afford to have a baby, would it be okay for her to kill her child?” Most would agree that it is not. This line of reasoning may be used to clarify, simplify, and dismiss numerous arguments involving the circumstances of the parents, the nature of the pregnancy (rape, incest,

⁷⁹See John Ensor and Scott Klusendorf, *Stand for Life: A Student’s Guide for Making the Case and Saving Lives* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012), 21; Scott Klusendorf, *The Case for Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 22; Gregory Koukl, *Precious Unborn Human Persons: Only One Question* (Signal Hill, CA: Stand to Reason Press, 1999), 1; and David Platt, *Counter Culture* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House), 2015.

⁸⁰Platt, *Counter Culture*, 63.

potential handicaps the baby may have), fairness, and rights. The strategy, of course, focuses the discussion on whether the baby in the womb is, in fact, a baby. Defense for that key question can be gleaned from examination of Scripture, history, and science. The pro-abortion advocate will still likely not be convinced, but at least the argument will be focused on the right question.

Three Common Pro-Abortion Arguments and Responses

The following three pro-abortion arguments are among those most frequently made. Responses are suggested in an abbreviated form, highlighting the essential elements of the response. Again, additional information is available in any of the sources cited for each question.

The first argument is women have the right to control their own bodies. A woman has rights to control her own body, but those rights are not absolute. Under the law, a woman does not have the right to publicly expose herself, to prostitute herself, or to abuse her body with illegal drugs.⁸¹ Although most generally agree with these laws, their result is a limitation of a woman's freedom to control her own body.⁸²

A woman's right to control her body does not extend to a right to deny life to her baby. The baby's life is separate from the mother's. The baby in the womb depends on the mother's body for life, but it is a separate person. This pro-abortion argument begs an answer to the key question discussed above about what is in the womb. If the baby is an individual person, the mother's rights to control her own body are trumped by the right of the baby to life.

⁸¹Alcorn, *Pro Life Answers*, 114.

⁸²*Ibid.*

All people have moral obligations to others—this is especially true for a mother’s obligation to protect the life of her unborn child. Assuming the unborn child is a person, the mother’s moral obligation is the same as if the baby was a toddler.⁸³

The second argument is you shouldn’t try to force your views on others. This argument is grounded in the worldview of moral relativism that is popular in our contemporary culture. Scott Klusendorf observes that “relativism, in its most basic form, says there are no objective moral standards, only personal preferences.”⁸⁴ If your standards do not match mine, you have no right to impose your standards on me. The Christian worldview says that there is moral right and wrong and it can be found in Scripture.

Defending a point of view and trying to convince another of its worthiness is not the same as forcing one’s views on another. This pro-abortion argument could easily be turned around to accuse pro-abortionists of trying to force their views on pro-life advocates. The question is what is right and what is wrong—on such questions, there will always be divergent views.

Even if a pro-life view was forced on others, it is not always wrong to force others to act in a way consistent with the prevailing standards of morality. Beckwith notes that our society has imposed laws on its members against “drunk driving, murdering, smoking crack, robbery, and child molestation . . . [with the intent to] impose a particular moral perspective on the free moral agency of others.”⁸⁵

The third argument is the denial of abortion rights is unfair to the poor and minorities. This argument reflects recognition that some segments of our society are less prepared financially and materially to care for children and that certain groups of

⁸³Klusendorf, *The Case for Life*, 200.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 161.

⁸⁵Francis J. Beckwith, *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case against Abortion Choice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 118.

minorities have a higher incidence rate of abortion than the larger population. The unavailability of abortion would certainly have consequences for the poor and these minorities. But those consequences, though significant, are subordinate to the preservation of life. Consequences can be addressed separately after a child is born, but once a child is aborted, that life is lost.

Beckwith clarifies how the question of what is in the womb makes this argument of secondary importance:

This argument is fallacious. For it *assumes* that legal abortion is a *moral good* that poor women will be denied if abortion is made illegal. . . . We would consider it bizarre if someone argued that the hiring of hit men to kill one's enemies should be legalized, because, after all, the poor do not have easy economic access to such professionals. In the abortion debate the question of whether abortion entails the death of a being who is fully human must be answered before the question of fairness is even asked.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Abortion is a common practice in our culture. The methods used to abort babies include non-invasive medical procedures as well invasive surgical procedures. Abortion has a long history, but the Christian church, with some differences of opinion concerning when life begins, has been largely unified in its opposition to abortion until the last century. The United States has a history of time periods when abortion was both allowed and disallowed under the law. Science cannot determine when life begins, but it can reveal much about the process of fetal development. Pro-life advocates must be ready to answer pro-choice arguments.

⁸⁶Beckwith, *Defending Life*, 96.

CHAPTER 4
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE PROJECT

This chapter consists of three sections: the first section documents how the general idea for this project was transformed into a specific plan for development, the second describes how the plan was implemented, and the third provides an evaluation of the results.

Project Planning

After defining the context and rationale for the project (see chapter 1), logistics for the project's implementation were developed, the content of the seminar's instruction was composed, and the content's quality was evaluated.

Project Logistics

Included in project logistics are planning for its implementation, promoting the event, and recruiting participants for the seminar. The seminar was designed to be used in the local church, so my home church was the logical place for it to be offered. I belong to Sojourn Community Church (Sojourn) in Louisville. The congregation of the Midtown campus, where I worship, is made up primarily of young people in their 20s and 30s. This site was the perfect forum for introducing younger generations to the issue of abortion and to accomplish the objectives—educate and motivate them.

Permission was requested to conduct the project in the form of an email to the lead pastor, Jamaal Williams, in February 2016. The request included an overview of the project including its objective, rationale, a preliminary summary of the project's content, an explanation of what was needed from Sojourn, and an estimated date of early 2017 for

implementation. Jamaal Williams responded with approval of the project within two weeks. In his response, Jamaal Williams mentioned that he and Luke Skeen, Associate Pastor at the Midtown campus, had discussed the need to include the word “justice” in the title. The promotion of justice for all is a focal point of the church’s ministry. Including the word “justice” in the title would be appealing and attractive to Sojourn’s members. Jamaal Williams also suggested consideration of covering the entire content in one or two days instead of a series of one-hour presentations for six-eight weeks. The concern was that it would be difficult to secure commitments from participants to attend a session each week for six to eight weeks.

At that point, there had not been much effort expended in naming the seminar—the name of the project submitted to the seminary was “Equipping Christians Through Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky to Defend the Sanctity of Life”; it was assumed the name provided to the church would be something like “Abortion and the Local Church.”

Having the site secured, attention was focused on writing the second and third chapters of the project over the remaining months of 2016 and the first five months of 2017. The projected timetable had proven to be too ambitious; it was recalibrated to plan and develop the content of the seminar in the summer of 2017 and to implement it in the fall of 2017.

Since the project included using human subjects in research as participants, the first task was to receive the Seminary Ethics Committee’s approval. In June 2017, the required information was submitted for the committee to evaluate—a statement of the project’s purpose, goals, research methodology, and limitations/delimitations, along with a copy of the survey that would be used to evaluate how effective the seminar had been in achieving its objectives. The committee gave its approval in July 2017.

Later that month, a meeting with Clif Roth, Pastor of Groups at the Midtown campus, was held to discuss the format and timing of the seminar. The tentative format

was a series of eight one-hour meetings (which could be grouped into a fewer number of days) in which the content of the course would be presented in lecture-type presentations and then questions from the participants would be fielded. In the first session, a survey that would identify the participants' knowledge of abortion and their positions on the issue would be administered; in the final session, the same survey would be re-administered, the results compared, and whether there had been a change in the participants' knowledge and attitudes due to their participation in the seminar would be evaluated. Clif Roth suggested that the seminar meetings be scheduled on Sunday mornings or Sunday evenings so that the church could offer childcare to participants. The fall of 2017 continued to be the target for implementation. With Jamaal Williams' earlier suggestion to include the word "justice" in the title in mind, the seminar was entitled "Justice for the Unborn: Understanding Abortion and How to Care for Those Affected (Justice for the Unborn)."

The meeting with Clif Roth was followed by an email to Jamaal Williams, Luke Skeen, and Clif Roth that summarized our discussion and requested a meeting with Jamaal Williams and Luke Skeen to finalize details. The meeting with Jamaal Williams and Luke Skeen took place in mid-September. Agreement was reached that the seminar would be presented in three two-hour meetings, from 5:30 pm until 7:30 pm, on three consecutive Sunday evenings, October 8th, 15th, and the 22nd. Since this was a deviation from the plan that had been discussed with Shane Parker, my supervisor for the project, his approval for repackaging the eight one-hour presentations into three two-hour sessions was requested and received.¹ Although the change in format required repackaging the seminar's content, it was welcomed because it would require less of a commitment for participants, making the seminar more attractive, and the entire seminar

¹Throughout the project, Shane Parker was updated on progress. In 2017, updates were provided on June 12, August 22, August 23, September 2, September 14, and November 6.

would be completed in just three weeks.

In the July 2017 meeting with Clif Roth, discussions began on how the seminar would be promoted to Sojourn members. Promotion was very important because a minimum of 25 participants had been targeted to ensure a statistically significant evaluation of the seminar's effectiveness. Each of these participants would be required to attend each session to be included in the sample for evaluation. Determination of a specific plan for promotion was left to Sojourn's staff so they could meld it into the church's established communication plan (which can include Facebook posts, bulletin inserts, posters, announcements from the pulpit, or videos.)

On September 24th and October 1st, Sojourn included an insert in its bulletins that announced Sunday classes on several topics; one was the seminar, "Justice for the Unborn." Clif Roth followed up the insert by promoting the seminar on Facebook on September 26th, October 4th, and October 8th. By the time promotion began, arrangements had been made for some of the seminar's content to be presented by subject-matter experts on some of the topics. On September 26th and September 30th, emails were sent to Luke Skeen asking how these experts' participation could be included in our promotion, but the bulletin insert (the primary means of promotion) had already been printed and distributed to the congregation. It was too late.

The response from Sojourn members was disappointing. Between September 24th, the date of the first bulletin inserts, and October 8th, the date of the first session, only three Sojourn members registered via the church's online registration system. None of the three ever attended a single session. Members of the Sojourn staff recommended that the director of a local missions organization be contacted to promote the seminar among those in his organization. The request was made but none of them registered. Because of the poor response, permission was received from Shane Parker to invite others to participate. By the first session on October 8, 20 people had committed to participate for all three weeks. Shane Parker agreed that 20 would be a sufficient number of

participants to ensure the statistical significance of the results.

Content Preparation and Evaluation

Through my experience working with churches and pastors as the Community Outreach Coordinator for BsideU for Life, I had already decided by the summer of 2017 to include several topics in the project. Among these were statistics descriptive of the scope and frequency of abortions, description of specific abortion techniques, and guidance on how to respond to pro-choice arguments. The primary desire, though, was to examine abortion from several different perspectives—the Bible, history, and science. These three perspectives are reflected in the approach to the subject taken by R. C. Sproul where he asks (1) “How Sacred is Human Life?” (the Bible), (2) “What is the Relationship of Church and State?” (history), and (3) “When Does Life Begin?” (science).²

By the time writing had begun on the content of the sessions in July 2017, several topics had been determined for each of the eight one-hour sessions. Following is a one-paragraph summary of each session’s planned content. At the end of each session, participants were to be asked to evaluate how the material covered helped answer the question, “Is it a baby in the womb?”

Session 1: “Introduction:” In the first session, the purpose for the seminar will be identified and an overview of what will be presented in each of the eight sessions will be provided. Before presenting the content for this first session, the survey will be administered to all participants. The presentation will have two parts: abortion statistics and abortion methods. Abortion statistics for both Kentucky and the United States will be provided to impress on the participants the frequency with which babies are aborted. Methods used to abort babies will be described to assure the participants are aware of the horror and violence involved in the procedure.

Session 2: “What Does the Bible Say?” This session will include exposition

²R. C. Sproul, *Abortion*, CD (n.p.: Ligonier Ministries, 1989).

and application of four sections of Scripture. Together, they establish that life is sacred, and that abortion should be opposed by Christians. Genesis 1:26-29 states that man is made in God's image. Man is unique and human life is sacred. Psalm 139:13-16 reveals that God already knows babies while they are still in the womb. Exodus 20:13 prohibits the taking of human life, and Proverbs 24:11-12 dictates that Christians are to rescue those being killed. Christians are commanded to protect life.

Session 3: "What Does History Say?" The history of abortion in both the church and in the United States will be reviewed. From its inception, the church has valued life and opposed abortion. Church fathers in the early church, the Middle ages, and the Reformation write in opposition to the practice. Augustine and Jerome, however, argued that the fetus does not become human until the time of "quickening"—when the mother can feel the baby move in the womb. Thomas Aquinas believed that babies do not receive their souls until 40 days after conception for boys and 80 days for girls. Canon law adopted Aquinas' views.

The population of the United States was first subject to common law, the law of England that reflects judges' decisions. Under common law, abortion was allowed before the time of quickening. It is unclear whether abortion after quickening was considered a crime under common law. After much prodding from the American Medical Association, every state had a law prohibiting abortion by the year 1900. Due largely to the effects of the sexual revolution of the 1960s, the birth of Planned Parenthood, feminism, the changed positions of many medical professionals, and the growth of liberalism, public opinion relative to abortion changed in the latter half of the twentieth century. In 1973, the United States Supreme Court effectively legalized abortion in its *Roe v. Wade* decision.³ Since 1973, state laws have whittled away at the effectiveness of the Court's decision; the courts have responded by striking down some

³*Roe v. Wade*, 410 US 113, 134 (1973).

of these laws leaving some state laws in jeopardy.

Christianity has always opposed abortion, but the definition of what a baby is has been debated in the church. The United States has a history of both legal and illegal abortion.

Session 4: “What Does Science Say?” In this session the inability of science to determine when life begins will be highlighted. The process of fetal development from the time before conception through birth will first be discussed. How science has been used to support different times during fetal development as the time when life begins will then be reviewed. These include conception, implantation, quickening, viability, end of trimesters, and birth. The intent for this session is to establish that science cannot determine when life begins, educate about the process of fetal development, and identify various points in the process of fetal development that people have accepted as the point when life begins.

Session 5: “Answering Pro-Choice Arguments” Those who support the sanctity of life will be challenged by those who are pro-choice; they need to be prepared to answer those arguments. This session identifies five pro-choice arguments that I heard most often when I was employed by BsideU for Life and suggests appropriate responses to each.

Session 6: “Abortion and the African-American Community” Abortion has been a tool for racists to control or reduce the growth of the African-American population. Efforts to control African-American growth began in the nineteenth century with colonization, sending African-Americans back to their countries of origin. It soon became clear that colonization was too costly and unpopular. Eugenics became the tool of a small white elitist group seeking to control African-American growth. The twentieth century saw sterilization, birth control, and abortion as weapons trained on African-Americans. For every year between 1973 and at least 2007, abortion has been the leading cause of death among African-Americans, exceeding the sum of lives lost to the

next ten causes of death.

Session 7: “Effects of Abortion and Your Sphere of Personal Involvement”

The first part of this session will review the conflicting conclusions pro-life and pro-choice advocates reach based on the research of how abortion affects the physical and mental health of mothers who abort. The second part will identify opportunities for individuals to support life in their personal lives, in their relationships with pro-life organizations, and in their relationships with their churches.

Session 8: “Conclusion:” In the last session, the content of the first seven sessions will be summarized. The question will be asked “Is it a baby in the womb?” and participants will be encouraged to make decisions based on the covered material. To those who answer “Yes! It is a baby in the womb!” an additional question will be asked: “What is God calling me to do?” Each participant will then be asked to fill out the same survey they filled out in the first session. Results of the two surveys will show whether there has been a significant change in knowledge and attitudes toward abortion because of the seminar.

The content of sessions 1 and 2 was written in July 2017; sessions 3, 4, 5 and 6 in August; and sections 7 and 8 in September. After each session’s content was written, it was submitted to members of the curriculum evaluation team for evaluation. Three people had earlier agreed to serve on this team. They were Monica Henderson, Executive Director of BsideU for Life; Grady Throneberry, a friend and staff member at a local church; and Jamaal Williams.

In addition to the curriculum evaluation team, the content of session 2 was submitted to Clif Roth, and the content of session 4 was submitted to Jimmy Tipton. As the content was written, the decision was made to ask Clif Roth to present session 2 (“What Does the Bible Say?”), Jimmy Tipton to present session 4 (“What does Science Say?”), and Jamaal Williams to present session 6 (“Abortion and the African-American Community.”) The addition of these three added variety to the seminar; it enlisted the

participation of three subject-matter experts in the project; and it made the seminar more attractive to the congregation of young people at Sojourn because each of the three presenters are in their 30s. It was desired that each of the three approve the content of the sessions they would present.

Feedback was received from the curriculum evaluators and presenters over the months of August, September, and early October. Each used the same “Curriculum Evaluation Tool” recommended by the Seminary that had been adopted for the project. The evaluation tool asks the evaluator to assign a grade of “insufficient,” “requires attention,” “sufficient,” or “exemplary” to questions addressing the biblical faithfulness, content, clarity, scope, and methodology of the project’s content. Collectively, the three members of the curriculum evaluation team assigned the following grades to the content of the eight sessions: 1 “Insufficient,” 17 “Requires Attention,” 44 “Sufficient,” and 145 “Exemplary.” Comments made for each of the “Insufficient” and “Requires Attention” grades were evaluated and prudent changes in the content were made. All grades assigned by the presenters were all “Sufficient” or “Exemplary.”

The decision to offer the seminar in three two-hour sessions had been made in September. This decision necessitated condensation of the eight one-hour sessions into three two-hour sessions. The curriculum was rewritten, with appropriate transitions and introductions, in late September, and sent to the three new presenters. In the new format, there would be one presenter each week who would present part of the material while I presented the rest. The revised sessions include the following material:

In the first session, the purpose of the seminar will be identified and an overview of the three sessions will be provided. The material on abortion statistics and abortion methods will then be presented. Clif Roth will follow with a presentation of what the Bible says about abortion.

Jamaal Williams will begin session 2 with a presentation addressing abortion and the African-American community. Presentations on the effects of abortion and

abortion from an historical perspective will follow.

In the third session, Jimmy Tipton will talk about fetal development and explain why science cannot tell us when life begins. The seminar will conclude with presentations on how to respond to pro-choice arguments and how to support life in one's personal life, one's relationship with pro-life organizations, and one's relationship with his or her church. A summary of what was covered in the three-week seminar will be presented. Re-administration of the survey will conclude the seminar.

Implementation

Implementation included administering the survey twice and presenting the seminar's content. In the following sections, how the survey was designed and administered will be explained, and then the three sessions in which the content was presented will be summarized.

Survey Design and Administration

The survey to be administered to participants before and after the seminar was designed in July 2016 under the supervision of Miguel Echevarria at SBTS. The survey consists of 27 statements that relate to the content of the seminar. For each of nine subjects or assertions relative to abortion, there are three statements designed to assess the level of knowledge or the opinion of the respondent. The subjects addressed are stages of fetal development and abortion methods, history of abortion in the United States, scientific support for life at conception, answering pro-choice arguments, and options for involvement in pro-life activities. Each of the assertions address one of the four points made in the session on what the Bible says about the sanctity of life. They are, "Man is made in God's image," "The baby in the womb is a person," "Man is forbidden to kill," and "Christians are called to defend the defenseless." The survey also contains a section entitled "Agreement to Participate" in which the purpose for the survey is explained, confidentiality of responses is assured, and participants' freedom to

withdraw from the research project is affirmed. Each respondent is asked to provide the date on which he or she completed the survey and to identify his or her gender and age.

The survey provides a Likert scale from which to choose responses.

Respondents are asked to choose one of six responses for each of the 27 statements in the survey: “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” “Disagree Somewhat,” “Agree Somewhat,” “Agree,” and “Strongly Agree.”.

Administration of the survey was simple and straightforward. The pre-seminar survey was distributed to those in attendance at the first session, they were then asked to complete it, and ample time was provided for them to do so. For those not physically present for the first session, the survey was provided and collected via email or in person. In all cases, the respondents were asked to identify themselves in the upper right-hand corner of the survey’s first page so that their pre-seminar responses could be matched with their post-seminar responses. Identification could be in the form of their names, or if respondents were concerned about confidentiality, they could enter numbers, symbols, or letters—anything they could remember so they could enter the same code on the post-seminar survey. Administration of the post-seminar survey at the end of the third session mirrored the administration of its pre-seminar counterpart.

Class Delivery

The seminar’s content was presented in a conference room at the church. Although crowded for the number of people present, the room was adequate for our purposes.

Early in the planning process, it was recognized that there would likely be participants in the study who would not be able to attend some, or any, of the sessions. Attendance at all sessions was a must for participants to be included in the sample for statistical evaluation. To alleviate this problem, a decision was made to post video recordings of the sessions online so participants who missed sessions could watch them.

During Thanksgiving dinner at my son's home in 2016, I explained the project to those present and noted the need to post videos online. To my surprise and delight, my daughter-in-law's brother, Drake Hatfield, a professional in designing and constructing web sites, enthusiastically volunteered to create a web site and post the videos. In August 2017, he was contacted and the process of establishing the web site began. The vision for the site and what it needed to provide were communicated, and he designed it. In September, he reserved the address for the site, "Drjimtipton.com." A head shot picture of me, a biographical sketch, the purpose of the seminar, and a schedule of the sessions were provided. The web site was made available online on October 6th, two days before the first session. In addition to creating the web site, Drake Hatfield also volunteered to record the sessions himself, and post them on the site by the Tuesday following each Sunday session.

As he developed the site, modifications were requested. In early October, a place where comments could be recorded was requested, and on October 11th, addition of a bibliography was requested so that participants would have a ready list of sources should they wish to study an issue further. The section for comments was never established, but he added the bibliography on October 16th.

Creation of the web site proved to be invaluable for completion of the project. Three of the twenty participants were unable to attend any of the sessions. Several others missed individual sessions. Because of the web site, these participants were able to watch the missed sessions online and participate in the project.

Following is a summary of the three sessions of the seminar:

Session 1, October 8, 2017: In this first session, participants were welcomed, thanked for their participation in the study, and the purpose for the seminar was explained. After the pre-seminar survey was administered, abortion statistics and an explanation of abortion methods were presented. One question voiced relative to abortion statistics provided an opportunity to highlight the higher abortion rate among African-Americans

compared to the rate for whites. Responses to the description of abortion methods were predictable—disgust and sadness, along with a little anger. One participant expressed disappointment that the drug used to combat her cancer, methotrexate, is also used to take life in medical abortions. After a short break, Clif Roth presented a study of what the Bible says about the sanctity of life, using a handout to guide the presentation of material and discussion. An interesting question asked by one participant—“If life is sacred, how can we support capital punishment?”—provided an opportunity for meaningful discussion. Several participants complimented the content and presentation of the information and said they had learned new things about abortion.

Logistically, the first session was a challenge. Drake Hatfield had forgotten that October 8th was the date of the first session and was about a half hour late in arriving to film the presentation. Clif Roth recorded the part of the presentation that Drake Hatfield missed on his computer. Although this recording was of poorer quality than that recorded later by Drake Hatfield, it was adequate for the purpose intended, and he posted both recordings on the web site in the following week. Sixteen participants attended the first session in person, but as noted earlier, none were members of Sojourn.

Session 2, October 15, 2017: The second session began with Jamaal Williams’ presentation on how abortion has affected the African-American community. Participants asked several questions after Jamaal Williams finished: “Why haven’t the African-American churches jumped on this issue?” and “Is the abortion rate in the African-American community due to socio-economic conditions or to spiritual problems?” These questions sparked helpful discussion and clarification. In the second hour, the history of abortion both within the church and within the United States was presented. In response to the statement that the Southern Baptist Convention was slow in condemning the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, one participant noted that the Convention was controlled by liberals at that time—the Convention is now controlled by conservatives and is firmly anti-abortion. This explanation for the Convention’s curious response to the court’s decision

was insightful and relevant. Thirteen participants attended the second session. Positive feedback was again received from several participants. Drake Hatfield posted the video of the presentations on the web site by the Tuesday following the session.

Session 3, October 22, 2017: Thirteen participants attended the third and final session of the seminar. The evening began with a presentation by Jimmy Tipton on fetal development and science's inability to determine when life begins. Following the presentation, there was a spirited discussion within the group on different viewpoints of when life begins. One opinion stood out—a grandfather (and close friend) in the group explained that his grandchildren had been born using invitro technology. Several fertilized eggs remain. If life begins at conception, disposal of the remaining eggs would be a form of abortion. If, however, life begins at some later point in the process of fetal development like when the fertilized egg is implanted in the uterus, disposal would not constitute abortion. He expressed his personal belief that life begins later than implantation—when the egg begins receiving blood but admitted that he was concerned his conclusion was a convenient answer born from his family's situation. The discussion is a reminder of how important and personal the question of when life begins is. In the latter half of the session, ways pro-life advocates can effectively respond to pro-choice arguments and ways people can get involved in pro-life efforts and ministries were discussed. The session, and the seminar, were finished by completion of the post-seminar survey. Drake Hatfield, again, posted the video online within a week.

During the next two weeks, those who could not be present at sessions watched the videos and completed their post-seminar surveys. They returned all their surveys by the end of the second week in November.

Evaluation

After the post-seminar surveys had been collected, it was time to determine whether the seminar had accomplished its purpose. For each response on the two surveys, a number that reflected the desired response was assigned. For example, for the

statement “A baby in the womb is a person,” the following values were assigned to the responses: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Disagree Somewhat = 3, Agree Somewhat = 4, Agree = 5, and Strongly Agree = 6. For the statement “A baby in the womb only becomes a person when it is born,” these values were assigned: Strongly Disagree = 6, Disagree = 5, Disagree Somewhat = 4, Agree Somewhat = 3, Agree = 2, and Strongly Agree = 1.

For each of the 20 participants, the values of participants’ responses for all 27 statements were totaled.⁴ A *t-test* was performed on these numbers. The *t-test* showed statistically significant improvement ($t_{19} = 4.37, p = .0002$).

Pre- and Post-Surveys

In addition to totaling the scores for each participant, the 20 values for each of the 27 statements were totaled and the pre and post seminar results were compared (Exhibit 3).⁵ This comparison allowed for determination of which statements’ responses changed the most.

The biggest changes were for statements 12, 15, 17, and 25. Statement 12 is “Christians should defend a woman’s right to abort a baby because the mother should have the right to control her own body.” More responses denied the truth of this statement in the post-seminar survey (18 responses of “Strongly Disagree” and 2 responses of “Disagree”) than in the pre-seminar survey.

⁴When a response was left blank, the value was subtracted for the corresponding statement on that person’s other survey. For example, if someone omitted the response for statement 1 from the pre-seminar survey, the value for that statement was subtracted from that person’s post-seminar survey. This gave comparable totals for the same questions on the two surveys that could be used in the *t-test*.

⁵Again, when a response was left blank, the value for the corresponding statement on that person’s other survey was subtracted. This adjustment allowed a valid comparison of the totals.

Statement 15 is “Until 1973, abortion was always illegal in the United States.” The change in responses for this statement was simply due to the correction of a common misunderstanding.

Statement 17 is “Science confirms that life begins at conception.” This statement carries the largest change and is another factual statement that many Christians find surprising. Science can tell us how a baby develops, but it cannot identify the specific point in the process where life begins—that determination is subjective.

Statement 25 is “Abortion is a form of racial injustice.” The history of how abortion has affected African-Americans and how population control methods have been targeted at this segment of the population convinced some participants that the statement is true.

Questions and Comments

When the post-seminar survey was administered at the end of the third session, those present were asked to write any comments they had about the seminar on the back of their surveys—things they liked, information that surprised them, suggestions for how the seminar could be more informative, etc. Seven participants wrote substantive comments. Positive comments included the following:

1. “Really enjoyed [the science] presentation.”
2. “[The] historical argument[s] were informative.”
3. “Pro-life arguments were very helpful.”
4. “Enlightening on so many fronts.”
5. “Very insightful and thought provoking.”

One participant objected to the claim that white Americans had advocated abortion in black communities, characterizing it as “not a fair presentation.” Neutral comments and suggestions for how the seminar could be improved included the following:

1. “I’m curious to know how the [abortion] laws differ in different states.”
2. “What were the Supreme Court Justices’ arguments in *Roe v. Wade*?”
3. “In the scripture part, what does the Bible say about killing? For example, is killing justified in war? Then is it justified in abortion?”
4. “More information [on] clinics available in predominately minority communities.”
5. “Do predominantly [African-American] congregations know/believe the problem exists?”

The overall feedback was positive that the seminar had been informative and enlightening. The one negative comment suggests that an emphasis is needed to make clear that the number of whites who actively promoted abortion in minority communities was comparatively small, and not representative of the larger white population. The neutral comments and suggestions identify opportunities for making the content clearer and more informative in future seminars—particularly in contexts in which there are fewer restrictions on time.

Conclusion

The seminar was planned and implemented successfully. Although no members of Sojourn participated, those who did participate were all Christians. It is assumed that the seminar’s effectiveness would be similar in both groups.

The seminar was designed to educate Christians in the local church about the issue of abortion, and to motivate them to support the sanctity of life. Statistical analysis of the pre and post-seminar survey responses confirms that the seminar was effective in accomplishing its objective.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This project was designed to educate Christians about abortion, and to motivate them to join the battle to protect the sanctity of life. The evaluation performed in chapter 4 revealed that knowledge and attitudes were changed because of the seminar. Chapter 5 takes the evaluation further. The project had a stated purpose and specific goals—how well did it satisfy them? What were the project’s strengths and weaknesses? If the project was redesigned, what would be changed? How can one now motivated to protect life support pro-life efforts? The following sections answer these questions.

Evaluation of Project’s Purpose

The purpose for this project was “to equip members at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky to defend the sanctity of life.” The project was successful in equipping, but the participants were not members of Sojourn. As explained in chapter 4, the response from Sojourn members to the offering of the seminar was disappointing. No Sojourn members participated.

The participants in the project were all Christians from the Louisville area. The average age of the 19 participants who provided their age was over 57. Two were in their 70s, 12 in their 60s, 2 in their 50s, 3 in their 30s, and 1 in his 20s. Ten females and 10 males participated. The group was like the desired target group from Sojourn in that they were all Christians and they were evenly split between females and males. They constituted the target group that had been planned, except they were not members of Sojourn and they were older than the group expected. As mature Christians, the seminar participants would be expected to have thought more about abortion and be decidedly

more pro-life than their younger counterparts who have not had that time for their views to develop. Because of the target group's younger age, the positive statistical results may have been even greater had they participated. That conjecture would, of course, need to be verified analytically. The point is that it is not thought that the older age of the participants was significant in judging whether the seminar was successful. The purpose was achieved.

Evaluation of Project's Goals

The project had three goals. The first goal was "to assess the current knowledge and attitudes toward abortion among a group of Christians through Sojourn Community Church." This goal was met. A survey was designed that would assess both knowledge and attitudes. Of the 27 statements on the survey, only five were strictly focused on knowledge; the remaining 22 required the respondent to agree or disagree with statements that required opinions or reflected attitudes. Those opinions and attitudes required underlying knowledge about abortion. Therefore, both knowledge and attitudes were assessed. The survey was administered to all 20 participants and all the completed surveys were received.

The second goal was "to develop a curriculum, to be delivered in eight one-hour sessions, on understanding and defending the sanctity of life." The content of the eight sessions was written in July - September 2017. The content of each is summarized in chapter 4. After they were written, the content of all sessions was sent to the three-person curriculum evaluation team, and selected sessions to the other three presenters, for evaluation. Ninety-one percent of the rubric evaluations met or exceeded the sufficiency level, meeting the goal of ninety percent. Feedback from the evaluation team was evaluated and modifications in the content thought appropriate were made. In the actual seminar, the content of the eight one-hour sessions was condensed and repackaged into three two-hour sessions. This goal was also met.

The third goal was “to increase knowledge and change attitudes toward abortion by implementing the curriculum.” In the seminar, participants received instruction on abortion from biblical, historical, and scientific perspectives. They were educated about the prevalence of abortion, abortion methods, and how to respond to pro-choice arguments. As discussed in chapter 4, analysis of the responses to the pre and post-seminar surveys revealed a statistically significant change due to intervention (the seminar). Again, the goal was met.

Strengths of the Project

The greatest strength of the project is the timeliness and importance of the issue addressed. There is little disagreement that society has responsibility to alleviate social issues like homelessness, substance abuse, human trafficking, and hunger. There are different ideas about how each of these issues should be addressed, but no one would object to efforts to resolve them. Abortion is different. The nation is divided on whether abortion is even a problem; many would consider it a major problem and a denial of women’s rights if abortion was not available. Abortion is complicated.

Pro-choice advocates demonize pro-life advocates for being insensitive to women, the poor, and minorities; pro-life advocates demonize pro-choice advocates as being agents of death and blind to the harm abortion inflicts on babies. Both opponents are passionate in defending their positions.

For those on the pro-life side, abortion is not just another social ill. Babies are being slaughtered every day! Millions of babies have already been killed and the death count continues to mount. Abortion is literally a life and death issue. There is little middle ground. Either the baby in the womb is not a person and therefore has no civil rights, or it is a person who demands our respect and protection. That is why in the seminar, participants were often asked to think about how the information being communicated helped them answer the question, “What is in the womb?” For those, like me, who believe that a baby in the womb is in fact a person, abortion is a tragedy.

This seminar highlighted believers' responsibility to protect life from the perspective of the Bible. It explained reasons why there have been divisions on the issue in history and traced the change of public opinion on abortion over time. It explained the process of fetal development, and although science cannot establish when life begins, provided plenty of reasons to conclude that it begins very early in pregnancy. The seminar explained how abortions are performed. It alerted participants to how a small minority of racist white citizens has used abortion to control growth in the number of African-Americans. And it provided sound and truthful responses for pro-life advocates when confronted with pro-choice arguments. The information communicated in this seminar provided a firm foundation for active opposition, and it provided the motivation that is needed to get otherwise silent Christians in the fight. A significant strength of the seminar is that it tackled a significant issue that demands a response. Lives depend on that response.

Another strength of the seminar is the involvement of three subject-matter experts as presenters. Clif Roth, the pastor at Sojourn who oversees ministry to groups, is more than qualified to communicate what the Bible says about the sanctity of life. Jamaal Williams is the lead pastor at Sojourn and an African-American who has personal experience of what being a black man in our country is like and is devoted to racial reconciliation. Jimmy Tipton is a pediatrician who is obviously qualified to teach about the process of fetal development. The addition of these men to the project enhanced the credibility of the information communicated.

My experience with the issue and passion for protecting life are also strengths that contributed to the authenticity and effectiveness of the seminar. From 2013 until 2017, I served as the Community Outreach Coordinator for BsideU for Life. In that role, I visited many pastors, churches, and church groups, explained what our ministry did and encouraged volunteer and financial support. Also, unrelated to my role as Outreach Coordinator, I served the pro-life cause by standing in the ministry's parking lot on many

mornings, trying to convince young women on their way to the abortion clinic (which is located next door to the ministry) to come inside so that our counselors could clarify all the women's options for them. My role involved weekly interaction (and often, conflict) with pro-choice "escorts" who tried to keep me from talking to the women. These interactions provided many opportunities for debating the issues surrounding abortion and to show Christian love to those who seem unlovable.

The availability of videos of the seminar presentations on a web site is another strength of the project. The web site provided a means for including all 20 participants in the statistical analysis because they could watch presentations even when they could not be physically present. Without the web site, there would have been only 13 participants. The web site also provided a bibliography of resources where participants could find additional information on each of the topics covered in the sessions.

Weaknesses of the Project

The greatest weakness was failure to attract the members of Sojourn. Their nonparticipation could be the product of several causes—the time of the sessions on Sunday nights, the complexity of the issue, and lack of awareness that the seminar was being offered. The seminar was not promoted in church communications as well as it could have been. That is not to say that Sojourn failed in promoting the event; Sojourn promoted the seminar in the same way it promotes other Sunday classes—by announcing it in bulletin inserts. I could have requested other avenues of communication. Arrangements could have been made for a video to be recorded featuring one of the pastors endorsing the seminar and encouraging participation. The video could have been presented at the beginning of church services or on the church's web site. A separate handout or flyer that stressed the seminar's importance could have been prepared and the flyer made available for people to pick up as they were leaving church. Posters promoting the seminar could have been made and placed in strategic locations throughout the church building. It could have been requested that the seminar be promoted in the numerous community

groups by their respective leaders. The seminar was promoted, but there are steps I could have taken to see that the promotion was more effective. What promotion there was also failed to include a very important attraction of the seminar—the participation of three subject-matter experts, including two Sojourn pastors, as presenters. Not only would awareness of their participation have attracted participants, their ages (all in the 30s) would have also been attractive to the young Sojourn members.

As noted earlier, the group of participants was considerably older than expected. Although the age difference is not considered a weakness in terms of the effectiveness of the seminar, the effectiveness could have been even greater had the participants been younger. The older participants have had many years for their opinions about abortion to crystalize, and each participant's pro-life stance was comparable to mine. Their knowledge and views on abortion were changed significantly by the seminar; how much greater would the change have been had the group been younger and not so firmly pro-life before the seminar!

The seminar was effective, but the responses for two statements on the survey were disappointing. There were many statements for which the post-survey responses matched or approximated their pre-survey counterparts. Most of these statements carried relatively high scores in both surveys and little change would be expected. But for two statements, it was disappointing that the post-survey scores were lower than the pre-survey scores. The first statement is “The Bible commands Christians to defend the lives of babies in the womb.” The truth of this statement is an essential element in the biblical argument communicated in the first session. The Bible tells us that man is made in God's image, God knows babies in the womb, man is prohibited from taking the lives of others, and Christians are to hold back those being led to death. That support for this statement declined in the post-seminar survey was both surprising and disappointing. The second statement is “A fertilized egg, with its unique set of DNA, is already a unique person.” Again, support for this statement decreased in the post-seminar survey results. In the

presentation on what science can and cannot determine about when life begins, the point was made that mature and sincere Christians can disagree on the answer to this question. Apparently, this revelation weakened the resolve of those who agreed with the statement in the pre-seminar survey. The negative result may reflect a heightened awareness among the participants that other points along the path of fetal development can be defended as the point when life begins. But the objective was not to discourage those who accept conception as that point, especially since other accepted points in time occur later in the process of fetal development. The decrease in scores for each of these statements was a weakness of the seminar's content.

A final weakness is that one statement on the survey was nonsensical. The statement reads “Non-invasive methods of abortion like the morning after pill are acceptable—they’re just alternative means of birth control.” When the methods of medical abortion were described in the first week of the seminar, it was explained that the Federal Drug Administration, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the National Institute of Health all endorse the definition of abortion as the disruption of an implanted, fertilized egg. Assuming this definition of abortion, the morning after pill is not a form of abortion because it prevents ovulation, blocks fertilization, or prevents the fertilized egg from attaching to the uterine wall. All three interruption possibilities occur before a fertilized egg is implanted, so under the definition of abortion as the disruption of an implanted fertilized egg, the morning after pill is not an abortifacient. Calling the morning after pill a “non-invasive method of abortion” in the survey statement was therefore nonsensical. My personal view is that abortion occurs when a fertilized egg is destroyed, but discussion of the alternative definition that is accepted by the organizations listed above surely produced confusion among the participants when they completed the post-seminar survey.

What I Would Do Differently

The things I would do differently if I presented the seminar again are corrections of the weaknesses identified above. Promotion could be improved by any of the means listed above. If I presented the seminar again, I would ask the church to produce a video promoting the event to be shown at the beginning of worship services. I would ask that the lead pastor be featured in the video so that his endorsement and involvement were communicated, as well as Clif Roth's and Jimmy Tipton's. Production of videos like this is a common practice at Sojourn and one that I think the church would endorse. In addition to the video, I would compose an informational and promotional announcement, and ask Clif Roth (the pastor of groups) to have community group leaders read the announcement in their meetings and encourage participation.

Improved promotion would hopefully produce a positive response from the congregation. Participation by Sojourn members would undoubtedly lower the average age of the audience and result in a better representation of the individuals for whom the seminar was intended.

To eliminate the reduced endorsement of the two survey statements, I would emphasize my own belief in the truth of the two statements. The intent would not be to produce "clones" who mirror my views, but to focus on the reasons why it is believed that each statement is true.

Elimination of the nonsensical statement would be relatively easy. The statement could just be eliminated, but I would choose instead to modify it to remove the problem language. Instead of "Non-invasive methods of abortion like the morning after pill are acceptable—they're just alternative means of birth control," I would remove the reference to the morning after pill, leaving the statement to read "Non-invasive methods of abortion are acceptable—they're just alternative means of birth control." This modification would eliminate confusion about the statement and consequently eliminate confusion among the participants who are asked to agree or disagree with it.

Theological Reflections

Scripture commands that Christ followers love God and love others as themselves. Because I believe a baby in the womb is a person, I cannot claim to love either God or others if I do not actively oppose the practice of abortion. I understand that many, including some who claim to be Christians, disagree with this conclusion for a litany of reasons including health concerns for the mother, protection of the mother's personal rights, and the pain and stress that children bring to parents. These people start from a different beginning point than I. Logic, history, science, and the legal preservation of personal rights all support life and argue against abortion. But my ultimate standard of truth is Scripture.

What does Scripture say about abortion? As communicated in the seminar, the Bible tells that man is born in God's image and life is sacred (Gen 1:26-29); God knows and owns babies before they are born, He creates (knits) us in the womb, His creation in the womb is wonderful, He sees babies as they develop, and, while they are still in the womb, He numbers their days (Ps 139:13-18); God condemns the taking of human life (Exod 20:13); and He commands us to protect life—"those being led away to death" (Prov 24:11-12). The collective force of these four sections of Scripture overwhelms any argument that can be made in support of abortion. God created us in His image; He knows babies as persons and numbers their days while they are still in the womb; He forbids the taking of life; and He commands us to protect life. The Word of God is clear in its condemnation of abortion—even when it is not specifically stated but inferred from these Scripture passages.

If biblical opposition to abortion is clear, why are Christians not outraged even more than they are? I think the problem is in the interpretation of Psalm 139:13-18. Few would argue against the veracity of the other three Scriptures in the argument, but many will argue with the understanding that Psalm 139 establishes the personhood of babies in the womb. My answer to their argument is that they are unduly influenced by secular voices of our culture, they question the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, or they are

ignorant of what the Bible says. I think there are two other factors that immobilize the Christian community—the complicated nature of the issue, and inertia. Abortion involves many issues of rights, fairness, and responsibility; the answers to questions are not always clear. But as many authors have pointed out, the only question Christians must answer is “What is it in the womb?” If the answer is that it is only tissue or a potential life, our time is wasted arguing about abortion—it is just another medical procedure. But if it is a baby, all the extraneous questions and arguments fade away. If it is a baby, our path is clear—life must be protected because life is sacred and God has spoken. Christians cannot be complacent and content to watch from the sidelines.

It is because I believe that Scripture is clear in its condemnation of abortion, and because babies are being killed every day by those who disagree, that I was led to create this seminar. I believe that if Christians are educated about abortion, they will feel compelled to speak out against the practice, regardless of opposition, complexity, and contrary public opinion.

Personal Reflections

I am richly blessed by my family. My family was very supportive of this project because they know the gravity of the issue, and because they know my passion and calling to defend the sanctity of life. My wife spent many hours in solitary pursuits while I planned the project and wrote its content. She attended each session, was one of the participants, and even made brownies and cookies for the participants to eat at breaks. My older son, Jimmy Tipton, was anxious to accept my invitation to present what science contributes to the discussion, and he did a wonderful job. Numerous compliments on the session he led and on his presentation of the material were received.

I am also richly blessed by Christian friends. Some of the participants in the seminar were friends. They participated because I asked them to when there was little response from the members of Sojourn. Without their help, the project would have necessarily been postponed or abandoned. They all made the commitment to travel

significant distances from their homes to Sojourn which is in downtown Louisville to attend the sessions, and some of them attended all three sessions. Their encouragement and positive feedback are precious to me. I was also blessed by the expertise and servant's heart of Drake Hatfield who filmed the sessions and posted them on the web site he created. The project was immensely enriched by his contributions.

I am touched by how intensely personal abortion is. The comments contributed by my friend whose grandchildren were born through invitro technology stand out among those of the participants. The question of when life begins is not just an intriguing and intellectual puzzle for him—it is the arbiter of whether his daughter's remaining fertilized eggs should be protected as lives in an early stage of development or disposed of as something less. His honesty and transparency in wrestling with the question were both encouraging and heart-wrenching. Abortion and the questions that surround it are deeply personal. We must all seek wisdom from God as we come to our own conclusions and tolerate the honest opinions of others who share a belief in Scripture's authority but have come to different conclusions.

This project served as encouragement to publish the content. In another classroom assignment in which I planned the lessons for a college level course on abortion, I discovered that there is no suitable text for such a course that addresses all the issues addressed in this seminar. The seminar's content addresses the topics that I think are most important to Christians relative to abortion. A text that includes these topics is needed in both academic settings and less structured settings for Christians. The seminar also revealed that there is significant ignorance and misunderstanding on these topics—even among the mature, conservative, and somewhat homogenous group of participants in the project. How much more ignorance and misunderstanding there must be in the rest of the Christian community! A book that clarifies these topics for Christians is needed.

Sphere of Personal Involvement

How can one get involved in supporting pro-life causes? There are many ways. As a means of clarifying options, opportunities in three spheres of life—one’s personal life, one’s relationships with pro-life organizations, and one’s relationship with the church—are identified.

One’s Personal Life

All can be more educated about issues related to abortion, all can pray, all can speak out in support of the sanctity of life, and all can become active in the political process to promote pro-life causes and candidates. Education about abortion is essential because if Christians are ignorant about the facts, they will be ineffective in their opposition and unmotivated to get involved. Resources are abundant. A good starting place for finding books is the bibliography of this paper. Some of these books are available in audio format.¹ Also, numerous videos and pro-life web sites are easily accessible.²

Prayer is an essential tool in the spiritual warfare that surrounds abortion. Multiple pro-life authors identify prayer as a critical component of pro-life ministries.³ Prayer can be offered for expectant mothers and fathers, their unborn babies, leaders and workers at pro-life ministries, pastors and leaders of local churches, those who have experienced abortion in their lives, political leaders who support pro-life causes, and for

¹See Russell Moore and Andrew T. Walker, eds., *The Gospel & Abortion*, CD-ROM (N.p.: christianaudio, 2017); and R. C. Sproul, *Abortion*, CD-ROM (n.p.: Ligonier Ministries, 1989).

²See *Black Genocide in 21st Century America*, 2nd ed., DVD-ROM (Denton, TX: Life Dynamics, 2010); and *Blood Money*, DVD-ROM (n.p.: TAH.LLC, 2010).

³See Heartbeat International, “Activate Your Church to Save Lives,” accessed February 17, 2016, <https://www.heartbeatinternational.org/involved/churches?tmpl=comp>; Randy Alcorn, *Why Pro-Life? Caring for the Unborn and their Mothers* (Sandy, OR: EPM Publishing, 2004), 120; John Ensor, *Innocent Blood: Challenging the Powers of Death with the Gospel of Life* (Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2011), 114; and Brian Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion: Awakening the Church to End the Killing of America’s Children* (Dallas: Brown Christian Press, 2015), 186.

pro-life advocates as they seek to promote life. They can pray for those who support the availability of abortion as well—that their eyes will be opened to the truth.

Once knowledgeable about the issues and bolstered by prayer, pro-life advocates are ready to let their voices be heard. Christians must be bold in defending life in conversations with family members, friends, and acquaintances, and be ready to answer their questions.

Finally, pro-life advocates can get involved in the political process to defend life. They can do that by voicing their support for pro-life legislation and by voting for pro-life candidates. They can meet with legislators and make them aware of their pro-life stance, and they can even run for political offices themselves.⁴

One's Relationships with Pro-Life Organizations

There is probably one or more pro-life crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) in your community. Offer your support to their ministries by giving your resources in monetary gifts and your time as a volunteer. These ministries typically provide all their services at no charge to clients and receive all their support from like-minded individuals and churches. Without your financial support, they cannot minister to women in crisis pregnancies. But they also need your time. Ask your local CPC what their needs are and how you can help fill those needs—whether it be counseling, landscaping, painting, sorting, filing, mentoring, tutoring, praying, cooking, teaching, or answering the telephone. Look for other pro-life ministries in your community to support. Nationally, there are numerous organizations and ministries devoted to preserving the sanctity of life that need support.

⁴Alcorn, *Why Pro-Life?*, 118-19.

One's Relationship with the Church

The local church should be a priority as a place where Christians stand for life. The church can be a place for Christians to learn about the sanctity of life, but it should also be a place of support for those who have chosen life, and a healing place for those who have been injured mentally and spiritually by past abortions.

It is the local church where seeds of purity and abstinence must be sown among the youth before they end up at the door of an abortion clinic. Volunteer in the youth department to educate and encourage our children to abstain from sex until marriage. Pastors and Sunday school teachers must educate the congregation about the sanctity of life and motivate the church members, individually and collectively, to take a stand for life. Encourage your pastor to preach and your teachers to teach about it. Volunteer yourself to teach and educate others about life.

The local church should provide pregnant women support and encouragement rather than judgment, condemnation, and contempt. That is not to say the church should condone sin but that it should respond with love in recognition that all sin and need a Savior. In a 2015 study conducted by Lifeway Research, women were asked what kind of response they expected or received from the church when they made their abortion decisions. Thirty-three percent expected or received judgment, 26 percent condemnation, and 16 percent coldness. Only 13 percent expected or received love.⁵ The abortion rate among Christian women exceeds that of women with no religious tradition because of the shame and guilt they expect their families and themselves to receive due to a pregnancy.⁶ Help to create an environment of love, acceptance, and support in your church. If your church has a ministry that reaches out to these women, get involved; if it does not, start

⁵Lisa Cannon Green, "Women Distrust Church on Abortion," LifeWay Research, accessed February 24, 2015, lifewayresearch.com/2015/11/23/women-distrust-church-on-abortion/.

⁶Sydna Masse, *Effective Ministry to the Abortion Vulnerable* (Fayetteville, AR: Ramah International, 2013), 35.

one. “Embrace Grace” is such a program that could serve as a model. This organization is an in-church ministry currently operating in 42 states that teaches pregnant women about Jesus resulting in changed lives. The program includes instruction, baby showers, celebrations for adoptions, as well as post-abortive counseling.⁷

Post-abortive healing is another need that the local church should actively and purposefully meet. Join or begin a ministry in your church that reaches out to those hurting individuals and communicates the love of Christ and the forgiveness of sins (even abortion) that is available from God for all who confess and repent.⁸

Conclusion

This project satisfied the purpose and goals established for it. It proved to be effective in increasing knowledge and changing opinions. It was a success. I am grateful for the help of family, friends, Sojourn staff, and my supervisor for contributions to that success.

Many opportunities are available to a person who wants to get involved in supporting the sanctity of life. Options were identified in a person’s personal life, relationships with pro-life organizations, and relationship with the church.

Abortion is a life and death issue. Its importance stands out among the issues that confront our culture. It is one in which Christians should be intensely involved and motivated. Our response will reveal our obedience or disobedience to God’s Word.

⁷See Laura Finch, “Helping ‘Blooms,’” *World Magazine*, accessed February 15, 2017, https://world.wng.org/2016/12/helping_blooms; and Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 192-93.

⁸Fisher, *Deliver Us from Abortion*, 187-92.

APPENDIX 1

PRE- AND POST-SURVEY

The following survey was used prior to the seminar to determine levels of knowledge and attitudes toward abortion, and again at the end of the eight-week session to determine changes in those levels of knowledge and attitudes.

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to determine your knowledge and attitudes toward the issue of abortion. This research is being conducted by Jim Tipton for purposes of collecting data for a research project. In this research, you will answer the following questions both before and after completion of the seminar. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Date: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Directions: Please circle the appropriate answer to the following questions using the following scale:

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

DS = Disagree Somewhat

AS = Agree Somewhat

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. | A baby in the womb is a person. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 2. | The Bible commands Christians to defend the lives of babies in the womb. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 3. | A baby in the womb is made in the image of God. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 4. | The Bible commands Christians to not kill babies in the womb. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 5. | I think abortion is a sin. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 6. | A baby in the womb only becomes a person when it is born. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

Please go to next page

7.	God gave man dominion over the earth.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8.	Abortion is a choice a woman should be allowed to make for herself.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9.	Abortion involves ending a life.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10.	A deformed baby is made in the image of God.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11.	Abortion is a sin when the baby in the womb was conceived through rape or incest.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12.	Christians should defend a woman's right to abort a baby because the mother should have the right to control her own body.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13.	The stage of fetal development should be a factor in whether a mother should be allowed to abort.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14.	Babies suffer pain when they are aborted.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15.	Until 1973, abortion was always illegal in the United States	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16.	All Christians are called to do something to fight abortion.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17.	Science confirms that life begins at conception.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18.	A mother's inability to financially care for a baby is a reasonable argument in favor of abortion.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19.	Evangelical Christians have historically led the fight against abortion.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20.	The church should not get involved in the fight over abortion because it is a political issue.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

Please go to next page

21.	Abortion is legal so Christians should submit to governmental authority and accept it.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22.	Non-invasive methods of abortion like the morning after pill are acceptable—they're just alternative means of birth control.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23.	A baby is formed at conception—when the sperm fertilizes the egg.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24.	Abortion is acceptable to avoid a woman from ruining her life because of an unplanned pregnancy.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25.	Abortion is a form of racial injustice.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
26.	The fetus is a part of a woman's body.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27.	A fertilized egg, with its unique set of DNA, is already a unique person.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

Finished! Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX 2

ABORTION CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The following evaluation form was used by a group of ministry professionals familiar with pro-life issues to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, content, clarity, scope, and methodology of the curriculum. The group included a pastor at Sojourn, a pastor on staff at another local church, and the executive director of the crisis pregnancy center where I served.

Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Session:					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness:					
1. The content of the curriculum is faithful to Scripture.					
2. All Scripture has been correctly interpreted and explained.					
Content:					
3. The content of the curriculum is relevant to the issue.					
4. The content of the curriculum is thorough, given the time constraints for its delivery.					
Clarity:					
5. The content of the curriculum is clear and understandable.					
6. The content of the curriculum is presented in a logical format.					
Scope:					
7. The content of the curriculum is neither too broad nor too narrow.					
8. The content covers the important points relative to the subject.					
Methodology:					
9. Methods for presentation of the material are sufficiently diverse.					
10. Major points in the curriculum receive the proper focus.					

APPENDIX 3

COMPARISON OF PRE- AND POST-SURVEY RESULTS

Statement	Adjusted Pre-Seminar Survey Total	Adjusted Post-Seminar Survey Total	Difference
1	119	119	0
2	114	112	-2
3	118	120	2
4	108	102	-6
5	115	120	5
6	119	119	0
7	103	106	3
8	100	103	3
9	114	120	6
10	114	119	5
11	99	103	4
12	105	118	13
13	110	110	0
14	103	106	3
15	63	87	24
16	97	106	9
17	54	89	35
18	111	118	7
19	63	67	4
20	112	118	6
21	111	115	4
22	96	96	0
23	104	100	-4
24	118	118	0
25	52	67	15
26	78	83	5
27	114	112	-2

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS THROUGH SOJOURN COMMUNITY CHURCH IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, TO DEFEND THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

James Davis Tipton, Sr., D.Ed.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
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This project was planned and implemented as a seminar designed to educate Christians on abortion and to motivate them to defend life. Chapter 1 provides the context, rationale, and purpose for the project. Chapter 2 presents an argument based on four passages of Scripture that the Bible dictates that Christians oppose abortion and protect the unborn. Chapter 3 summarizes historic, scientific, and cultural issues related to the sanctity of life. Chapter 4 traces the steps in planning and implementing the seminar, and chapter 5 provides an evaluation of the project.

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