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DEVELOPING A MODEL OF THE ACTIVELY PROLIFE
CHURCH FOR OASIS OF HOPE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN

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DEVELOPING A MODEL OF THE ACTIVELY PROLIFE
CHURCH FOR OASIS OF HOPE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN

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My mother
Minnie L. Brookins

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PREFACE

I cannot begin to name all of the people who have contributed to my spiritual growth and education. For me, the two go hand in hand. I could write a book about the encouraging words that were spoken by each professor of SBTS and the impact those words had on me. Dr. William R. Cutrer, who is now with our Lord, encouraged me to hold on to my passion for the unborn and their mothers. With every review of my work, Dr. Shane Parker took the time to include encouraging words with his remarks. I often returned to those words as I pressed on. Dr. Danny Bowen helped me to see the value of my project beyond my community. I appreciate Marsha Omanson, who not only reviewed my work, but provided instruction. My good friends, Patricia Ann Ways, Esq. and Frank Jackson III, Esq. kept me going when they insisted that I provide updates on my writing at our regular breakfast meetings. Pat was always available to review a draft and provide feedback, and Frank insisted that I talk through my research even when I didn't feel like it. At my most desperate times, Dr. Frances Jackson was gracious with her time and counsel. My mother, who went to be with the Lord my first year at Southern, told me to "do a little each day." And finally, where would I be without my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty for my sins that I could not pay? I would not be here!

Diane Gene Brookins

Detroit, Michigan

May 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Oasis of Hope Christian Church (OHCC), affiliated with the National Baptist Convention, is an actively prolife church where the biblical view of human life is forcefully preached (Gen 1:26-27). The church came to the attention of the Right to Life of Michigan (RTLTM) Diversity Outreach Advisory Committee because of the pastor's public stance against abortion. At the time, RTLTM and OHCC partnered to sponsor and host an educational event for the community. The event included prolife speakers, resource displays, and presentations. Because of my previous experience as a member of the RTLTM Diversity Outreach Advisory Committee and now as manager of this project, I invited the church to participate in the study described here.

Although OHCC is located and active in Detroit, Michigan's largest city, it is not unusual for Detroit to account for about one-fourth of the abortions performed in Michigan, annually. Of the 25,348 abortions reported in 2016, more than 6,100 of the patients resided in Detroit, where several institutions (political parties, universities and churches) promote abortion on demand as an entitlement.¹ While OHCC cannot minister to every potential abortion patient in the Detroit area, the church can serve as a model for the Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit.

¹Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Division for Vital and Health Statistics, "Induced Abortions in Michigan, January 1 through December 31, 2016" (Lansing, April 2017), accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/annuals/Abortion%202016.pdf>.

Context

The Greater Detroit Baptist Association (GDBA) is a network of 42 Southern Baptist churches. The GDBA is headquartered in Redford, Michigan, a small suburb of Detroit. Of the 42 churches that represent GDBA, 15 churches are located in Detroit. However, to find an actively prolife Protestant church in Detroit, you must look outside of the Southern Baptist denomination.

Oasis of Hope Christian Church, located in Detroit, is a Baptist church that meets the definition of an actively prolife church where the pastor teaches and preaches, equips, loves, and confronts fear. First, the pastor of OHCC regularly preaches and teaches about the sanctity of human life as supported in Genesis 1:26-27. This text is biblical evidence for the value of human life created by God in his image. Next, the pastor of OHCC equips the members to engage the culture. He does so by example. The pastor regularly speaks publicly against the false doctrine of a culture that promotes abortion on demand. The third characteristic of the actively prolife church is a passion for ministry that naturally flows out of the gospel of Jesus Christ. While a passion for ministry can be a subjective characteristic, the passion is obvious as members of OHCC are observed in service to women in need through the church-based pregnancy resource center, Detroit Pregnancy Test & Help Center (DPTHC). In fact, the Center's tag line is, "Delivering Hope Through Compassionate Hearts." The final evidence that OHCC is an actively prolife church is the pastor's courage to preach and teach about the issues of life and abortion from the pulpit and in other public forums regardless of the opposing views that dominate the culture of Detroit.

Detroit is not an easy place to be actively prolife. There are a few organizations, (such as Planned Parenthood, liberal political parties and universities, as well as some religious denominations) that dominate the culture and preach a message of

abortion on demand in the city.² Some local churches, regardless of religious affiliation, are complicit by their silence.

It is obvious from the definition that the actively prolife church begins and ends with its pastor. However, in day-to-day ministry practices the actively prolife church must remain relevant to the needs and even demands of those women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion. In other words, in order to remain relevant, the church must seek feedback from women who represent their target audience.

Of the more than 6100 abortions that took place in Detroit during 2016, about 30 percent of the women may be identified as Protestant.³ This statistic is supported by data collected by the Guttmacher Institute in 2014.⁴ The data show that while about 30 percent of abortion patients self-reported as Protestant, 24 percent identified themselves as Catholic.⁵ A report conducted a year later by Lifeway Research, suggests that about 43

²The Democratic Party dominates the city of Detroit, primarily because of the presence of the UAW Solidarity House. Both entities are strengthened by the many collectively bargained jobs that represent the auto industry. (Detroit is the Motor City.) The Democratic Party and UAW share a commitment to protect the woman's right to choose to abort her unborn child. It is in this climate that Planned Parenthood of Michigan operates a clinic that provides medication abortion and related services. The clinic's proximity to Wayne State University (WSU), 0.6 miles, provides convenient access to the target market of women ages 20 to 24. Like WSU, the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) is also located in Detroit. UDM is a Catholic university, however, when representatives of RTLM were invited to speak on campus, professors and students objected. Students went so far as to sign an online petition. There are many local churches of various denominations (i.e. National Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal) that do not take a definitive position on the issue of abortion. One such denomination is that of the United Methodist Church, which has many local congregations in Detroit. In the *Social Principles* of the Church is a statement that describes the United Methodist Church as "reluctant" to oppose or support abortion.

³ Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Division for Vital and Health Statistics, "Induced Abortions in Michigan, January 1 through December 31, 2016" (Lansing, April 2017), accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/annuals/Abortion%202016.pdf>.

⁴Guttmacher Institute, "Induced Abortion in the United States," Fact Sheet January 2017, accessed March 6, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

⁵Ibid.

percent of women attended church at least once a month at the time of their abortion.⁶ This number should be alarming. It suggests that members of the local church, who attend church with some regularity, choose abortion.

The question that seems to surface from the data just discussed is “How does the local church respond to the woman faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion?” This question cannot be answered for every local church in Detroit. However, some of the Southern Baptist churches of the GDBA that are located in Detroit may support a prolife position with financial and/or material contributions to local pregnancy resource centers, and special attention to the issue of abortion on Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in January each year. However, there are women who are faced with the dilemma of an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion every day. Based on the data from 2016, about seventeen Detroiters choose abortion each day of the year.⁷ These women need the local church to be actively prolife every day.

Another question that seems to logically follow “How do the female members perceive the response of the actively prolife church?” The value of a response to this question is the opportunity for the local church to remain relevant in its day-to-day ministry practices.

This question gives those female members of the local church who are most likely to face an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, and/or those who have already had an abortion the opportunity to provide the local church with valuable feedback about its response to women who are faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortions.

⁶Lisa Cannon Green, “Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church,” Life Way Research, sponsored by Care Net, November 23, 2015, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://lifewayresearch.com/?s=Abortion>.

⁷Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Division for Vital and Health Statistics, “Induced Abortions in Michigan, January 1 through December 31, 2016” (Lansing, April 2017), accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/annuals/Abortion%202016.pdf>.

Rationale

This project is foundational to the doctrinal statement that identifies the local church as Southern Baptist. With respect to the issue of abortion, Southern Baptists believe that “children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord,” and Southern Baptists should actively “speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception.”⁸ Therefore, the local church that is Southern Baptist should distinguish itself from other doctrines with a bold presence against abortion, especially where the local society fails to affirm the sanctity of human life, and instead promotes the convenience of abortion.

Detroit is home to more abortion patients than any other city in Michigan. Of Michigan’s 25,348 abortion patients in 2016, more than 6100 resided in Detroit.⁹ This number calls for a response from the local Southern Baptist churches because of their doctrinal position on the sanctity of human life.¹⁰

Research shows that 30 percent of the abortion patients identify themselves as Protestants, and about 43 percent of women, Protestant and other denominations, attend church at least once a month.¹¹ These data suggest that women who attend church, and

⁸At its 2015 convention in Columbus, Ohio, the SBC passed a resolution on the sanctity of human life that reads as follows: “WHEREAS, Biblical revelation clearly and consistently affirms that human life is formed by God in His image and is therefore worthy of honor and dignity (Genesis 1:27; 9:6),” accessed September 13, 2015, <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2256/on-the-sanctity-of-human-life>.

⁹Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Division for Vital and Health Statistics, “Induced Abortions in Michigan, January 1 through December 31, 2016” (Lansing, April 2017), accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/annuals/Abortion%202016.pdf>.

¹⁰At its 2015 convention in Columbus Ohio, the SBC passed a resolution on the sanctity of human life that reads as follows: “WHEREAS, Biblical revelation clearly and consistently affirms that human life is formed by God in His image and is therefore worthy of honor and dignity (Genesis 1:27; 9:6),” accessed September 13, 2015, <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2256/on-the-sanctity-of-human-life>.

¹¹Gutmacher Institute, “Induced Abortion in the United States,” Fact Sheet January 2017, accessed March 6, 2017, <https://www.gutmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>; Lisa Cannon Green, “Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church,” Life Way Research, sponsored by Care Net, November 23, 2015, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://lifewayresearch.com/?s=Abortion>.

most likely hear the preaching of the gospel, choose to abort their unborn children when faced with a moral dilemma. This behavior suggests a disconnect between the hearing of the gospel and its application.¹²

The growing epidemic of abortion in the community and in the local church requires a strategic response from the fifteen Southern Baptist churches located in the Detroit.

A model of an actively prolife church located in Detroit aids the local Southern Baptist churches of the GDBA to intentionally and strategically respond to women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion. Southern Baptist churches may use the model to take the first step in response to women considering abortion, and/or advance to the next level in their response.

Next, while the OHCC meets the definition of an actively prolife church and serves as a model for GDBA churches, this project allowed the OHCC to assess the relevance of its response to women facing unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion. The feedback was provided by women who were members of OHCC. These members were representative of those most at risk for an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and those most likely to be post-abortive. Feedback provided by this assessment allowed the church to adjust day-to-day ministry practices as needed to remain relevant to its audience.

Finally, with a model of an actively prolife church, local Southern Baptist churches can confidently respond to women faced with unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and/or abortion, giving the GDBA a bold voice on the issue of abortion in Detroit and a strong presence to advance the kingdom of God.

¹²Scott Klusendorf, *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), 211.

Definitions

Key terms used throughout this project are defined here in order to contribute to a consistent understanding among the readers.

Abortion. A legally induced abortion is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as an intervention performed by a licensed clinician. Such an abortion is intended to terminate a suspected or known ongoing intrauterine pregnancy and produce a nonviable fetus at any gestational age.¹³ In the *Dictionary of Everyday Theology and Culture*, Evan B. Howard defines abortion as “the termination of fetal life in a uterus prior to birth.”¹⁴ Howard goes on to say, “Some abortions are natural, such as when a pregnancy miscarries due to illness. Currently, the term ‘abortion’ more often refers to induced abortions, involving human intention and intervention.”¹⁵ For purposes of this project, natural abortions, such as miscarriages, are excluded.

Actively prolife church. Scott Klusendorf defines the actively prolife church using four criteria that center around the role of the pastor.¹⁶ First, the pastor regularly preaches and teaches on the importance and value of human life (Gen 1:26-27), and the issue of abortion in order to shape the values and morals of the congregation and help them make godly decisions.¹⁷ Next, the pastor equips the members of the local church to engage the culture on the issue of abortion in order to dispel beliefs that hold no biblical

¹³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) “Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2008,” accessed November 3, 2012, http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6015a1.htm?s_cid=ss6015a1_w.

¹⁴Evan B. Howard, “Abortion,” in *Dictionary of Everyday Theology and Culture*, ed. Bruce Demarest and Keith J. Matthews (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2010), 9.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Klusendorf, *The Case for Life*, 209-16.

¹⁷Russell D. Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe: Abortion Rights and the Reshaping of Evangelical Theology,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7, no. 2 (2003): 48; Greg R. Scharf, “Wisdom from Preaching,” in *Why the Church Needs Bioethics: A Guide to Wise Engagement with Life’s Challenges*, ed. John F. Kilner (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 268-69.

basis.¹⁸ One such belief is that God’s grace allows the woman the freedom to abort or not.¹⁹ The third characteristic of the actively prolife church is a passion, among its members, for ministry that naturally flows out of the gospel of Jesus Christ. According to Vandrunen, “Christians who show love to one another, not merely in word but also in action, exhibit a true pro-life ethic.”²⁰ Finally, the actively prolife church is characteristic of a pastor who has confronted fears that may hinder him from preaching and teaching on the issues of life and abortion.²¹ Fear of offending members of the congregation, jeopardizing the pastorate, causing division in the church, and other such fears hinder the church from being actively prolife and leave the members of the local congregation subject to the pro-abortion message of the culture.

Authority of Scripture. For purposes of this research, the definition of authority of Scripture, as put forth by Wayne Grudem, “means that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.”²²

Limitations/Delimitations

The women of the OHCC were asked to voluntarily participate in this project by scoring the response of the church to women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion using the Organization Perception Questionnaire. The pastor of OHCC and other ministry leaders were interviewed in order to inform the data

¹⁸Klusendorf, *The Case for Life*, 210-11.

¹⁹Paul D. Simmons, *Birth and Death: Bioethical Decision-Making* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 106.

²⁰David Vandrunen, *Bioethics and the Christian Life: A Guide to Making Difficult Decisions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 165.

²¹Klusendorf, *The Case for Life*, 212-16.

²²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 73.

collected from the completed Organization Perception Questionnaires. Except for the pastor, the men of OHCC were excluded from this project.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop a model of an actively prolife church for Oasis of Hope Christian Church in Detroit, Michigan, for Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit.

Goals

As the model of an actively prolife church was developed for the Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit, the project was driven by the four goals described here:

1. The first goal was to allow the women of OHCC to assess the church as actively prolife based solely on their perceptions.
2. The second goal was to develop a case study of OHCC, as actively prolife, to inform the data collected from the surveys.
3. The third goal was to prepare a model of the actively prolife church located in Detroit.
4. The fourth goal was to develop strategic priorities, including a model of the actively prolife church in Detroit and an action plan for the Southern Baptist churches to respond to women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion and move toward becoming actively prolife.

Research Methodology

This section includes descriptions of the research instrument and methods used to gather data and the methodology for presenting the data.

First, women of OHCC were asked to assess the church's response to women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion using the Organization Perception Questionnaire. The OPQ was written by Ernest Schuttenberg for the purpose of identifying and prioritizing organizational processes and outcomes targeted for change based on perceptions of employees. OPQ was published by McGraw-Hill in *The*

Consultant's Big Book of Reproducible Surveys and Questionnaires, edited by Mel Silberman. The publisher gives the original purchaser of this resource access to a downloadable version of the questionnaire, as well as permission to copy and customize or edit the questionnaire for the user's audience. I requested and was granted permission to use the OPQ for purposes of doctoral research. The OPQ was modified based on input from an expert panel of prolife leaders and the members of the Research Ethics Committee of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. 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. The modified OPQ was subsequently field-tested and further modified based on the results of the field test. The results of the field test are described in appendix 2. The goal here was to obtain a minimum of ten completed surveys.

Next, a case study of OHCC as an actively prolife church was developed to inform and understand that data collected through the surveys. Those interviewed for the case study included the pastor, women's ministry leader, and chairperson of the pregnancy center. The interviews helped to understand how the actively prolife status of the church translates into day-to-day ministry practices that teach and equip members of OHCC, and serve those women at risk.

The purpose of the case study was to help me and those who read this report to understand the basis of the assessment completed by the women, in other words, what the women were assessing and where the need for change should begin.

The results of the survey were analyzed and combined with the case study to create a model of an actively prolife church operating in the city of Detroit. The goal was to present strategic priorities that include the model of an actively prolife church and an action plan for local Southern Baptist churches in Detroit.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN LIFE

Many people who support abortion on demand cite, as evidence, the absence of a command against abortion in the Bible. However, the strongest biblical evidence against abortion may be the description of God's direct involvement in the creation of human life in his image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27; 2:7). Beyond the description of creation in the book of Genesis, Scripture continues to provide evidence for the value of human life, and the need to protect that life. Much of that biblical evidence is described here in chapter 2.

The Biblical Position on Human Life

The value and importance of human life is proclaimed at that point in the biblical creation story when God, himself, describes the creation of human life, made in his image and his likeness (Gen 1:26 NKJV).¹ The biblical text reads "Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." From this text, one learns that God is more than a designer, but also the hands-on creator of human life. In his article, "Bioethics and a Better Birth," John Kilner states that "humanity's creation begins with God referring to his own participation in the process."² With his words, "Let Us make,"

¹Russell D. Moore, "The Gospel according to Jane Roe: Abortion Rights and the Reshaping of Evangelical Theology," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7, no. 2 (2003): 43.

²John F. Kilner, "Bioethics and a Better Birth," in *Why the Church Needs Bioethics: A Guide to Wise Engagement with Life's Challenges*, ed. John F. Kilner (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 83.

God signals his own direct involvement in creating something unique and valuable, which is human life.³ The uniqueness and value of human life did not change with the fall of man (Gen 9:6). God continued to be involved in the creation of man, which is emphasized throughout the Bible. Further discussion of God's participation in the creation of human life will follow later in this chapter.

Next, after God's direct involvement in the creation of human life, it is God's image and likeness that signals the value and importance of human life. According to Wenham, the creation process, which God describes in Genesis 1:26, distinguishes human life from that of nonhuman animals.⁴ The nonhuman animals created before humans were not created in the image and likeness of God. Only humans are created in the image of God.

So, what exactly is the image and likeness of God that it gives human life such value? In Genesis 1:26, God defines the term "image of God" as he delegates responsibility for his creation to the humans, both men and women. In other words, "image of God" is the capacity to represent God and manage his creation.⁵ Human life, made in the image of God, is to represent God on earth and rule over his creation.⁶ Richard E. Averbeck, in his article "Wisdom From The Old Testament," states that humans stand for God, "his authority and his divine purposes amid the whole creation."⁷

³Peter J. Gentry, "Kingdom through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (2008): 22; Kilner, "Bioethics and a Better Birth," 83.

⁴Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 31.

⁵Gentry, "Kingdom through Covenant," 24.

⁶Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 442, 448. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 32.

⁷Richard E. Averbeck, "Wisdom from the Old Testament," in *Why the Church Needs Bioethics: A Guide to Wise Engagement With Life's Challenges*, ed. John F. Kilner (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 35.

According to David Vandrunen, author of *Bioethics and the Christian Life*, human beings are responsible before God and accountable to God for the “royal task” of representing him on earth over his creation.⁸

The capacity to represent God and manage his creation is seen in the many traits that men and women share with God. Those traits include the capacity to think rationally, and to feel and express a range of emotions such as anger, love, and joy (Rom 2:14-15).⁹ Humans also have a physical component that includes five senses to interact (see, touch, taste, smell and hear) with creation. Further, humans have a spiritual component that allows them to enter into relationship with God, who is spirit (John 4:23-24). Because of this relationship, humans are able to reflect God’s character as his representatives. Therefore, the image and likeness of God is the capacity given to human life to enter into relationship with God and represent God before his creation.

God’s command for humans to participate in the creation of subsequent generations is a sign of the importance of human life to God’s plan. In Genesis 1:28, God commands men and women to be fruitful and multiply. As with all of God’s commands recorded in the Bible, he actually empowers men and women to fulfill the command and realize the blessing (Ps 127:3-5).¹⁰

In summary, Scripture provides evidence that human life is valuable and important because God is directly involved in the creation of human life, and human life is uniquely made in God’s image and likeness. Because humans are made in the image and likeness of God, they have the unique capacity to enter into relationship with God and represent him before his creation. Further, humans are empowered by God to join

⁸David Vandrunen, *Bioethics and the Christian Life: A Guide to Making Difficult Decisions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 150.

⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 446.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 33.

him in the creation of human life with a direct role in furthering God's creation and filling the earth.

Abortion, on the other hand, is an attack on God himself, as it destroys the human life that God creates in his own image and likeness (Gen 9:6), and allows humans to circumvent God's command to further creation (Gen 1:27-28).¹¹ Abortion denies the unborn child his or her God-given purpose for relationship with God and a role in creation as God's representative.¹² Finally, abortion of human life denies the unborn child the potential opportunity to make a unique contribution to the furtherance of creation and the advancement of God's kingdom.¹³

The Impact of the Fall on Human Life

The fall of man introduced sin and corrupted all of creation, yet the value of human life and God's purpose for humans, male and female, did not change (Gen 3:6-8; Rom 8:18-23). After the fall of man, God continued to be directly involved in the creation of human life (Ps 139:13; Jer 1:5). God continued to create humans in his image and likeness, and God continued to empower men and women to reproduce and fill the earth (Gen 3:16-19).¹⁴ Further, God continued to hold human beings responsible as his representatives over his creation (Ps 8:6-8).

Subsequent to the fall of man, Scripture continued to emphasize the value of human life and the importance of man's role to God's creation (Gen 9:1, 6-7). However,

¹¹Stephen Tu, *Pro-Life Pulpit: Preaching and the Challenge of Abortion* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 18.

¹²Terry Schlossberg, and Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Not My Own: Abortion and the Marks of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 32.

¹³Stanley Grenz, *Sexual Ethics: A Biblical Perspective* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1990), 139; Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 32.

¹⁴Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 32.

because of the introduction of sin, Scripture included warnings against behaviors that destroy and devalue human life (Gen 9:6; Exod 20:13; Matt 5:21-22).

A warning issued, after the fall of man, against those who would destroy human life is recorded in Genesis 9:6-7. The text reads, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.”

This text is evidence that human life continued to be made in God’s image after the fall, and that God’s command did not change nor was it rescinded. According to Foreman, it is clear in Genesis 9:6-7 that the murder of human beings is “an affront” to God’s image; an act committed against God.¹⁵ This biblical text also shows that the blessing of God, to be fruitful and multiply, bestowed on men and women before the fall, was not removed after the fall of man. Kilner suggests that Genesis 9:6-7 explains the reason for the unique relationship between God and human beings, which is that humans are made in God’s image, and therefore commanded by God to be fruitful and fill the earth.¹⁶ This unique relationship is unlike the relationship that God has with any other animal life, which is simply one of creator and creature. Because God continued to create human beings in his image, humans are not to be destroyed.¹⁷

In fact, the biblical command against murder, “You shall not murder” (Exod 20:13), which was not given until after the fall, serves to protect and respect human life made in God’s image. According to Durham, this commandment “describes a killing of human beings forbidden by Yahweh.”¹⁸ Like all the other commandments listed in

¹⁵Mark W. Foreman, *Christianity and Bioethics: Confronting Clinical Issues* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 100.

¹⁶Kilner, “Bioethics and a Better Birth,” 83.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸John I. Durham, *Exodus*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 293.

Exodus 20, the command forbidding the killing of human life is intended to teach those living in covenant with God how to live. Exodus 20:13 reinforces what is implied in Genesis 1:26, that life begins with God and therefore belongs to God.¹⁹ Fedler's response here is that "Scripture demands that any action which would violate the value of life, if it can ever be justified, must be seen only as an exception and must be undertaken with great humility and seriousness."²⁰ Why? Because God is the creator of human life, human life is not to be destroyed for the convenience of man, the creature.²¹

Jones and Foreman agree with Durham that Exodus 20:13 refers to killing that is forbidden by God.²² Killings forbidden by God clearly include those motivated by works of the flesh, such as revenge, jealousy and anger (Gal 5:19-21). However, the killing of unborn children is often motivated by fear of being exposed, fear of jeopardizing a relationship or fear of added responsibility, and is included in the prohibition of Exodus 20:13. The unborn child is described as a "reward" from God in Psalm 127:3-4, and according to Foreman, destruction of the unborn child "robs society of someone of value to it or . . . robs the murder victim of a future."²³ Therefore, the

¹⁹Kyle D. Fedler, *Exploring Christian Ethics: Biblical Foundations for Morality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 100.

²⁰Ibid., 81.

²¹Larry Chouinard, David Fiensy, and George Pickens, eds., *Christian Ethics: The Issues of Life and Death* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 426.

²²Foreman, *Christianity and Bioethics*, 100; Foreman and Jones agree that the sixth commandment found in Exod 20:13 refers to innocent life. According to Foreman, the biblical evidence is found in Gen 9:6 where murder is described as an "affront: to God's image, and therefore, an attack against God. Jones elaborates as he describes murder as "unlawful, malicious taking of human life" [therefore] "the sixth commandment addresses the sanctity of life." David W. Jones, *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 176-77. Although the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion, it continues to be against God's law as found in Exod 20:13.

²³Foreman, *Christianity and Bioethics*, 100.

intent of the commandment found in Exodus 20:13 is to preserve human life by teaching respect for that life made in God's image and likeness.²⁴

The command against murder is enforced by a penalty for the destruction of innocent human life as outlined in Exodus 21:22-25. Admittedly, there is much disagreement about the interpretation of this biblical text. It is discussed here because the text is often the focus of debates about abortion, especially among Christians. Exodus 21:22-25 describes an accidental injury (not an intentional injury, like abortion) that results in the injury or death of human life. Disagreement about its interpretation applies to whether it is the mother or the unborn baby who is injured or destroyed. According to Durham, the penalty, which is determined by the husband of the pregnant woman and approved by a judge or third party, is the same whether the one injured is the mother or the unborn child.²⁵ This text is important to the discussion about abortion because it seems to show that the human life of the unborn deserves the same protection as an adult human. According to this interpretation, the penalty for injury or permanent damage to the unborn is life for life. Vandrunen, who adopts this interpretation, says that the biblical text shows that the legal consequences for the destruction of human life are the same whether that life is unborn or born.²⁶ Therefore, the value of human life is the same whether still in the womb or birthed.²⁷

On the other hand, Durham insists that Exodus 21:22-25 is not "specific" with respect to loss of life; therefore, the text may assign life for life for the loss of the mother, and some lesser compensation for the loss of the unborn child.²⁸ This interpretation

²⁴Jones, *Introduction to Biblical Ethics*, 181.

²⁵Durham, *Exodus*, 323.

²⁶Vandrunen, *Bioethics and the Christian Life*, 155.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Durham, *Exodus*, 323.

would suggest that the unborn human life is of a lesser value than that of the mother, in which case abortion would not be the violation suggested by other biblical texts discussed here. However, one must keep in mind that Exodus 21:22-25 refers to the accidental destruction of human life, not the intentional destruction of the unborn human life, as abortion is defined for purposes of this project. Again, the text is discussed here because it is often referenced in debates and discussions about abortion.

At the time God warned against destroying human life, he reiterated his command to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 9:6). The blessing that God gave in Genesis 1:28, to be fruitful and multiply, continued after the fall of man. It was not eliminated (Gen 3:14-19). God repeated the command and blessing of procreation to Noah after the flood as recorded in Genesis 9:1, which reads “So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth’.” Further evidence of God’s continued command and blessing on humans to reproduce is the record of genealogies in the Bible.²⁹ Chouinard describes a disruption of this command by way of abortion as a violation of God’s sovereignty over life.³⁰ Quite simply, abortion destroys God’s work.³¹

God’s response to the interruption and/or destruction of his work, as recorded in Jeremiah 7:31, is worth noting here. God says “And they have built the high places of Topheth, which *is* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart.”

This text provides a description of child sacrifice that was regularly practiced by pagan nations and adopted by some of God’s covenant people (Jer 32:35). Craigie, Kelley and Drinkard suggest that God’s response to this practice of child sacrifice

²⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33.

³⁰Chouinard, *Christian Ethics*, 422.

³¹*Ibid.*, 428; Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 32.

confirms that children are “the most precious of all divine gifts.”³² This commentary by Craigie, Kelley and Drinkard seems to agree with Wenham’s commentary on Genesis 1:28 in which God commands men and women to be fruitful and multiply.³³ Wenham explains that God blesses human beings to fulfill his command by empowering them to reproduce “the most precious of all divine gifts” that are rejected when children are aborted in the womb.³⁴

Further evidence of the continued value and importance of human life after the fall of man is found in Psalm 8. As the psalmist speaks in verses 3 and 4, he seems perplexed by the attention that the creator gives to man who is insignificant when seen in the context of creation. The psalmist goes on to acknowledge that God has given man dominion over all the universe (v. 6). Craigie explains that it is the God given dominion or man’s “mastery” over the universe that gives man significance.³⁵ Man was granted this significance at the time that he was created by God in his image and likeness, and the significance continued after the fall (Gen 1:26).

God’s continued involvement in the creation of humans after the fall is seen in Psalm 139:13-16. As Wenham explains the use of the *image of God* as a descriptive term for the creation process that makes man unique, Psalm 139:13-16 provides the details of that creation process. As this biblical text describes God’s involvement in the creation of every human being, it also shows the special concern God has for human life.³⁶ Allen

³²Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 26 (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 125.

³³Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33.

³⁴Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 125.

³⁵Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 19 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 108.

³⁶Vandrunen, *Bioethics and the Christian Life*, 155.

explains that this text shows that God is aware of every detail of the creation process because he actually creates every human being from conception.³⁷ According to Geisler, the unborn child, regardless of where he or she is in the maturation process, is fully human and, like Adam, created by God (Gen 1:27).³⁸ Therefore, the unborn child is known by God and has a personal relationship (not a saving relationship) with God from conception, and because God is involved in the creation process, every human life is intentional and important to God.³⁹

God's Purpose for Human Life

As God is directly involved in the creation of human life in the womb of the woman, God has a purpose and plan for each human life, although man is now a fallen being, marred by sin.⁴⁰ The prophet Jeremiah is a popular biblical example here. God's knowledge of the unborn child and personal relationship with the child, as well as God's purpose for human life is explicitly described in Jeremiah 1:4-5, which reads, "Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations'."

While the psalmist used metaphorical language to describe the creation process in Psalm 139, God is direct and to the point in Jeremiah 1:4-5 as he speaks of having created the prophet in the womb. Craigie, Kelly and Drinkard explain that this text is a clear statement of God's participation in the creation of human beings.⁴¹ The text further

³⁷Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, rev. ed., Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 21 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2002), 329.

³⁸Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 146.

³⁹Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 148, 329; Chouinard, *Christian Ethics*, 422; Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 129.

⁴⁰William Lane Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 123.

⁴¹Craigie, Kelly and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 10.

confirms that God’s purpose and “firm meaning” for every human life was established before conception.⁴² However, as demonstrated by Jeremiah’s experience with God, human beings cannot realize their purpose and meaning without accepting God’s call on their lives. The abortion process prevents the unborn child from realizing God’s purpose for his or her life.⁴³

The Redemption of Human Life

In his article, “Wisdom from the Old Testament,” found in Kilner’s, *Why the Church Needs Bioethics: A Guide to Wise Engagement with Life’s Challenges*, Richard E. Averbeck notes that “all of human history to this very day is dependent on the birth of babies.”⁴⁴ Averbeck cites the biblical genealogies, which many believers fail to read, as support for the conclusion that abortion hinders the advancement of human history.⁴⁵

The redemption of human life from the consequences of the fall of man was certainly dependent on the birth of a baby, Jesus the Christ, the redeemer. The incarnation of Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, followed the same process that was already in place for the birth of human life.⁴⁶ (Of course, Jesus the Christ was not conceived by the action of man but by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Luke 1:35). The biblical evidence is found in Luke 1:39-56, where the angel announces to Mary the redeemer’s conception, as recorded specifically in Luke 1:30-36, and the pregnancy of Elizabeth who was once considered barren.⁴⁷

⁴² Craigie, Kelly and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 10.

⁴³Grenz, *Sexual Ethics*, 138; Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 32.

⁴⁴Averbeck, “Wisdom from the Old Testament,” 34.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 532; Kilner, “Bioethics and a Better Birth,” 85.

⁴⁷Kilner, “Bioethics and a Better Birth,” 85.

Upon receiving the news about Elizabeth's pregnancy, Mary traveled to the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah. At that time, Jesus was a "newly conceived embryo."⁴⁸ Elizabeth was pregnant with John the Baptist, and both Elizabeth and her unborn child acknowledged the presence of Jesus in Mary's womb. John "leaped" in Elizabeth's womb, and Elizabeth acknowledged the "fruit" of Mary's womb, referring to Jesus as "my Lord" (Luke 1:39-45). According to Nolland, Elizabeth's exclamation was in response to Mary's greeting (Luke 1:41), but John's movement in the womb of Elizabeth was a direct response to the presence of the unborn Christ.⁴⁹ Nolland says that "John witnesses to the one who comes after him and . . . the unborn John anticipates prenatally his later position in relation to Jesus" (John 3:28-30).⁵⁰

The birth of John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ was necessary to God's plan of redemption (Jn 3:16). The genealogy of Christ, as recorded in Matthew 1:1-17, is evidence of God's plan of redemption rolled out through human history, which as Averbeck states, "is dependent on the birth of babies."⁵¹ The birth of babies was necessary to God's plan of redemption, and God's plan of redemption is necessary to human babies. As Grenz states, "human beings have a special value because they are the special objects of God's salvific love" and "have a special place in God's purposes as potential participants in God's recreated eschatological community."⁵²

⁴⁸Kilner, "Bioethics and a Better Birth," 85.

⁴⁹John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol.35A (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 67.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 67, 74.

⁵¹Averbeck, "Wisdom from the Old Testament," 34.

⁵²Grenz, *Sexual Ethics*, 138.

The Consummation: God’s Plan for Human Life

Every human life “is a potential participant in the coming community of God” that will be realized at the second coming of Christ when participants will be transformed and prepared for the new heaven and the new earth (Rev 21:1-3).⁵³ In the meantime, it is the responsibility of church leaders to bring those participants or believers to complete maturity in the faith in anticipation of the second coming of Christ (Eph 4:11-13). Central to this plan is new human life, generation after generation.⁵⁴ According to Averbeck, the genealogies found throughout the Bible, as well as the emotional circumstances of women, like Hannah, Sarai and Rachel, who were unable to bear children, are evidences that marriage and the blessing of children are critical to God’s plan (Ps 127).⁵⁵ But when men and women choose to abort their unborn children, they attempt to circumvent God’s plan.

The Responsibility of the Church

Not My Own: Abortion and the Marks of the Church, written by Terry Schlossberg and Elizabeth Achtemeier, is considered an important work to the project proposed here because (1) it speaks of the practice of abortion among Christian women, and (2) the authors place the issue of abortion right in the proverbial lap of the church.⁵⁶ In other words, the authors challenge the Protestant church, specifically, to own the issue of abortion, rather than continue to allow the social-political arena to dictate the ethics and practice of abortion.⁵⁷ Schlossberg and Achtemeier are not alone in their position.

⁵³Grenz, *Sexual Ethics*, 139.

⁵⁴Averbeck, “Wisdom from the Old Testament,” 34.

⁵⁵Kilner, “Bioethics and a Better Birth,” 85.

⁵⁶Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 3.

⁵⁷At the time of this work, Schlossberg was executive director of Presbyterians Pro-Life, Research, Education, and Care, Inc., and Achtemeier was adjunct professor of Bible and homiletics at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.

Moore, President of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, has said that “Advocacy for the unborn is an ecclesiological issue even before it is a sociopolitical one.”⁵⁸ Moore and many other Christian ethicists have written to challenge the church to take the lead in advocating for the unborn. The implication is that the local church, by definition, must take the lead as it relates to the truth about of abortion and the church’s responsibility to Protestant women faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.

Identifying Marks of the Church

How is the local Protestant church identified? First, there are two distinguishing characteristics or marks that identify the local church as a Protestant church. Those marks are (1) the Word of God rightly or regularly preached, and (2) the ordinances, which are baptism and the Lord’s Supper, rightly administered.⁵⁹ For those local churches that fail on these two marks, the pastors and ministry leaders bear the burden of explanation. For Jesus Christ, the head of the church (Matt 16:16-20), set the example of right or regular preaching (Matt 5-7), baptism (Mark 1:9-11) and Lord’s Supper (Matt 26:26-29), and then commanded his followers to do the same (Matt 10:7; 28:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23).

According to Grudem, participation in baptism, signals the beginning of the Christian life, and the Lord’s Supper is the sign of continued membership in the Body of Christ.⁶⁰ However, Jesus, himself, warns that there will be some who participate in these ordinances who are neither Christian nor members of the Body of Christ (Matt 7:21-23; 13:24-30). Therefore, although the administration of these marks may identify the local

⁵⁸Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48.

⁵⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 865.

⁶⁰Ibid.

Protestant church, those who participate may not, in fact, be members of the Body of Christ.

However, an important assumption in the project proposed here is that the Protestant church surveyed accepts the authority of Scripture and understands that abortion is morally wrong according to Scripture; therefore, this assumption and understanding of Scripture should be evident in how the marks of the church are administered.⁶¹ If the identifying marks of the church indicate, by way of administration, what the church believes about abortion, the practical ministries of the church should support that belief, as well. As Moore has said, “The pro-life nature of the gospel must also be present in the makeup and activity of the church itself.”⁶² Many of Christian ethicists and ministry leaders who have written on the issue of abortion and the Protestant church speak of the responsibility of the local church to minister to women faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.

The Word of God Rightly and Regularly Preached

One of two marks of the local Protestant church is that the Word of God is rightly and regularly preached. This mark is foundational to the actively prolife church, by definition. The first criterion in the definition of the actively prolife church is for the pastor to regularly preach and teach the importance and value of human life (Gen 1:26-27), and the issue of abortion in order to shape the values and morals of the congregation and help them make godly decisions.⁶³ The criterion is consistent with Scripture that

⁶¹Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 2.

⁶²Moore, *The Gospel according to Jane Roe*, 48.

⁶³The purpose of preaching and teaching is to equip believers for ministry and thereby edify the church (Eph 3:11-16). As with any teaching, there must be a characteristic of regularity to the extent that the teaching makes a difference in the life of the one being taught. The Protestant tradition is that preaching and teaching takes place, regularly, every Sunday. Therefore, regular preaching and teaching of the importance and value of human life is to occur at least once a week.

states the purpose of preaching and teaching the Word of God is to equip believers for ministry and to edify the members of the Body of Christ, the church (Eph 4:11-12; 2 Tim 3:16-17).⁶⁴ If the Word of God equips and edifies the Body of Christ, abortion works against God's Word. According to Samuel Wells and Ben Quash, "It is hard to see in what circumstances an abortion might be said to build up the Church."⁶⁵

The right and regular preaching of the Word of God on the value of life begins at the beginning, in the beginning, with God's direct involvement in the creation of human life.⁶⁶ God's plan and the fulfillment of that plan, including God's direct involvement in the creation of the first human, is recorded in Genesis 2:7. The Lord God, himself, formed Adam from the dust of the ground, and Eve from Adam (Gen 2:21-22). Subsequent to the creation of the first man and woman, God continued to be directly involved in the creation of human life in the womb as recorded in Scripture (Ps 139:13-16; Jer 1:5). Therefore, preaching that begins with God and his creation lays the groundwork for abortion to be seen for what it is, the destruction of human life that belongs to God, and the promotion of man's agenda over God's plan.⁶⁷

Moore has said that the church must preach "the whole counsel of God" (2 Tim 4:2) in order to "theologically shape the consciences of its members."⁶⁸ This preaching is necessary because the fall of man has distorted how humans think and behave (Rom 12:1-2).⁶⁹ In his article, "Wisdom from Preaching," Greg R. Scharf stated

⁶⁴Tu, *Pro-Life Pulpit*, 55.

⁶⁵Samuel Wells and Ben Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics* (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 327.

⁶⁶Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 25.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 27, 33.

⁶⁸Moore, "The Gospel according to Jane Roe," 48.

⁶⁹Arthur F. Holmes, *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 20; Tu, *Pro-Life Pulpit*, 18.

that “good preachers equip careful listeners to handle the Word rightly when ethical decisions arise.”⁷⁰ In other words, when the entire Word is regularly preached, it serves to shape the listener’s values and morals. With godly values and morals in place, the woman already knows the godly choice—even if she struggles to comply. With respect to the project proposed here, right and regular preaching serves to “theologically shape” how women think, that is to conform to the Word of God, hopefully, before they find themselves faced with an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy and/or abortion.⁷¹

Relationships. Preaching about God, his role in creation, and the value of human life is certainly the beginning of right preaching about abortion, as advocated by Schlossberg and Achtemeier. However, preaching that deals with God’s standards for relationships may also serve as a deterrent to abortion. Too often abortion or single parenthood are the only options presented to the woman faced with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy but certainly marriage should be part of the right preaching of the church.⁷²

Marriage is the context, given by God, for intimate relationships between men and women (Gen 2:24). To that end, preaching should highlight the godly role of fathers and mothers ordained by God (Eph 6:4) and the blessing of children (Ps 127:3). While right preaching may not eliminate unplanned or unwanted pregnancies, it will serve to shape how women (and men) think about their options when faced with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy.⁷³

⁷⁰Greg R. Scharf, “Wisdom from Preaching,” in *Why the Church Needs Bioethics: A Guide to Wise Engagement with Life’s Challenges*, ed. John F. Kilner (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 268-269.

⁷¹Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48.

⁷²Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 113, 116.

⁷³Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48.

Forgiveness. Women who are faced with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy, may need to hear a message about God’s forgiveness even before they decide how to deal with the pregnancy.⁷⁴ According to Schlossberg and Achtemeier, “many abortions are attempts to solve the problems raised when . . . commandments of God with regard to our sexual lives are broken.”⁷⁵ This statement is supported by the data reported by researchers of the Guttmacher Institute that show that 85 percent of the women who accounted for the 1.2 million abortions in 2008 were not married, and 29 percent of those women were in a cohabiting relationship.⁷⁶ The researchers noted that “Of all the groups examined in this report, cohabiting women had the highest abortion index, suggesting that their rate is more than triple the overall average and is one of the highest relative abortion rates of any subgroup.”⁷⁷ Therefore, women faced with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy, outside of the marriage relationship, need to hear about God’s forgiveness for the disregard of his commandment against fornication, cohabitation, and in some cases, adultery (1 Tim 1:8-11).⁷⁸ Although the woman may be considering abortion, the church has a responsibility to extend the opportunity for forgiveness for the behavior and/or lifestyle that precipitated the pregnancy (i.e., fornication) before a decision is made about the outcome of the pregnancy.⁷⁹

Because it is not uncommon for a woman to keep the unwanted or unplanned

⁷⁴Jean Garton, “Where Are the Shepherds?” in *Back to the Drawing Board: The Future of the Pro-Life Movement*, ed. Teresa R. Wagner (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2003), 231.

⁷⁵Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 70.

⁷⁶Guttmacher Institute, Rachel K. Jones, Lawrence B. Finer, and Susheela Singh, “Characteristics U.S. Abortion Patients, 2008,” accessed November 6, 2012, <http://www.guttmacher.org/sections/abortion.php?pub=reports>.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 13.

⁷⁸Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 70.

⁷⁹Andreas J. Kostenberger, with David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010) 184.

pregnancy and/or abortion a secret in the church, as well as among family members, it is critical to reach her through the preaching of God's Word. The secrecy contributes to an unhealthy environment that promotes the growth of toxic emotions such as guilt, shame, anxiety, fear and grief, to name a few.⁸⁰ Consequently, these emotions often hinder the woman from seeking help from the church (Gen 3:7, 9-10). She then submits to the abortion, which she considers to be her only choice for eliminating the secret problem.

Ordinances Rightly Administered

For the Protestant church, there are two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is a one-time event that signals the beginning of the believer's Christian life; therefore, believers are usually accepted into the church, which is the Body of Christ, by way of baptism. The Lord's Supper, as an ordinance, is a practice by which the believer remembers the death of Christ Jesus as the payment for her sins; therefore, regular participation in the Lord's Supper signals the ongoing relationship that a believer has with Christ Jesus (1 Cor 11:24-25).

Right administration of these ordinances, as distinguishing marks of a Protestant church, is dependent on preaching that informs these ordinances. Preaching that informs baptism and the Lord's Supper, serves to equip women faced with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy, as well as the post-abortive women, to rightly examine themselves before participation in the ordinances.

Baptism. The ordinance of baptism signals the beginning of the Christian life. Therefore, "baptism is appropriately administered only to those who give a believable profession of faith in Jesus Christ," according to Grudem.⁸¹ It is through the act of

⁸⁰Tim Clinton, and Diane Langberg, *The Quick Reference Guide to Counseling Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 18; Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007) 575; Russell Moore, "Abortion and the Gospel," accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.russellmoore.com/2013/01/22/abortion-and-the-gospel/>.

baptism that believers identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and are admitted into the Church (Rom 6:4-11).⁸²

Grudem says, “The symbolism of union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection seems to require baptism by immersion.”⁸³ While baptized believers identify with the death of Christ as they go down into the water, believers further identify with the resurrection of Christ as they rise from that same water into a new life in Christ Jesus. As believers rise, they claim the victory over death that Christ won through his resurrection. Abortion opposes that victory over death by claiming “victory of death” over the birth and life of an unborn child.⁸⁴ Therefore, if the local church is functioning as a Protestant church, with the right administration of baptism as its distinguishing mark, it must preach to inform baptism and, by doing so, oppose abortion, which opposes the symbolism of baptism.

Another important point of baptism that stands in opposition to abortion is the public and community aspect (1 Cor 12:12-14). The act of baptism is a public sign that a new believer has been placed into the body of Christ, which is the church, and united with the community of believers.⁸⁵ As Dever explains, “The one baptized has been united to Christ by faith; he is also being united to the congregation by covenant and fellowship in the gospel.”⁸⁶ But contrary to baptism, abortion often takes place in secret

⁸¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 967, 970.

⁸²Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 1113; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 866.

⁸³Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 968.

⁸⁴Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 38.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 35.

⁸⁶Mark E. Dever, “Baptism in the Context of the Local Church,” in *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner, and Shawn D. Wright (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 337.

and outside of the body of Christ. According to Moore, “The spirit of Roe preaches a ‘gospel’ of personal autonomy.”⁸⁷ In other words, the choice to abort is said to be personal and private, which explicitly demands that the woman, even young teenagers, not tell anyone, not the woman’s parents or the father of the unborn child. But having been baptized into the body of Christ, the woman facing an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion is not autonomous but one of many members of one body.⁸⁸ Moore further makes the point that as Protestant women keep their unplanned or unwanted pregnancy a secret from “the Body of Christ, many of them fall prey to the false gospel of the abortion clinic.”⁸⁹ The implication of that false gospel is that the pregnancy will go away and no one has to know, other than the woman and the abortionist.

The Lord’s Supper. Unlike baptism, which is a one-time event, the Lord’s Supper is observed repeatedly subsequent to the beginning of the believer’s Christian life.⁹⁰ According to Protestantism, participation in the Lord’s Supper is a sign of the believer’s salvation and continued fellowship with God, and membership in a local church.⁹¹ Schlossberg and Achtemeier have said, “All said in relation to baptism is repeatedly reaffirmed by our celebration of the Lord’s Supper.”⁹² With that in mind, the Lord’s Supper, like baptism, celebrates Christ’s victory over death by way of his resurrection. Abortion, on the other hand, celebrates a woman’s victory of death over

⁸⁷Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Moore, “Abortion and the Gospel.”

⁹⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 988, 996.

⁹¹Ibid., 988.

⁹²Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1115; Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 54.

human life.

In 1 Corinthians 11:27-30, the apostle Paul warns that there are consequences to participating in the Lord's Supper unworthily. As a believer examines herself, before participating in the Lord's Supper, she is to consider her relationships within the church, the Body of Christ. Does she reflect the character of Christ in her relationships with other members of the Body?⁹³ Recall, as stated previously, human life is created by God in his image and likeness, which is the capacity for relationship with God, and the authority to represent him, that is to reflect his character in relationship with others. Those who participate in the Lord's Supper are in relationship with God and should reflect his character in relationship with others, therefore, contributing to the unity of the body, not autonomy.⁹⁴ Therefore, when a believer is faced with an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy and/or abortion, she is not autonomous. She is still a member of the Body of Christ, united with the other members.⁹⁵ According to Erickson, some Protestant groups are consistent in denying believers who live in serious sin the opportunity to participate in the Lord's Supper.⁹⁶

Grudem says, "For the most part, the church must depend on the pastors and teachers to explain clearly the meaning of the Lord's Supper and to warn of the dangers of participating unworthily. Then people will have the responsibility to examine their own lives, in accordance with what Paul says."⁹⁷ In other words, to ensure that the Lord's Supper is properly administered, as a distinguishing mark of the church, church leaders must ensure that the biblical meaning and warnings are preached and taught. Right

⁹³Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1131.

⁹⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 997.

⁹⁵Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 58.

⁹⁶Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1122.

⁹⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 998.

preaching and teaching in this regard serves to equip women faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, or those who are post-abortive to responsibly examine their lives before participating in the Lord's Supper.

Discipline. Discipline is not necessarily identified as a mark of the Protestant church in the literature dealing with the issue of abortion in the church. However, Schlossberg and Achtemeier treat church discipline as a third mark because it serves as a tool to ensure right administration of the two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁹⁸ Therefore, it follows that discipline is the means used by church leaders to ensure that believers, who have strayed from the standard set by right preaching of God's Word, conform to the public profession of faith in Jesus Christ that they made at the time of baptism, and to protect the believer from participating in the Lord's Supper unworthily.⁹⁹ In 1 Corinthians 11:27-30, Paul warns believers against participating in the Lord's Supper without regard for the body and blood of the Lord (v. 27). To do so is to participate in an unworthy manner. Instead, Paul admonishes the believer to examine herself before participating in the Lord's Supper; otherwise, the consequences are judgment which may result in adverse health issues (v. 30). According to Erickson, the first step of discipline is denying the believer the opportunity to participate in the Lord's Supper.¹⁰⁰ Right preaching and teaching, that is, preaching and teaching that informs the Lord's Supper, equips women to examine themselves before participating in the Lord's Supper, and then voluntarily denying themselves where appropriate.

Discipline is rooted in "preaching of the whole counsel of God" in order to be

⁹⁸Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 93.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 93-94.

¹⁰⁰Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1132.

corrective.¹⁰¹ Therefore, discipline is corrective if it logically flows from “preaching of the whole counsel of God” (2 Tim 4:2), in which case it serves to “theologically shape the consciences” of the women faced with unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancies or those who are post-abortive.¹⁰² If believers are disciplined for behavior that has not been addressed in the preaching or teaching of God’s Word, then the discipline is not corrective but punitive (Rom 10:14).¹⁰³

In summary, the local Protestant church is identifiable by the marks of right and regular preaching of the entire Word of God, and the administration of the ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The right execution of these marks serve to inform believers of the value of human life as evidenced in God’s Word, and allow believers to practically identify with Christ and remember his sacrificial work for life.

Conclusion

The biblical evidence that supports the value and importance of human life from conception can be found throughout the Bible, from Genesis through to Revelation. For those Protestant churches that correctly administer the marks of the church, the biblical evidence presented here is included in the right preaching and teaching of the entire Word of God. To avoid preaching and teaching the biblical evidence presented here is to fail to rightly and regularly preach the entire Word of God as a mark of the Protestant church, and as a criterion of the actively prolife church. The biblical evidence informs the believer, and the ordinances of the church, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, that human life, which is made in the image and likeness of God, by God, is valuable to

¹⁰¹Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48; Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 99.

¹⁰²Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48

¹⁰³Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 93.

God. Therefore, as God's representatives before his creation, every woman (and man) is responsible for valuing and protecting life, from conception until natural death.

CHAPTER 3
RESPONSE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH
TO ABORTION

Men and women need to be determined to respect and protect the sanctity of human life before they are faced with a moral dilemma. This applies to the men and women faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion, and the men and women of the local congregation who will respond. The local church is responsible for responding biblically to the unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion in its midst (Jas 2:14-18). However, the church must first understand the practicality of abortion. Women in the church choose abortion for practical reasons, and there are consequences.

Abortion: The Practice and the Consequences

The term *abortion* may be used broadly to include ectopic pregnancies, miscarriages or still births. For this reason, the definition used for the purposes of this project is worth repeating here. The term *abortion* is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as “an intervention performed by a licensed clinician that is intended to terminate a suspected or known ongoing intrauterine pregnancy and produce a nonviable fetus at any gestational age.”¹ This definition makes it clear that the abortion procedure is legal and intentional. Further, an abortion ends the life of the unborn child, described as a fetus. Ectopic pregnancies, miscarriages and still births are involuntary

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) “Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2008,” accessed November 3, 2012, http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6015a1.htm?s_cid=ss6015a1_w.

and, generally, occur naturally or as the result of an accident. Therefore, they are not included in this definition.

According to data reported by the Guttmacher Institute,² 926,200 abortions were performed in 2014.³ This number is down by 12 percent from 2011, but 926,200 abortions represent lives made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26-28). The characteristics of women who accounted for the highest percentage of abortions in 2014 are shown in table 1.⁴ This information is helpful as church leaders consider those members of the local congregation who may be most at risk for an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.

The characteristics presented in table 1 are intended to inform pastors and ministry leaders about the women who have abortions. This information is not to suggest that the women who fall outside of these characteristics are not at risk for abortions or should not be studied. In fact, Black women and Hispanic women account for a significant percentage of abortions at 28 percent and 25 percent, respectively. Women who self-identified as Catholic accounted for 24 percent of the abortions in 2014.⁵

²The mission of the Guttmacher Institute, as a leading research and policy organization, is to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States and globally, accessed September 26, 2017, <https://guttmacher.org/about>.

³Guttmacher Institute, "Induced Abortion in the United States," Fact Sheet January 2017, accessed March 22, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

⁴The Guttmacher Institute collects data on abortion patients by contacting providers, such as hospitals, clinics and physician offices, that are known to provide abortion services. On the other hand, the data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is voluntarily reported by states but not all states require providers to report abortion data. The difference in the data collected by these two organizations can be seen in the total number of abortions reported in 2008. The CDC reported a total of 825,564 abortions in 2008, while the Guttmacher Institute reported a total of 1.21 abortions for that same year. Reports, like the one prepared by Jones, Finer and Singh are not prepared each year.

⁵Guttmacher Institute, "Induced Abortion in the United States," Fact Sheet January 2017, accessed March 22, 201, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

Table 1. Characteristics of those groups of U.S. abortion patients that account for the highest percentage of the 926,200 induced abortions performed in 2014

<i>Religious Affiliation</i>	Protestant	30%
<i>Ethnicity</i>	White	39%
<i>Age</i>	20-24 yrs.	34%
<i>Marital Status</i>	Single	46%
<i>Family Structure</i>	At least 1 birth	59%
<i>Income level</i>	Below 100% of Federal poverty	49%

Why Women Choose Abortion

While there is no known evidence of research that specifically targets Protestant women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion, there is research in which 1,209 women were asked the reasons for choosing abortion.⁶ The top two reasons given for choosing abortion were (1) having a baby would dramatically change my life, at 74 percent, (2) I can't afford a baby now, at 73 percent, and (3) Don't want to be a single mother or having relationship problems, at 48 percent.⁷ These data, from 2005, seem to confirm that women choose abortion because of the financial and material needs that come with a baby, and because of relationship problems with the woman's partner.⁸

In 2014, three-fourths of the 926,200 abortion patients gave similar reasons for

⁶There is no known research that captures the reasons Protestant women, specifically, choose abortion. In the research cited here, women who participated were not asked to identify their religious affiliation. Lawrence B. Finer et al., "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortion: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 37, no. 3 (2005):110-18.

⁷Ibid., 111-12.

⁸Stanley Hauerwas, "Abortion Theologically Understood," in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, ed. M. Terese Lysaught et al. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 946.

aborting their unborn children. The top reasons were (1) concern for or responsibility to others, (2) the inability to afford raising a child, and (3) the belief that having a baby would interfere with work, school or the ability to care for dependents.⁹ These responses suggest that the reasons women abort their unborn children have not changed much from 2005. Like 2005, the data for 2014 show that women aborted their unborn children for reasons that had to do with finances and relationships.

The Consequences of Abortion

While the data show that many women respond to the responsibilities and fears of bringing a pregnancy to term by choosing abortion, the woman does not walk away from the abortion unaffected, as if the pregnancy never occurred.¹⁰ The abortion procedure subjects the woman, as well as others in close relationship with her, to consequences.

The most obvious consequence of abortion is the “nonviable fetus,” or the destruction of human life. However, Cutrer, who was a pro-life physician and pastor, warned that women who aborted their babies often suffered from physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences.¹¹

So what are those consequences? The physical consequences may include infertility problems, and diseases such as cancer.¹² The Guttmacher Institute would

⁹Guttmacher Institute, “Induced Abortion in the United States,” Fact Sheet January 2017, accessed March 22, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

¹⁰Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) “Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2008,” accessed November 3, 2012, http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6015a1.htm?s_cid=ss6015a1_w.

¹¹William R. Cutrer, *The Church Leader’s Handbook: A Guide to Counseling Families and Individuals in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2009), 54.

¹²Theresa Burke, Tim Clinton, and George Ohlschlager, “Abortion: Crisis Decision and Post-Abortion Syndrome,” in *Caring for God’s People God’s Way: Personal and Emotional Issues, Addictions, Grief and Trauma*, ed. Tim Clinton, Archibald Hart, and George Ohlschlager (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2005), 460; Cutrer, *The Church Leader’s Handbook*, 57.

disagree with this assertion. Its position is that there is no relationship between abortion and breast cancer or other cancers.¹³ However, Right to Life of Michigan clarifies the link between abortion and breast cancer on its website. While the abortion does not cause cancer, the abrupt interruption of the biological changes occurring in a woman's body as she prepares to give birth leaves the woman more vulnerable to cancer than she was prior to the pregnancy.¹⁴

The emotional consequences that result from abortion have been labeled Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS) because the symptoms are much like those of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. PAS is defined by Christian counselors as “the inability to adequately process the painful emotions attached to abortion, especially guilt, anger and grief; the inability to properly identify and grieve the loss of the child, or to come to peace with God, and within oneself, about the abortion.”¹⁵ In addition to the feelings of guilt, anger, and grief, the woman may experience feelings of anxiety and depression, which may then lead to substance abuse.¹⁶

Depression, as a symptom of PAS, can manifest itself in many ways. For example, the woman may have difficulty sleeping or become withdrawn and isolated, or experience crying spells and/or thoughts of suicide.¹⁷ Unchecked, depression can lead to substance abuse but in what may be even more extreme behavior, the woman may attempt to deal with PAS by way of a subsequent pregnancy. The woman hopes to bring

¹³Guttmacher Institute, “Induced Abortion in the United States,” Fact Sheet, January 2017, accessed March 22, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

¹⁴Right to Life of Michigan Life Notes, “A Risk to Avoid: Abortion’s Link to Breast Cancer,” accessed September 23, 2017, <https://media.rtl.org/pdf/ABCLinkprint.pdf>.

¹⁵Burke, Clinton and Ohlschlager, “Abortion,” 456.

¹⁶Tim Clinton and Diane Langberg, *The Quick Reference Guide to Counseling Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 18-20; Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 572.

¹⁷Burke, Clinton, and Ohlschlager, *Abortion*, 457.

the subsequent pregnancy to term but ends the pregnancy with another abortion. This behavior is evidence of “deep psychic trauma,” according to Burke, Clinton and Ohlschlager.¹⁸

Collins says that the emotional consequences of abortion are exacerbated when the woman receives little, or no support from her partner, family or fellow church members, and/or experiences conflict or tension in the relationship with the father of her unborn child.¹⁹

However, even if the members of the local church are prepared to support and minister to a woman who experiences an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion, the woman’s emotional state can distract her from making her pregnancy known and from seeking the help and support she needs as she considers abortion, especially if she is not married.²⁰ (The Guttmacher Institute reported that 46 percent of the abortion patients from 2014 were never married and were not in a cohabiting relationship.)²¹

Cutrer wrote that women who are most at risk for PAS are young women who range in ages 15 through 24; young women raised in a religious environment; women who experience multiple abortions; and women who experience infertility problems after having had an abortion.²² Of the 1.2 million abortions reported in 2008, half of the

¹⁸Burke, Clinton, and Ohlschlager, *Abortion*, 455.

¹⁹Collins, *Christian Counseling*, 572.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 575.

²¹Guttmacher Institute, “Induced Abortion in the United States,” Fact Sheet January 2017, accessed March 22, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

²²Cutrer, *The Church Leader’s Handbook*, 57.

women had one or more previous abortions, and a common assumption drawn from these data is that women use abortion as a form of contraception.²³ The Guttmacher Institute did not report data on multiple abortions in 2014.

The age range for women most at risk for PAS overlaps with the age range for those women who account for the majority of abortions, ages 20 through 29 years, and includes the age range of 20-24, which accounts for the highest percentage (34 percent) of abortions in 2014, as recorded in table 1.

The spiritual consequences of abortion are explicitly stated in the definition of PAS as “the inability to come to peace with God . . . about the abortion,” which results in a belief that God is angry about the woman’s decision to abort her unborn child.²⁴ In fact, according to a 2008 study, 4,926 women who sought abortions at one U.S. clinic reported that they believed in God or a higher power, and in 43 percent of those abortion cases, women had some spiritual concerns about the abortion.²⁵ Eighteen percent of the women who reported having spiritual concerns responded that they were afraid or kind of afraid that God would not forgive them for the abortion.²⁶ In a 2014 study conducted by Life Way Research, 49 percent of 1038 post-abortive women said that the pastors’ teachings on forgiveness do not apply to their abortions.²⁷ Consequently, a post-abortive woman may experience an inability to grow in her relationship with God, which may result in a

²³Guttmacher Institute, Rachel K. Jones, Lawrence B. Finer and Susheela Singh, “Characteristics U.S. Abortion Patients, 2008,” accessed November 6, 2012, <http://www.guttmacher.org/sections/abortion.php?pub=reports>.

²⁴Burke, Clinton and Ohschlager, *Abortion*, 456-57.

²⁵Diana Greene Foster, Heather Gould, Jessica Taylor, and Tracy A. Weitz, “Attitudes and Decision Making among Women Seeking Abortions at One U.S. Clinic,” *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 44 (2012): 120

²⁶Foster et al., “Attitudes and Decision Making,” 121.

²⁷Lisa Cannon Green, “Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church,” Life Way Research, sponsored by Care Net, November 23, 2015, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://lifewayresearch.com/?s=Abortion>.

loss of faith or a falling away.²⁸

How the Church Contributes to the Problem

Many women approach abortion as the only remedy to the problems presented by an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy. These women may not be aware of other options, such as adoption, alternative housing, or resource centers for single mothers.

Consequently, they are not likely to ask for help because they do not know that help is available. When the local church fails to prepare a right response to an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, it may be responsible for the woman's ignorance in this area (Jas 2:14-26).²⁹ In this case, the church fails the woman who is experiencing an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, and therefore contributes to her sense of hopelessness.³⁰

So how does the local church fail in its response? The most obvious way that the church fails is by not preaching the full counsel of God.³¹ Preaching the entire Word of God is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a Protestant church.³² It is how the local church is identified as a church.

Where the local church fails to rightly preach the Word of God, especially with respect to the value of human life and the issue of abortion, one must look to the leadership. According to Schlossberg and Achtemeier, many church leaders and members "believe that discussing abortion is like deliberately setting a torch to the church because

²⁸Cutrer, *The Church Leader's Handbook*, 56.

²⁹William Lane Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 124; Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 106-7.

³⁰Russell Moore, "Abortion and the Gospel," accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.russellmoore.com/2013/01/22/abortion-and-the-gospel/>.

³¹Russell Moore, "The Gospel according to Jane Roe: Abortion Rights and the Reshaping of Evangelical Theology." *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7, no. 2 (2003): 48.

³²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 865.

... it divides believers and diverts their attention from the primary role of the church to preach the gospel, pastor the sheep, and teach faith.”³³ However, preaching the gospel, pastoring the sheep, and teaching faith require that church leaders preach and teach the entire Word of God, including Scriptures that address or apply to uncomfortable social issues like abortion.³⁴

Garton, founder of Lutherans for Life, offers some very practical reasons for the failure of Protestant pastors and ministry leaders to preach and teach the biblical truth about human life and abortion.³⁵ Those reasons include fear of being removed from the pulpit by those in the congregation who support abortion on demand, genuine concern for the emotional state of the post-abortive woman, political correctness that stands against the truth, and a worldview that sees abortion as financially and socially beneficial to women.³⁶ However, as Moore admonishes, when pastors fail to preach about the issue of abortion, church members are subjected to, and influenced by, the message of abortion on demand promoted by society.³⁷

In addition to these reasons offered by Garton, there are those of the clergy who hold to the belief that the Bible actually allows for abortion. In fact, Paul D.

³³Terry Schlossberg, and Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Not My Own: Abortion and the Marks of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 7.

³⁴Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48.

³⁵Jean Garton, “Where are the Shepherds?,” in *Back to the Drawing Board: The Future of the Pro-Life Movement*, ed. Teresa R. Wagner (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2003) 231.

³⁶Garton, “Where are the Shepherds?,” 231; The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is one such organization that holds to the belief that abortion is beneficial to women. It includes Protestant, Catholic and Jewish affiliates. The organization’s mission statement reads: Pro Faith. Pro Family. Pro Choice. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) is a broad-based, national, interfaith movement that brings the moral force of religion to protect and advance reproductive health, choice, rights and justice through education, prophetic witness, pastoral presence and advocacy. Accessed September 30, 2017, rcrc.org/mission-statement/.

³⁷Russell Moore, “Abortion and the Gospel,” accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.russellmoore.com/2013/01/22/abortion-and-the-gospel/>.

Simmons, once a professor of ethics at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has written, “One is free to abort or not to abort, as God leads. This is the freedom of grace.”³⁸

Although Simmons once taught at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, his position on abortion is not consistent with that of the seminary or the Southern Baptist Convention.³⁹

However, even some local Protestant churches that embrace and preach the biblical truth about abortion do not follow-up with practical application of that belief (Jas 2:14-26). In other words, some churches fail to minister to the needs of women faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.⁴⁰ This failure to minister is, in fact, a failure to fulfill one of the purposes of the church, which is to minister to, or serve, believers.⁴¹ According to Schlossberg and Achtemeier, “silence in the pulpit” results in “inaction in the pews” and therefore, “withholds help from the men and women who daily are making decisions that determine the future of their unborn children,” which leads many women to believe abortion to be their only option for dealing with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy.⁴²

However, some female members of the church may not know that the local

³⁸Paul D. Simmons, *Birth and Death: Bioethical Decision-Making* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 106.

³⁹At its 2015 convention in Columbus, Ohio, the SBC passed a resolution on the sanctity of human life which reads as follows: “WHEREAS, Biblical revelation clearly and consistently affirms that human life is formed by God in His image and is therefore worthy of honor and dignity.” (Genesis 1:27; 9:6), accessed September 13, 2015, <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2256/on-the-sanctity-of-human-life>.

⁴⁰Garton, “Where are the Shepherds?,” 232.

⁴¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 867. Grudem identifies three purposes of the church. The three purposes are ministry to God, ministry to believers and ministry to the world. Ministry to God takes the form of worship, while ministry to believers is seen in how the church nurtures believers and builds them up to maturity in the faith (Eph 4:12-13). Finally, ministry to the world is evangelism and mercy combined in the mission efforts of the church.

⁴²Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 7, 111.

Protestant church is failing them. The survey conducted by Lifeway Research in 2015 of 1038 post-abortive women yielded two troubling conclusions: Women do not trust the church on the issue of abortion, and the church lacks grace.⁴³ The survey, sponsored by Care Net,⁴⁴ supports the belief that, generally, women tell no one in the local church of their unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, and/or subsequent abortion. As a result, no one in the church has the opportunity to meet the needs of the woman and influence the outcome of her pregnancy. This conclusion underscores the need for the church to preach and teach the entire Word of God and be a major influence on the entire congregation in advance of moral circumstances, and/or the decision to abort or not to abort.

About 70 percent of the women from this survey identified themselves as Christian, and about 43 percent of the women surveyed attended church at least once a month at the time of the abortion. More than half of the women who attended church were silent about their abortions, and 64 percent reported that church members would rather gossip than help.⁴⁵

The secrecy of abortion is re-enforced by increased access to abortion and the convenience of that increased access. The Guttmacher Institute reports an increase in abortions early in the first trimester.⁴⁶ This is before the woman begins to appear

⁴³Lisa Cannon Green, “Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church,” Life Way Research, sponsored by Care Net, November 23, 2015, accessed January 12, 2008, <https://lifewayresearch.com/?s=Abortion>.

⁴⁴Care Net is a nonprofit organization that supports about 1100 pregnancy resource centers nationwide. Its mission is “Acknowledging that every human life begins at conception and is worthy of protection, Care Net offers compassion, hope, and help to anyone considering abortion by presenting them with realistic alternatives and Christ-centered support through our life-affirming network of pregnancy centers, organizations, and individuals.” Carenet, accessed September 25, 2017, care-net.org.

⁴⁵Lisa Cannon Green, “Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church,” Life Way Research, sponsored by Care Net, November 23, 2015, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://lifewayresearch.com/?s=Abortion>.

⁴⁶Guttmacher Institute, “Induced Abortion in the United States,” Fact Sheet January 2017, accessed March 22, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>; The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that “early medical abortions” increased 110 percent

pregnant. This trend seems to result from the increased availability of medication abortions. Abortions performed during the first trimester are promoted as safe with minimal risk, and the prescription drugs used to induce these type of abortions can be taken in the convenience of the home.

With respect to a lack of grace, the women cited the following attitudes and behaviors:

1. Church members/members of the congregation are most likely to judge, condemn or gossip about single women who are pregnant than to offer help and care
2. Churches oversimplify decisions about pregnancy options, such as parenting, abortion and adoption
3. The majority of churches are not prepared to help with decisions about unwanted pregnancies
4. Few women seldom think churches give accurate advice about pregnancy options⁴⁷

According to Scott McConnell, vice president of Lifeway Research (at the time of this study), it is critical that women have a different experience with the local church in order for the attitudes about the local church to change and therefore abortion numbers to change.

In response to McConnell's comment, it is worth noting that of the 43 percent of women who reported attending church at least once a month, those with more frequent regular attendance were more likely to report positive responses, like caring and helpfulness, by members of the local congregation to their unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy. This response suggests a need to encourage more regular church attendance, especially among women who are most likely to face an unplanned and/or unwanted

in 2014 from 2005 when 22.6 percent of all abortions in the U.S. were reported as "early medical abortions." Abortion Surveillance 2014, accessed January 8, 2018, https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/data_stats/abortion.htm.

⁴⁷Lisa Cannon Green, "Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church," Life Way Research, sponsored by Care Net, November 23, 2015, accessed January 1, 2018, <https://lifewayresearch.com/?s=Abortion>.

pregnancy or abortion.

The Role and Responsibility of the Local Church

Abortion is often seen as a political and/or social issue, even by the church, but those who have written on the issue of abortion from a Christian worldview remind the church that abortion is first an ecclesiastical issue, and those same authors admonish the church to reclaim the issue of abortion as such.⁴⁸ From this perspective, women faced with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy should rightfully expect the local Protestant church to meet certain of their needs. To this end, this section includes a discussion about the role of the local Protestant church in response to the woman faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.

How the Church Responds to Women Faced with Unplanned and Unwanted Pregnancies

Faith without works is dead faith (Jas 2:17), and this is where many pro-life churches are said to fail the woman faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy or who is post-abortive. According to Garton, many churches fail to demonstrate their theological position on the issue of abortion with ministries that meet the practical needs of the woman faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.⁴⁹ Schlossberg and Achtemeier agree with Garton, and point to community-based crisis pregnancy centers, such as Care Net or Heartbeat International, that stand as “a rebuke to the church’s neglect of the moral, spiritual and materials needs that have led so many women to choose abortion.”⁵⁰ But what are the needs of women who choose abortion? As previously described, the reasons that women give for aborting their unborn children

3. ⁴⁸Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48; Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*,

⁴⁹Garton, “Where are the Shepherds?,” 232.

⁵⁰Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 111.

have to do with financial and material, as well as relational needs.

The Response of the Church

The presence of an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy in the local congregation is as much a challenge for the local church as it is for the woman facing the pregnancy.⁵¹ Why? Because abortion does not edify or build-up the body of Christ, the congregation is challenged to practice what is rightly preached (Eph 4:12) as a deterrent to abortion.⁵² According to Wells and Quash, “Christians should be in the business of forming and fostering communities in which the unexpected life is welcomed as a gift rather than a threat.”⁵³

In fact, community-based crisis pregnancy centers, like CareNet and others, that represent the front line in responding to women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion, are said to stand as an indictment against local Protestant churches.⁵⁴ (In fact, emotions, like anger, anxiety and depression that accompany an unwanted and/or unplanned pregnancy, are said to be exacerbated when the woman involved feels little or no support from the local church.)⁵⁵

In response, Clinton and Langberg admonish the local church to provide for the material and relational needs of the woman faced with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy.⁵⁶ According to Garton and Grenz, these women need the church to provide

⁵¹David Vandrunen, *Bioethics and the Christian Life: A Guide to Making Difficult Decisions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 165.

⁵²Samuel Wells and Ben Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics* (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 327; Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 107.

⁵³Wells and Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 326.

⁵⁴Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 111.

⁵⁵Collins, *Christian Counseling*, 572.

⁵⁶Clinton and Langberg, *The Quick Reference Guide*, 21.

biblically-based counseling that includes forgiveness and leads the women away from the choice of abortion and toward other options.⁵⁷ Moore speaks of the effectiveness of an attitude of adoption among the members of the local church in combating the attitude of abortion.⁵⁸ On a practical level, Schlossberg and Achtemeier recommend that the church clear the bureaucratic path with a ministry for those who may want to choose adoption over that of abortion.⁵⁹ And then Craig reminds the church that there are other “social services,” such as day care and medical benefits, that serve to meet the practical needs of women who choose life over death for their unborn children.⁶⁰ The point in the church offering these services is for women to see that alternatives to abortion are readily available.⁶¹

Where the woman is in need of housing, Wells and Quash challenge the members of the body of Christ, according to James 2:15-17, to make their homes available to the mother and child.⁶² Vandrunen assures that, “Christians who show love to one another, not merely in word but also in action, exhibit a true pro-life ethic. When they uphold their sisters and brothers experiencing unwanted and/or unplanned pregnancies, and pledge their time and resources to contribute to the care that these children will require, they bestow profound assistance to those who might otherwise

⁵⁷Garton, “Where are the Shepherds?,” 231; Stanley Grenz, *Sexual Ethics: A Biblical Perspective* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1990), 160.

⁵⁸Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48

⁵⁹Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 121.

⁶⁰Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers*, 124.

⁶¹Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers*, 124; Stephanie J. Smith, “Post-Abortion Syndrome—Fact or Fiction?” in *Bioethics and the Future of Medicine: A Christian Appraisal*, ed. John F. Kilner, Nigel M de S Cameron, and David L. Schiedermayer (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 169.

⁶²Wells and Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 326; Grenz, *Sexual Ethics*, 167.

succumb to the pressures to abort that society often imposes.”⁶³

A Call for the Church to Respond Rightly

Many professionals who have written about what women faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion need from the church are consistent. They call and challenge the local church to begin to meet the needs of women by preaching the entire Word of God. By rightly preaching the entire Word of God, not only will the church exhibit a critical mark of the church but the impact will potentially be exponential. Scharf emphasizes that it is the preaching of the Word of God that serves to meet a critical need for women to be theologically equipped to respond to ethical dilemmas with biblical wisdom.⁶⁴ Willke, who was founder and a past president of the National Right to Life Committee, was adamant in his remarks that “If, in fact, such widespread preaching had been part of the anti-abortion movement from the beginning, it may well be that abortion would not be legal today.”⁶⁵

Then, in addition to the need for “the whole counsel of God,” “the Word of God,” or “widespread preaching,” it is critical to address the value and need of preaching specifically about God’s standards for relationships, and the gift of sex inside of marriage.⁶⁶ Regular preaching on these topics help to influence young men and women to embrace God’s gift of marriage (Eph 5:22-33) and adhere to God’s standards for sexual purity (1 Cor 6:12-20). To the extent that God’s standard for sexual purity is

⁶³Vandrunen, *Bioethics and the Christian Life*, 166.

⁶⁴Greg R. Scharf, “Wisdom from Preaching,” in *Why the Church Needs Bioethics: A Guide to Wise Engagement with Life’s Challenges*, ed. John F. Kilner (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 268-69; John F. Kilner, “Bioethics and a Better Birth,” in *Why the Church Needs Bioethics: A Guide to Wise Engagement with Life’s Challenges*, ed. John F. Kilner (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 87.

⁶⁵Jack Willke, M.D., “For Better or Worse,” in *Back to the Drawing Board: The Future of the Pro-Life Movement*, ed. Teresa R. Wagner (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2003), 131.

⁶⁶Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 113.

violated outside of marriage, marriage may also be considered an alternative to abortion.

As discussed in chapter 2, Schlossberg and Achtemeier emphasize the need for preaching that informs the two ordinances of the Protestant church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Without this type of preaching, the ordinances serve as empty rituals rather than visual reminders of God's sacrificial love for human life, even in the womb. Informed by preaching, baptism and the Lord's Supper remind those who participate in these ordinances of the value of human life. Schlossberg and Achtemeier suggest that the Protestant church meets the needs of the woman faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion as the marks of the church, preaching and the administration of ordinances, thoroughly reflect what the church believes on the issue of life and abortion.⁶⁷

Seminal Research

The research discussed in this section was conducted from 10 to almost 40 years ago, and is still important to understanding how women resolve a moral conflict. There is no known record of more current research in this area.

Much is written about the need for preaching that serves to shape the consciences of women who are faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, or women who are most likely to face an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, so that these women are well prepared to apply biblical wisdom to their circumstances. However, research suggests that women who have been exposed to sound preaching may not make biblically sound decisions when it comes to the resolution of unwanted or unplanned pregnancies.

In fact, in 1980, Carol Gilligan conducted an abortion study to understand how women resolve the conflict that may exist between what they know to be morally right

⁶⁷Schlossberg and Achtemeier, *Not My Own*, 2; Moore, "Abortion and the Gospel."

and the morally wrong decision to abort.⁶⁸ Gilligan concluded that women faced with decisions that challenge their morals beliefs are more likely to decide against their morals and rationalize the decision in order to preserve relationships.⁶⁹

This is also seen in a more recent study conducted in 2004 by researchers for the Guttmacher Institute.⁷⁰ The data show that although women may know abortion is sinful, they rationalize their decision to abort by choosing what they may consider to be the lesser sin.⁷¹ Protestant women were not targeted and the religious affiliation of the women was not reported in either study.

One final study of note was conducted by Lifeway Research in 2008. Protestant pastors were asked to share their views on abortion and how often they discuss their beliefs with the congregation.⁷² Of the 1,002 pastors surveyed, 75 percent described themselves as pro-life. According to Ed Stetzer, vice president of Life Way Research and Ministry Development at the time, “42 percent of all Protestant pastors rarely or never speak on the subject.”⁷³ Ninety-seven percent of the pro-life pastors agree with the statement, “Our church considers Scripture to be the authority for our church and our lives.” If this statement from prolife pastors is true, why is the percentage of Protestant pastors who rarely or never speak on the subject of abortion so great, at 42 percent?

⁶⁸Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), introduction.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 44,74.

⁷⁰Finer et al., “Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions,” 118.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷²Rob Phillips, “Protestant Pastors Share Views on Gay Marriage, Abortion,” November 23, 2009, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/LifeWay-Research>.

⁷³*Ibid.*

Conclusion

The local church must be an advocate for the unborn, those persons made in the image and likeness of God who cannot advocate for themselves. Moore says that “pro-life advocacy cannot be left to parachurch political activist organizations, as important as these are.”⁷⁴ The local church cannot buy into the worldview that separates the church from the State. To do so, is to defer to the secular culture on the issue of life.

The local church is responsible for protecting life made in the image and likeness of God, and ministering to women and men faced with a moral crisis. But the church can fail to be a safe place to make an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion known. Post-abortive women say that church members are judgmental of single women who are pregnant, and ill-prepared to help with options.

To the extent that church leaders and women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies continue to remain silent about the issue of abortion, society’s pro-abortion message is more clearly heard. However, before the local church can effectively prepare and respond to unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and/or abortions, the pastor and ministry leaders, must be informed about the occurrence of abortion, its consequences, and the reasons that women choose abortion for their unborn children.

Roland Warren, president and CEO of Care Net, is hopeful. He gives the following words of encouragement, “While much work needs to be done to equip the church to help women and men with their pregnancy decisions, there are positive signs that many churches will be receptive to efforts to implement programming that addresses this need.”⁷⁵

In doing so, the local church must present a safe environment of trust, and

⁷⁴Moore, “The Gospel according to Jane Roe,” 48.

⁷⁵Lisa Cannon Green, “Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church,” Life Way Research, sponsored by Care Net, November 23, 2015, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://lifewayresearch.com/?s=Abortion>.

equip members to extend the grace that God extends to them (2 Cor 12:9). As the grace of God is preached, it must also be demonstrated by the local congregation. Chapell says, “The grace of God is the magnet that draws persons away from sin. But if those who say they represent grace are unloving, that grace has no apparent power.”⁷⁶

⁷⁶Bryan Chapell. *The Hardest Sermons You'll Ever Have to Preach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 31.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to develop a model of the actively prolife church for OHCC located in Detroit, Michigan for Southern Baptist churches also located in Detroit to progress toward becoming actively prolife. The model includes strategic priorities of an actively prolife church based on OHCC, is an actively prolife National Baptist church. The model was developed from data gathered through surveys completed by the women of OHCC, interviews with the pastor and ministry leaders of OHCC, and from Bible study sessions and other events. The data used to develop the model was first used to develop a case study of OHCC. The purpose of the case study is to inform the data gathered through the surveys.

Survey Questionnaire

The female members of OHCC were surveyed using the Organization Perception Questionnaire. The OPQ was written by Ernest Schuttenberg for the purpose of identifying and prioritizing organizational processes and outcomes to be targeted for change based on perceptions of employees. OPQ was published by McGraw-Hill in *The Consultant's Big Book of Reproducible Surveys and Questionnaires*, edited by Mel Silberman. The publisher gives the original purchaser of this resource access to a downloadable version of the questionnaire, as well as permission to copy and customize or edit the questionnaire for the user's audience. The OPQ has been modified based on input from an expert panel of prolife leaders and the members of the Research Ethics Committee of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The modified OPQ was subsequently field-tested and further modified based on the results of the field test. The

field test is described in appendix 2.

In the final version of the OPQ, women are asked about their perceptions of how the church *now* responds to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion, and their perceptions of how the church *should* respond to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.

The chairperson of the Detroit Pregnancy Test & Help Center, a member of OHCC, coordinated the promotion, distribution and gathering of the questionnaires. The survey process was promoted during Sunday worship. A sign was posted and a specific location designated for picking up a paper survey and pen, and a designated location for returning the completed survey. Women took surveys and returned completed surveys over an 8-week period. Twenty-one completed surveys were returned.

For the purposes of this project, the project manager used 12 of the 21 surveys. The 12 surveys were completed according to the instructions provided in the OPQ, and/or the project manager was able to reasonably interpret the responses. Of the 9 surveys that were not used, those who participated in the survey did not use the response scale described in the OPQ, and/or the project manager was unable to reasonably interpret the responses.

Analysis of the Data

As the completed surveys were received, the responses were scored and change targets were identified. Change targets are those survey items that require substantial change in how the church responds to women who experience unplanned or unwanted pregnancies, and/or abortions. The survey items were identified as change targets if the response in column A of the OPQ was 4 or less and the response in column B of the OPQ was 2 or more numbers higher or lower than the number in column A. In column A, the women recorded their perceptions of how the church *now* responds to

women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, and/or abortion. In column B, the women recorded their perceptions of how the church *should* respond.

The women who participated in the survey were asked to respond to a total of 33 items. Seventeen of the items dealt specifically with the church, while 16 of the items dealt specifically with ministry. A total of 30 items were identified as change targets for OHCC. Sixteen of the change targets were church items and 14 of the change targets were ministry items. The change targets are displayed here in figure 1 and figure 2.

However, before accepting these items as change targets for OHCC, the difference between the responses in column A of the OPQ and the responses in column B were subjected to a *t*-test to ensure that the differences were not simply the result of chance or sampling error. Because this project calls for a comparison of the church as it is now and as it should be, according to the same women, the *t*-test for dependent samples was used.

The null hypothesis for this project is that there is no difference between the means of the response scores for the change targets of OHCC as the church is now and as the church should be.

The research hypothesis states that there is a difference in the response scores for the change targets of OHCC as the church is now and as the church should be.

Because the response scores for how the church should be (column B) can be higher or lower than the response scores for how the church is now (column A), the research hypothesis is a two-tailed, directional research hypothesis.¹

The α value is set at .05 which means that the probability is less than 5% on any one test of the null hypothesis that the difference between the average response scores is due to chance only.

¹Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2011), 210.

The *t*-test was applied to the church change items, and then to the ministry change items. In both cases, the absolute value of the *t* Stat result was larger than the *t* Critical two-tail value, and the α value was less than .05.

<i>Church items identified by the women of OHCC as change targets</i>
1. The church is a safe place for women to seek help without condemnation.
3. The issue of abortion and unplanned/unwanted pregnancy is a prayer concern for the church body.
4. Abortion is a topic of preaching and teaching.
5. The church is concerned with solving the problem of abortion in society.
6. The church equips members to discuss the issue of abortion in public.
7. The church makes changes as new or unique conditions and needs arise for women.
8. The ministries and work groups that make up the church work together to minister to women.
9. Leaders keep abreast of outside developments (i.e. legislation) affecting the church and how it ministers to women.
10. The response of women being ministered to (members and non-members) influences changes made to the church.
11. The ministry leaders correctly interpret the impact of current events and trends in the area of abortion and/or abortion-prevention on the church.
12. The church meets its ministry goals.
13. The church commits money, time, and knowledge to a solution for the problem of abortion both within the church and society.
14. I understand the goals of the church for ministering to women.
15. The church is aware of new discoveries and methods of ministry.
16. The church is directly involved in helping to alleviate the problem of abortion in society in addition to producing its primary ministry.
17. The church foresees potential problems in the accomplishment of its ministry goals.

Figure 1. Church items identified as change targets for OHCC

<i>Ministry items identified by the women of OHCC as change targets</i>
1. The ministry is up to date.
2. Those leaders responsible for the ministry provide leadership.
3. Ministry leaders are concerned about how those outside the church view the effectiveness of the ministry.
4. Ministry leaders want to hear how members feel—both pro and con.
5. The ideas and desires of the church-members influence changes that are made to the ministry.
6. I have the opportunity to use my abilities in ministering to women.
7. The church makes changes as new or unique conditions and needs arise for women.
8. I am kept informed about issues (i.e. medical, political) I need to know.
9. I feel free to risk trying new ideas and methods.
10. The ministry offers sidewalk counseling.
11. I am involved in the planning and decision-making.
12. I feel free to suggest new ways of ministering to women.
13. Those in positions of authority are responsive to my suggestions.
14. God's hope of healing is shared with women who have chosen abortion.

Figure 2. Ministry items identified as change targets for OHCC

Therefore, for the specific church items identified as change targets, there is a statistically significant difference between how women perceive the current response of the church to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, and/or abortion, versus the desired response of the church to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion ($t_{(11)} = 2.332, p < .039702$).

With respect to the ministry items identified as change targets, there is a statistically significant difference between how women perceive the current response of the church to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, and/or abortion, versus the desired response of the church to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion ($t_{(11)} = 3.411, p < .005813$).

Therefore, it is recommended that the processes and outcomes related to the 30 change targets for OHCC be examined for potential change.

Demographic results. Those women who participated in the survey provided demographic data about themselves, although none of the data identified the women personally. The demographic data have to do with age, abortion experience, marital status, ethnicity and education, and are all displayed in tables 2 thru 7.

Table 2. Age Range

<i>Age range</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>
Under 20	0
20-24	1
25-29	1
30-34	2
35-39	2
40 or Older	6

While this project deals with a relatively small sample size, there are some data that are especially noteworthy. For example, the older women were more likely to participate in the survey. Of the 12 women who participated, half were age 40 or older. Only 2 women, aged 20 through 29, participated in the survey.

Table 3. Abortion experience

<i>Question</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Do you know anyone who had an abortion?	12	
Have you had an abortion?	3	9

With respect to abortion experience, all 12 of the women who participated in the survey reported knowing someone who had an abortion, and 25 percent of the women responded “yes” to the question, “Have you had an abortion?”

Table 4. Marital status

<i>Question</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Not married</i>
What is your marital status?	6	6

Table 5. Ethnicity

<i>Question</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>
What is your ethnicity?		12			

Table 6. Education

<i>Question</i>	<i>< High School</i>	<i>High School diploma or GED</i>	<i>Some college</i>	<i>College degree or higher</i>
What level of education have you completed?	0	1	7	4

Half of the women reported being married and half identified themselves as unmarried. While the membership of OHCC is not 100 percent Black, it is predominantly Black. All 12 of the survey respondents identified themselves as Black. The majority of the respondents had at least some college education.

Interviews

The chairperson of the board of the DPTHC is also a member of OHCC. She was interviewed for the purpose of gathering data to develop a case study. The interview questions can be found in appendix 4. Other data used to develop the case study was

gathered from a brief conversation with the pastor and women's ministry director. Data were also taken from the OHCC website, the DPTHC website, promotional literature, and gathered from attendance at, and participation in, Bible study and prolife events. The case study serves to inform the data gathered through the OPQ.

Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities presented here were developed based on the characteristics, structure and practices of OHCC, as an actively prolife church located in Detroit, Michigan. Data was gathered about OHCC by way of questionnaires, interviews, observation and participation, and taken from websites and literatures. The priorities include a model of an actively prolife church located in Detroit, and a timeline to aid Southern Baptist churches as they advance toward becoming actively prolife.

The strategic priorities were presented, in PowerPoint format, at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting of Southern Baptist pastors. Thirteen pastors, deacons, associate ministers, or assistant pastors were present. They represented 10 churches. Seven of the 10 churches were located in Detroit. Five pastors of Detroit churches were present.

Those in attendance asked a few questions. In response, the presenter clarified that the research applied to induced abortions only. It was further explained that the Guttmacher Institute reports that women may travel up to 25 miles to access an abortion clinic.² In response to one request, the presenter provided all of those in attendance with a list of resources, also included here.

²Guttmacher Institute, "State Facts About Abortion Michigan," accessed November 4, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/state-facts-about-abortion-michigan>.

Case Study of Oasis of Hope Christian Church an Actively Pro-life Church in Detroit, Michigan

This case study of Oasis of Hope Christian Church helps to inform the data gathered through the Organization Perception Questionnaire. In other words, the case study provides a snapshot of the actively pro-life church being evaluated. As the women, members of OHCC, scored the church's response to women faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion, the case study helps the reader to know what was being evaluated. And when the female members scored how the church should respond, based on their perceptions, the reader understands the basis for the scores. The case study was developed based on data gathered from interviews, websites, YouTube, promotional literature, and observations, as well as participation in Bible study, fundraisers and pro-life events.

Background

Oasis of Hope Christian Church is a National Baptist church located in Detroit, Michigan's largest city. OHCC's location is on the cusp of Highland Park. Highland Park is a small city of about 11,000 residents located inside of Detroit. OHCC has about 500 members. Not all of the members are actively involved in the church life.

OHCC is also located about one-mile road from the boundary line that separates the city of Detroit from the suburbs. This distance and the relationship of OHCC to the suburbs is noteworthy because the Guttmacher Institute reports that in 2008, one-third of U.S. abortion patients traveled more than 25 miles one way to obtain an abortion.³ A popular abortion clinic is located in a Detroit suburb, less than 9 miles from OHCC.

³Guttmacher Institute, "State Facts About Abortion Michigan," accessed November 4, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/state-facts-about-abortion-michigan>.

The history of OHCC can be traced back to 1945 under the name of Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church. However, it is under the current pastorate, which began in 1995, when the church started to earn the reputation of an actively prolife church. OHCC's mission and vision statement is "to love God, to love others, and to magnify the name of Jesus Christ. The vision of our church is to glorify our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, to make true disciples throughout all the nations by teaching and applying the Word of God through the means of community and missionary activity and support. We want to magnify the name of Jesus!" The stated purpose and/or goals of each ministry speak of how OHCC's mission and vision will be accomplished.

The Pastorate of OHCC

It is said that OHCC's pastor *is* prolife, much like one would say that a man or woman *is* Christian. The emphasis is that he does not need to tell people that he is prolife, they know by talking to him and/or observing him. And so it is with the church. OHCC does not advertise that it is a prolife church. Visitors or new members sitting in the pews first learn that the church is prolife from the preaching. The pastor does not necessarily plan to preach prolife sermons. He preaches, and his prolife views are often interspersed regardless of the specific sermon topic.

While the pastor preaches a biblical view of human life and against abortion from the pulpit, he also preaches the message in more public forums. The pastor regularly joins with members of other prolife groups, such as Right to Life of Michigan, The National Black Prolife Congress and Citizens for a Pro-life Society, in public forums to speak against abortion and for the sanctity of human life. The pastor sets the example for members to do the same. Because of the pastor's relationship with prolife organizations, OHCC's members have access to opportunities to participate in prolife events and to learn how to respond to the pro-choice culture.

The Ministries of OHCC

OHCC's pastorate is known for its investment in the lives of young people through youth ministries that emphasize character development. These ministries emphasize love for others by cultivating Christ-like character in young people that is exhibited through godly attitudes and behaviors. The ministries are named, Destined Teens, Girls With Virtue and Young Warriors. While the young people are engaged through wholesome activities, like interactive games, movies, and puppet and clown performances, they also participate in discussions about discipline, purity, hygiene, relationships and etiquette, to name a few. These discussions are a critical part of the ministries and therefore, communicate the value and importance of their lives to the future of the church and the community.

Oasis Women of Virtue is a discipleship ministry for adult women. The ministry's purpose statement is, "That women will experience real and tangible help through the ministry of sisterhood and continued filling of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to work in the spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Like the youth ministries, the women's ministry provides a safe place for women to discuss issues of a personal nature without judgement and condemnation but with a biblical response.

The men's ministry, Oasis Men of Integrity, also a discipleship ministry, complements the women's ministry with its stated purpose and goals. The purpose statement is, "This ministry was established to bring Christ-centered men together to develop vital relationships that would allow them to become godly influences in the world." Some of the goals that the men emphasize include sexual purity, building biblical families and marriages, obedience to the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20), and reaching beyond denominational barriers to promote unity.

The communities that surround OHCC are served by Food for Hope, an outreach ministry of the church. Through this ministry, OHCC seeks to "edify God by

serving our brothers and sisters: Humbly, With Respect, and Self-Sacrifice.” The vision statement reads: “To serve as an Oasis of Hope within the community combating the plight of a poverty stricken neighborhood through meals, prayer, evangelism and discipleship.”

It is through these ministries, Oasis Men of Integrity, Oasis Women of Virtue, the youth ministries, and Food for Hope that members of the church continue to learn about the value of human life and the practice of valuing human lives.

Another important, even critical, ministry of the church is the Biblical Counseling ministry. Any member of OHCC who has a desire may serve as a counselor in this ministry. However, the member must successfully complete four levels of biblical counseling training.

The ministries of OHCC provide a safe place to deal with, from a biblical perspective, character traits, lifestyle issues and behaviors that often pave the road to or away from an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.

The Church-based Pregnancy Resource Center

All of the ministries described thus far are resources available to young people, women and men, including women faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion. However, The Detroit Pregnancy Test & Help Center, also a resource for the woman faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion, provides resources that the other ministries do not. The Center is described as church-based because it is a ministry of the OHCC, located in the church, but serves the community.

The DPTHC was the pastor’s vision. When talking to the pastor about the Center, he will quickly acknowledge God as the source of his vision. In fact, at a recent event, the pastor explained that he was praying in his study when God spoke in a vision

and said, “I want you to start a crisis pregnancy center.” A short time later, the pastor learned that the executive team of Care Net-National had been praying, around the same time, about planting a center in Detroit. That was in 2009. Subsequently, the pastor appointed a steering committee for DPTHC from the members of OHCC. The chairperson is a nurse who once held the position of Director of Health Clinics for the city of Detroit. Many of the other members appointed to the committee brought specific knowledge and/or experience needed.

The DPTHC is a Care Net affiliate. In 2010, the president of Care Net traveled to Detroit to facilitate training of the board members. That same year the Center opened its doors to the members of the church and the community. All services are free and there are no residency requirements. Those seeking services from the DPTHC are not required to be Christian or a member of a local church.

The Center’s mission statement reads: “Our mission is to support life for women and families facing pregnancy-related crisis by providing compassionate care and hope through the life changing ministry of Jesus Christ.” The woman who seeks assistance from the DPTHC can expect to receive a pregnancy test, after which staff will share three options: parent, adopt or abort. The woman must decide for herself. However, the woman who chooses to parent her unborn child will receive care and support for up to one year of the child’s life. The care and support may include housing accommodations, materials resources, such as clothing and food, and parenting classes. Some resources, such as housing, are not provided by DPTHC, directly, but through partnerships with other organizations. Bible study is offered but attendance is not mandatory. The woman may choose to voluntarily attend Bible study.

The DPTHC has been located in the basement of the OHCC, and a large sign has been posted on the fence outside of the church to inform the community. However,

the board recently signed a lease to operate out of a separate building located in Detroit, about four miles from the church.

The DPTHC is not directly funded by OHCC. However, DPTHC has been housed in the OHCC building without the expense of rent or utilities. These expenses will be added to DPTHC's budget with the change of location. Individual donors have been the source of funding to date.

**Strategic Priorities for the Actively Pro-life
Southern Baptist Church located in
Detroit, Michigan**

One distinctive mark of the Southern Baptist Convention is its commitment to protecting human life in the womb. Southern Baptists point to Genesis 1:26 to define the value of the unborn, which is human life made by God himself, in his image and likeness. Yet of the fifteen Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit, Michigan, none can be defined as actively pro-life. At the same time, Detroit residents accounted for 24 percent of all the 25,348 abortions performed in Michigan during 2016.⁴

The strategic priorities presented here were developed to provide Southern Baptist churches a tool to help advance toward an actively pro-life status. The strategic priorities are presented in a model of the actively pro-life church for Detroit and include an action plan for the local church to realize this model.

It is understood that not all of the fifteen Southern Baptist churches will start from the same point nor will the churches progress at the same rate. Resources, culture and current knowledge about abortion are some of the factors that can impact, positively or negatively, the progress of the local church toward an actively pro-life status.

⁴Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, "Induced Abortions in Michigan, January 1 through December 31, 2017," (Lansing April 2017), accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/annuals/Abortion%202016.pdf>, 1, 14.

Background

The Greater Detroit Baptist Association is a network of 42 Southern Baptist churches that, generally, serve Wayne County, Michigan. Fifteen of the churches are located in Detroit, Michigan's largest city. Yet, none of the 15 Southern Baptist churches can be defined as actively prolife.

A local church is defined as actively prolife if it meets the four criteria of an actively prolife church.⁵ First, the actively prolife church starts with the prolife pastor. Research conducted by Lifeway Research confirms that the pastor's position on abortion is directly related to whether or not he preaches on the sanctity of human life and the issue of abortion.⁶ Precedent literature on the topic of abortion and the Protestant church is consistent. The pastor must rightly preach the entire Word of God. Next, members of the actively prolife church must be equipped to engage members of the culture with a biblical basis for the prolife view. Of course, the pastor is responsible for equipping the members of his congregation, whether teaching them directly or organizing and implementing a ministry structure for teaching and equipping.

The third criterion for an actively prolife church is a process or ministry for healing and restoration, which includes forgiveness, of those who fall victim to sexual sin. In other words, the pastor not only preaches against sexual sin, including abortion, but also preaches forgiveness for those who have given into sexual sin.

The fourth and final criterion requires that the pastor confronts the fear or concern that abortion distracts from the gospel of Jesus Christ. The truth is that abortion wars against the gospel of Jesus Christ, and must be confronted. In John 3:16 it states: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in

⁵Scott Klusendorf, *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), 209-16.

⁶Rob Phillips, "Protestant Pastors Share Views on Gay Marriage, Abortion," accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Lifeway-Research-protestant-pastors-share-views-on-gay-marriage-abortion>.

Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” While God’s sacrifice demonstrates the highest value for human life, man’s actions, by way of abortion, demonstrate great disregard for human life.

Detroit residents accounted for 6100 of the 25,348 abortions reported in the state of Michigan during 2016.⁷ According to the Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood, about 30 percent of U.S. abortion patients self-report as Protestant.⁸ These numbers call for local Southern Baptist churches to respond to the women in the pews and the women in the community faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion.

The woman faced with an unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancy often considers abortion because of certain needs that she believes will go unmet if she carries the baby to term. Those needs are material, financial and relational. The material needs add financial needs. And, women in this situation long for supportive relationships during the pregnancy and afterwards, as well as after an abortion.

While the abortion procedure brings the pregnancy to an end, there are physical, emotional and spiritual consequences. Some of the physical consequences may be cancer, infertility or sleeplessness. The emotional consequences can include guilt, anger, or depression. And finally, with respect to spiritual consequences, many Christian women are unable to believe that God forgives the act of abortion.

⁷Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, “Induced Abortions in Michigan, January 1 through December 31, 2017,” (Lansing: April 2017) accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/annuals/Abortion%202016.pdf>, 1, 14.

⁸Guttmacher Institute, “Induced Abortion in the United States,” Fact Sheet January 2017, accessed March 22, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>.

The Model Actively Pro-life Church in Detroit, Michigan

The model for an actively pro-life Southern Baptist church in Detroit is based on the analysis of an actively pro-life church located in Detroit, outside of the Southern Baptist denomination. The church's doctrine is similar to that of Southern Baptists, and the church faces the same political, ideological and cultural strongholds that stand against a pro-life worldview.

The analysis of the actively pro-life church located in Detroit, and research related to abortion and the Protestant church yielded the model found in Figure 3. This model serves as a tool to advance Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit toward an actively pro-life status. The practices in the model are described here.

Preach. The precedent literature is consistent. The pastor must rightly preach the entire Word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:2). The pastor must preach against abortion, and the behaviors (fornication) and lifestyles (cohabitation) that create a market for abortion. Further, the pastor must preach for the behaviors (sexual purity) and lifestyles (marriage) that lead to God's plan for life.

In preparation, pastors must educate themselves about the product and the marketing strategy of the abortion culture. A marketing strategy often draws the consumer's attention from the actual product to something subjective. For example, as a marketing strategy for an automobile may promote luxury and/or prestige over the vehicle, the marketing strategy for abortion may promote convenience and privacy over the life of an unborn child. Knowledge of how the abortion culture opposes the life of the unborn child, helps the pastor to be more strategic in his preaching (2 Tim 3:16).

Although women who experience or may experience unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortions represent the target audience, the pastor is also preaching to members of the church body who should stand ready to support women in such circumstances (Gal 5:14; Eph 4:12).

Teach and equip. Discipleship ministries where members are taught how to live for Christ are to include goals that regularly address behaviors and lifestyles accepted by the culture but with biblical responses. The ministries must be safe havens, where members (and in some cases lost folks) can share their life experiences, issues, pressures and failures without judgment but with compassion (Jude 22-23).⁹

It is in these ministries where women and men, ask questions and learn from wise leaders and other believers how to apply the preached word and the written word to their life experiences. In so doing, the Word of God shapes the morals and values of these men and women, and brings their lifestyles in line with God's standard. (Gal 5:16-17; Eph 4:14-16; 21-24).

Serve. It is not unusual for women to find it difficult to forgive themselves or to believe that God forgives an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.¹⁰ However, neither abortion nor the sins of sexual immorality are unpardonable (Matt 12:31-32). God will forgive these sins and use the experiences to help others who may be struggling with the same behaviors (Rom 8:28). Therefore, as members learn to live for Christ, experience the forgiveness of the cross and are restored from past sins and hurts, they must have the opportunity to minister to and meet the needs of others who may have had similar experiences (2 Cor 1:3-7). The church must make this opportunity available through discipleship ministries, such as counseling, teaching and others. This opportunity is especially important for post-abortive women to experience forgiveness and emotional healing. The trust extended to them to minister to others is practical evidence in their

⁹Diana Greene Foster, Heather Gould, Jessica Taylor, and Tracy A. Weitz, "Attitudes and Decision Making Among Women Seeking Abortions at One U.S. Clinic," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 44, no. 2 (2012): 117-24.

¹⁰Lisa Cannon Green, "Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church," Life Way Research, sponsored by Care Net, November 23, 2015, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://lifewayresearch.com/?s=Abortion>.

lives that their forgiveness is certain and God continues to value human life after the fall (I John 1:9; Rom 8:34).

Meet needs. Before the need arises, members of the local church must determine where they stand on life and how they will respond to the needs that an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy and/or abortion brings to the congregation (Eph 4:11-12; Jas 2:14-26). The research shows that women faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and women who are post-abortive have financial, material and/or relational needs.¹¹ These needs provide the opportunity for members of the actively prolife church to demonstrate practical evidence of their faith (Jas 2:14-26). Since the needs in these circumstances are already known, members of the local church now have the opportunity to put into place a plan for meeting the needs (Gal 5:14).

In the actively prolife church, the practices described here do not operate in silos. Instead, the entire Word of God, rightly preached, flows down from the pulpit to equip men and women to serve, and therefore, meet the needs of the women (and men) who are faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion.

Action Plan

Presented here are action steps suggested for Detroit's Southern Baptist churches to progress toward actively prolife status. Steps that may be taken immediately include the following:

1. Pray. An actively prolife stance is a spiritual battle that can be traced back to the garden. It can only be fought with prayer (Gen 2:17; 3:4; Eph 6:18).
2. Prepare and preach a prolife message. The pastor learns as he prepares and preaches prolife messages, and the congregation learns as the pastor begins to deliver prolife messages. Those who sit in the congregation will know the position of the church by the messages preached.

¹¹Lawrence B. Finer, et al., "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 37, no. 3 (2005):110-18.

3. Talk to someone who has been restored from sexual sin to learn the hurt of sexual sin and the needs of the person before, during and after.

The following action steps may be taken within about a month:

1. Invite a prolife speaker to the church. Local pregnancy resource centers often have a speakers' bureau or can recommend experienced Christian prolife speakers.
2. Examine the mission and goals of the church and its ministries. If necessary rewrite or tweak the language to address issues such as discipline and purity.
3. Identify potential prolife leaders for the ministries of the church. Just as the prolife pastor sets the tone for the church, the prolife ministry leader sets the tone for the ministry.

The following action item may be more long-term, requiring about six months or a year:

1. Identify the specific material, relational and financial needs of women who are faced with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion, and plan how the church body and individual members of the church will meet those needs as they surface (Jas 2:15-16).

Conclusion

Don't allow your church to be caught off guard as a woman faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion makes herself known in your congregation. Make your church a safe place where women can come forth without fear of judgment or condemnation but to open arms of compassion.

Resources

Some pregnancy resource centers, a foster care and adoption service, and educational resources available to the Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit are listed here.

Care Net Pregnancy Center Berkley/Detroit
13864 Grand River Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48227
313-243-1267
After Hours Care: 800-712-HELP
Carenetberkleydetroit.org

Detroit Pregnancy Test & Help Center
933 West Seven Mile at Woodward
Detroit, Michigan 48203
313-366-0888
www.dpthc.com

Bethany Christian Services
Missy Parker-Miller
Church Liasion
586-662-7317

National Black Pro-life Congress
P.O. Box 981084
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
Elder Levon R. Yuille
National Director
734-487-5678
www.joshustrail.org

Right to Life of Michigan
Rtl.org

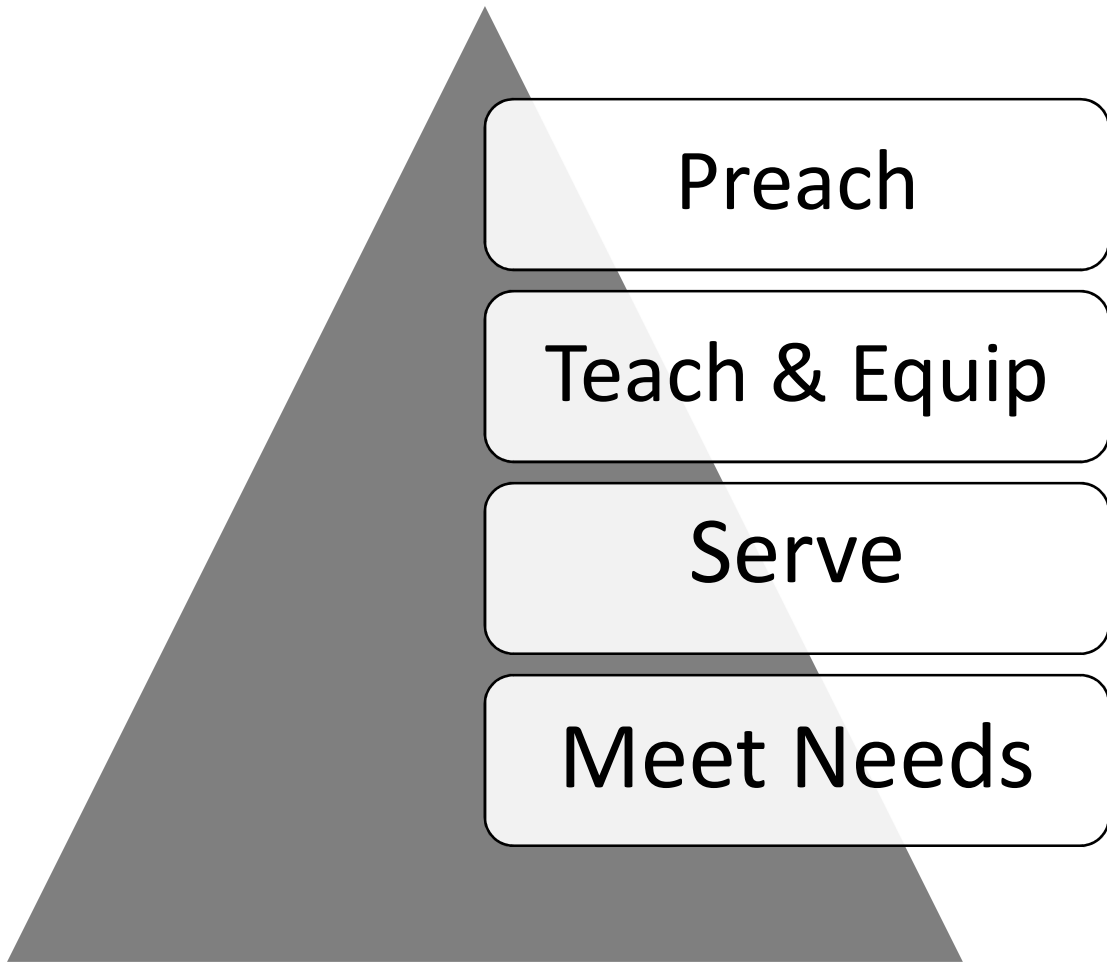


Figure 3: Model of an actively prolife church for Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit, Michigan

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The project described here began with an assessment of OHCC, as an actively prolife church located in Detroit, and ended with a presentation of strategic priorities to Southern Baptist churches also located in Detroit. The assessment of OHCC was the basis of the strategic priorities for the Southern Baptist churches to advance toward becoming actively prolife, a distinctive characteristic of Southern Baptists. This chapter of the report includes an evaluation of the project and my reflections, as the project manager.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project, as described in chapter 1, was to develop a model of an actively prolife church based on OHCC in Detroit, Michigan. The model was created for Southern Baptist churches also located in Detroit. The model included strategic priorities packaged along with an action plan for the Southern Baptist churches, none of which meet the definition of an actively prolife church.

Goals of the Project

The project described in this report was guided by four goals. The first goal was to allow the women of OHCC to assess the response of OHCC to the woman faced with an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy and/or abortion, *now*, and then how OHCC *should* respond. The women used the Organization Perception Questionnaire to make this assessment. By extending the opportunity to participate in this assessment to all women of the church, I was able to obtain input from women who may have faced an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion, as well as those women who may have been

vulnerable to such as experience, without identifying the women. The success of this goal was to be based on receipt of 10 completed surveys. Twenty-one surveys were received. I determined that 12 of the surveys were useful to this project.

The second goal of this project was to create a case study of OHCC for the purpose of informing the data gathered by way of the OPQ. The data used to create the case study was gathered by way of an interview with OHCC member and chairperson of the board of the DPTHC, a pregnancy resource center of OHCC. Data was also gathered from brief conversations with the pastor and women's ministry director. Both referred me to the chairperson. However, I attended a DPTHC-sponsored event where the pastor spoke about DPTHC's early start, including his vision for the center. I chose not to interview the executive director of DPTHC because of the turnover in the position. The executive director resigned one week after I contacted OHCC regarding this project. Subsequently, the position was filled two weeks later. However, data was gathered from DPTHC's website, as well as OHCC's website, You Tube and promotional literature. I also attended Bible study, prayer meeting, and prolife educational events, all of OHCC.

The third goal of this project was to prepare a model of OHCC as an actively prolife church located in Detroit. The model was a necessary tool to guide Southern Baptist churches toward actively prolife status. All of the data gathered through the OPQs, and the case study contributed to the creation of the model actively prolife church for Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit, Michigan. The model includes the strategic priorities for the churches.

The fourth and final goal was to develop strategic priorities for the pastors of the 15 Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit. The strategic priorities, created as a tool for the churches, included background information about the practice of abortion in Detroit, and the impact of abortion on women and the local church. The strategic priorities also included the model of the actively prolife church in Detroit and an action

plan for Southern Baptist churches to advance toward becoming actively prolife. The priorities were presented, by way of PowerPoint, to 13 pastors, deacons, assistant ministers and associate ministers of 10 churches located in Michigan. Seven of the 10 churches were Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit.

Strengths of the Project

There are four noteworthy strengths of this project. They are OHCC, the pastor, the chairperson of the board of the DPTHC, and the opportunity I had to participate in the life of OHCC.

With respect to actively prolife churches located in Detroit, one or two maybe Baptist but not Southern Baptist. There are some Catholic churches and a few churches that maybe nondenominational. While I cannot provide an exact number, I can speak with some authority. During my eleven years as a member of the Right to Life Advisory Committee, I sought to partner with churches in Detroit and its suburbs to educate the population about the impact of abortion in minority communities. Through my experience, I found OHCC to be the one actively prolife church located inside of Detroit that is doctrinally similar to that of Southern Baptists and serves the same population as the 15 Southern Baptist churches also located in Detroit. Therefore, the opportunity to develop a model based on OHCC is considered a strength.

Next, the pastor of OHCC *is* prolife, not just theoretically, but in spirit and in truth (John 4:21). Based on my experience, it is more the norm for pastors of pro-life churches (not necessarily actively pro-life) to silo the issue of life in women's ministry or a specific pro-life ministry of the church. This practice suggests that church members may choose to join the ministry or not to join. In other words, the members may choose to value human life or not. However, in the case of OHCC, the pastor is certain about where he stands on the moral issue of life, biblically and in practice. As a result, the issue of life and the need to respect and protect life permeates every ministry of OHCC. Each

ministry supports and complements the issue of life by targeting related issues, such as purity and discipline, not in women's ministry only but in all ministries of the church, including men's ministry. This approach allows all members of the church, as they are disciplined, to be shaped according to biblical principles on human life.

The third strength of this project is the chairperson of the board of DPTHC, not the position but the person. The chairperson is a member of OHCC and has proven leadership and administrative skills as the once director of health centers for the city of Detroit. She coordinated the task of promoting participation in the survey process among the women of OHCC, which was critical to the success of this project.

This was proven as the OPQ was field tested. As described in appendix 2, Church A of the field test did not have a coordinator for the survey process. Instead, the female members of Church A were asked to sign a petition if they wanted to participate in the survey. The names of the women were given to me, the project manager. I then coordinated the survey process although I was not known by the women of the church. I called the women and arranged for them to complete the OPQ. Only two women participated and two surveys were received for Church A.

In the case of this project and OHCC, I credit the chairperson of the board of DPTHC, her leadership ability, administrative skills and relationship with the women of OHCC, for being able to secure 21 completed OPQs. Twelve were useful.

The fourth strength of this project worth mentioning is the opportunity to participate in OHCC life. I attended about three Bible study and prayer meeting sessions. I also attended a fundraiser for the DPTHC, where the pastor spoke publicly about DPTHC's early start and his vision, as well as his position on the sanctity of human life and the church. I also had the opportunity to attend a prolife educational event where the pastor preached about the need to protect life in the womb. My participation in the life of the OHCC gave me direct exposure to the prolife culture of the church.

This type of exposure, participation in the life of the church, allowed me to experience, the prolife nature of the church, which is beyond the tangible and the visible. The prolife nature is the tangible and visible but is also the subjective DNA of the church. The prolife nature has to do with how comfortable the members are with the issue of life, and the extent to which the sanctity of life permeates the church life versus being compartmentalized in a specific ministry. As I participated in the life of OHCC, I realized that the prolife stance flows from the pulpit of OHCC and permeates every ministry of the church to the people in need.

Weaknesses of the Project

Early in the execution of this project, it became obvious that the men of OHCC should have been given a voice beyond that of the pastor of the church. The absence of input from the men is a weakness of this project. Society, including the legal system, excludes men from the choice women are faced with when they experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion. The choice or decision is said to be private, between a woman and her doctor.

However, the actively prolife church, unlike the pro-choice culture, ministers to the mother and/or the father of the unborn child when faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion according to biblical principles for family. Both men and women of OHCC are exposed to prolife sermons, and disciplined in ministries that are guided by goals that promote and encourage behaviors and lifestyles that value human life. And both men and women are encouraged to seek the support of DPTHC in time of crisis. Although the DPTHC presents three options in such situations, the Center provides an incentive for the mother and father to choose to parent the unborn child. The DPTHC will meet the needs of the child, including food, clothing, and housing accommodations, for up to one year of age.

The survey was conducted to provide a more complete picture of OHCC, as an actively prolife church. But without input from the men of the church, the picture is still incomplete.

The survey itself is another weakness of this project. The survey, the Organization Perception Questionnaire, was designed to identify organizational processes and outcomes that may need to be changed based on how those who complete the OPQ perceive those processes. The OPQ was also designed to help prioritize those processes for change. Those who completed the OPQ, scored each item listed. Therefore, the completed OPQs provided scores for specific organizational processes and outcomes with respect to the actively prolife church. The OPQ was not designed to provide an overall score for the organization. Therefore, the OPQ did not produce a score for OHCC, as an actively prolife church.

In fact, the results of the survey may suggest, on the surface, that OHCC is a poor example of an actively prolife church. Of the 33 church and ministry items scored by those who completed the OPQ, 30 of the items were identified as change targets. Change targets identify those survey items that suggest the need for substantial change in how the church responds to women who experience unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion. However, the scores do not measure the type of change required or the degree to which change may be required. In other words, the change targets identify *potential* areas of change. Where change is required (after review), the change may range anywhere from a slight modification or a major overhaul.

At best, the OPQ suggests the need for the actively prolife church to regularly seek input from those served and evaluate the church's processes and outcomes to ensure that the local church remains relevant to the needs of women who experience unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion.

Finally, the congregation of OHCC was subject to several life events that may have weakened the project, specifically the number of surveys completed and/or the survey results. For example, within a week after the pastor of OHCC agreed to participate in this project, the executive director of the DPTHC resigned (for a reason unrelated to this project). Next, as the fall weather turned colder, the church's boiler stopped operating. Consequently, the Sunday morning worship service was moved from the sanctuary to a smaller room, resulting in the cancellation of some afternoon services. Later, the DPTHC secured a building which would result in a move of the Center from the OHCC building. This move required the board of the DPTHC to assume a lease and, therefore, a monthly expense that was not required previously. Then the DPTHC board later hired a new executive director.

All of these events in the life of the church occurred concurrently and may have impacted the number of women who participated in the survey and/or how the women responded. It is my opinion that the events may have overwhelmed the women of the church and negatively impacted the number of participants.

What I Would do Differently

As the program manager, I consider this project to be a good foundation on which to build further and support the Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit to advance toward becoming actively prolife in their respective communities. However, if I were to execute this specific project again, I would make some definite changes, and then consider some other changes.

First, I would include the men of OHCC in the sample by interviewing the male ministry leaders for the case study and inviting male members of OHCC to participate in the survey. Although society and the culture routinely exclude the father from the decision to abort his unborn child, the actively prolife church does not. In fact, the actively prolife church disciple's men and women guided by goals that are consistent

with God's standards for family, sexual purity and discipline. However, if faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion, ministries of the church, such as biblical counseling, are not restricted to the woman but are also available to the father of the unborn child. Also, the DPTHC makes parenting classes available to the father, as well as the mother, and in fact, encourages participation on the part of the father.

Therefore, in order to have a more complete assessment of OHCC as an actively prolife church, input is needed from the men of OHCC.

Another definite change I would make to this project has to do with the survey, the Organization Perception Questionnaire. Although prolife experts, some on a national level, reviewed the questionnaire and provided input, the OPQ was lengthy and seemed somewhat complex. As the survey was field tested and used in the execution of the project, the participants did not complain or comment about the length or complexity of the OPQ. However, the survey did not allow for an overall rating of the church. Instead, the survey was designed to rate specific processes and outcomes within the church and did not provide an overall rating of the church as actively prolife.

In executing this same project again, I would design and test a survey that would result in an overall rating of the local church as actively prolife. The tasks required to do so, would be the same tasks that resulted in the OPQ used here. The OPQ was reviewed by prolife experts, revised, and field tested. Further, a simpler looking survey may encourage more women and men to participate.

Although I would definitely make the changes that I just described, there are some changes I may not make but I would at least consider making, if executing this same project once again.

For example, although there are Baptist churches located in Detroit that may periodically donate to a prolife cause, OHCC is the only Baptist church that has a prominent prolife presence. However, there is a nondenominational church, which is

evangelical in nature, that has a strong prolife presence in Detroit. An assessment of the nondenominational church as well as OHCC may provide a stronger project and, maybe, a more comprehensive model.

Another change worth considering would be the opportunity to interview women who actually experienced an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion while members of the church being assessed. It is not easy for women who have had an abortion to come forward for an interview in the context of the local church where they are members. Such an approach may require a financial incentive, and the interview may need to take place off site.

When conducting an educational workshop about abortion at another church, several years ago, a few women contacted me about their abortions. But they did so after the workshop. One or two contacted me in writing, while two women spoke to me about their abortions during a small group session. However, these two women had previously established trusting relationships with me.

Finally, I would provide more support to the Southern Baptist churches in the context of this project. The pastors of these churches were given my contact information when presented with the strategic priorities. However, as part of this project, I would follow-up to help execute next steps, which will more than likely be different for each church.

Theological Reflections

The issue of abortion has been politicized over the years. The Democratic party invites national pro-choice leaders to speak at its convention, and Republican candidates campaign on a prolife platform. This seems to suggest that choosing to abort, or not to abort, is as harmless as choosing to vote for a democrat or republican. Citizens have the right to vote for the candidate of their choice without revealing how they vote.

And so it is with abortion. The citizen has a right to privacy when choosing to abort her unborn child.

But the truth is that abortion is not a political issue. It is a tool used by Satan in a spiritual battle that dates back to the garden (Gen 2:8). In chapter 2 of Genesis, before sin and therefore death entered the world, God explained to man how to live under God's care. While man was allowed to eat freely of every tree in the garden that God created, there was one exception. Man was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To do so would result in certain death (v. 17). But later, the woman was deceived by the serpent who contradicted God's warning by suggesting that death was not certain (Gen 3:4). Although God said, "you shall surely die," the serpent said, "You will not surely die." God warned against death, then Satan, the serpent, warned against life. The woman, and then the man, doubted God's warning and acted accordingly by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and giving way to sin and death. Since that time, men and women have been dying. In fact, humans are born dying (Ps 51:5; Rom 5:12). God's warning was true. Satan's warning was deceptive.

Abortion is a tool used by Satan in his battle against life that God, himself, created in his image and likeness to represent God before his creation (Eph 6:12-13; Gen 1:26-27). Politicized, abortion is an effective tool. It is packaged with, and in, other platform issues such as education, health care and jobs. Therefore, if for no other reason, abortion looks like a basic need or right by its association with these other issues.

The issue of abortion does not belong to a political party, or in some cases, a specific religious denomination. Nor, is abortion a social issue that surfaced in 1973 with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Roe v Wade*.

Abortion must be seen for what it is, a tool of the enemy. As the prolife pastor preaches a biblical view of human life, which he does by definition, the pastor must de-

politicize the issue of abortion and present it for what it is. That is, a tool the enemy uses in a theological battle that dates back to, and can be traced back to, the garden.

By cracking the political shell that protects the issue of abortion, the pastor frees members of the local church to stand with God in the ongoing battle for life, regardless of personal politics and regardless of Satan's weapon of choice. In other words, instead of packaging abortion with basic issues necessary to quality of life, abortion will begin to be packaged with the other tools that Satan uses in his battle against human life (1 Cor 6:9-11). Then, maybe abortion will be seen for what it is, a tool of the serpent, Satan, the enemy, and not an entitlement.

Personal Reflections

I believed that God burdened my heart for the unborn more than a decade ago, in 2002. And, I had been ministering on that assumption as I served with Right to Life of Michigan and other prolife groups. But, as I worked through the project described here, it became clear to me that my burden is first for the mother of the unborn child and the aborted child. Why?

Of course, I do not want a child to be aborted or abused. But, those who support abortion of demand, seem to talk about the procedure as if it allows the woman to walk away unscathed, as if the pregnancy never occurred. But, that is not the case.

During the course of this project, I heard, second-hand, a testimony by the owner of a business located next door to an abortion clinic in Detroit. The owner witnessed young women vomiting in the parking lot after having undergone the abortion procedure. The business owner was so bothered he moved to a different location. Then there are those few post-abortive women who shared their experiences, in private. The women admitted to regularly thinking about their aborted children, although the abortions occurred years and in some cases decades ago.

The abortion procedure does not allow the woman to live as if the pregnancy never occurred and/or as if a child never existed. Regardless of what is said by abortion proponents, and regardless of the evidence of physical, emotional and spiritual consequences, the woman remembers. And the impact of those memories are then compounded by the physical, emotional and/or spiritual consequences of abortion.

For churches and/or those individuals in the woman's circle of influence to ignore the issue of abortion is like ignoring someone who is grieving over the loss of a loved one. It is like ignoring the woman sitting on the pew who lost a close family member, and/or refusing to acknowledge her grief over the loss of that family member. Would we ignore a member of our church whose spouse died?

When the local church refuses to speak to the issue of abortion in the church, the woman faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion is ignored, and she suffers through the grief and consequences, alone. For this reason, my concern is first for the woman, the mother of the unborn child.

Another, somewhat related issue, that surfaced for me in this project is the importance of relationship in ministry. Before this project, I certainly knew that relationship was important to life and consequently to ministry (Gen 2:18; Matt 22:39). However, this project allowed me to see the importance of cultivating relationships even during those down times, when it may seem as if we are not doing ministry.

As a member of the Right to Life of Michigan Advisory Committee for more than a decade, I worked with other committee members to partner with churches to educate their communities about abortion, and the impact on minorities, in particular. However, more often than not, the pastors would not respond to our request for a meeting. Or, for those who did respond, we were often allowed to make an initial presentation to their congregations, but there was no follow-up. I can see now that the

absence of relationship may have been at the root of the difficulty in developing a partnership.

For the past three years, I have been serving at the Greater Detroit Baptist Association, alongside the churches that represent the Association. Therefore, when I asked to present the strategic priorities of this project at a regularly scheduled meeting of pastors and ministry leaders, there was no hesitate. Further, those in attendance were receptive to the issue and presentation. They were engaged. They asked questions. And they asked for follow-up information. I attribute their engagement to the relationship that I had already established with the pastors and ministry leaders.

Another example of the importance of relationship can be found in the survey activity within OHCC. The chairperson of the board of DPTHC promoted the survey process, and coordinated the distribution of the surveys and the gathering of the surveys. It would have been easy for the pastor to delegate the task to his secretary or another ministry leader, but he did not. The chairperson had a great deal of credibility, influence and respect with the entire congregation, which made a difference in the number of completed surveys returned.

This realization suggests the importance of being intentional about cultivating and nurturing relationships, especially in ministry. I am not suggesting that relationships are to be valued because you may need their support one day. On the contrary, relationship is foundational to ministry in order to minister. People in need are much more receptive to those who have taken time to cultivate a relationship with them. In the case of this project, the Southern Baptist churches are in need, and the women of those churches are in need. And, they need help and support from someone who has taken the time to enter into relationship with them.

Finally, I am disappointed that I did not interview the male ministry leaders of OHCC for the case study and invite male members of OHCC to participate in the survey.

Early in the project, I realized that there was no reasonable explanation for excluding the men. As I noticed that the goals of the men's ministry of OHCC complemented the women's ministry, it occurred to me that the men should have been included in this project.

In fact, exclusion of the men in this type of project is contrary to the role and responsibility of the church, which is to teach God's design for sex, marriage and the family (Matt 5:27-32; 1 Cor 7; Col 3:18-21). Although this project speaks of the woman being faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion, both a man and a woman are necessary and involved in creating this dilemma.

I concluded that I have been more influenced by society's position on abortion than I want to admit. According to society, abortion is a private matter between a woman and her doctor; therefore, the father of the unborn child need not be included or informed about the pregnancy and/or the mother's decision to abort or not to abort. Unfortunately, my approach to this project reflected this attitude, as I excluded the men, both fathers and potential fathers.

Conclusion

The project presented here started with a survey of OHCC, an actively prolife National Baptist church located in the city of Detroit, and ended with the presentation of strategic priorities to the 15 Southern Baptist churches, also located in Detroit. The city of Detroit was the ideal location for such a project because the residents account for more abortions in Michigan than any other city, and none of the Southern Baptist churches located in Detroit may be defined as actively prolife. In other words, the need is great.

An outcome of this project was the strategic priorities presented to Detroit's Southern Baptist churches. The presentation included a model of an actively prolife church located in Detroit, and a timeline for advancing toward active prolife status. The

model was based on OHCC, a church with doctrine similar to Southern Baptists, and a church that serves the same population as the Southern Baptist churches.

Although the model and timeline are simple and easy to follow, this project begs for more work to support the Southern Baptist churches as they take the first step, in some cases, and/or the next step, in other cases, toward becoming actively prolife. Also, the unique obstacles that Southern Baptist churches face in the urban environment need to be identified, examined, and addressed.

Although the pastors and ministry leaders, all male, were receptive to the need to address this issue, they need to hear from a colleague, a pastor who is actively prolife. Until they do so, these pastors and ministry leaders are likely to continue to see the issue of abortion, and therefore the sanctity of life, as an issue that is to be addressed by women's ministry leaders. And while it is important for the women's ministry leaders to be included in the response of the local church to the abortion epidemic, the actively prolife church starts with a prolife pastor as seen in the definition and in the life of OHCC.

APPENDIX 1

EXPERT PANELISTS

Linda Cochrane, RN
Cofounder of PACE (Post-Abortion Counseling and Education)
Executive Director of Hopeline Women's Center
Author of *Forgiven and Set Free: A Post-Abortion Bible Study for Women*

Laura Farrugia, RN
Executive Director, Care Net
Pregnancy Centers
Berkley and Detroit

Scott Klusendorf
Founder and President, Life Training Institute
Author, *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture*

Sydna Masse'
CEO & Founder, Ramah International
Author of *Her Choice to Heal Abortion Recovery Program*

Kathy Norquist
Board Member of Eternal Perspective Ministries
Past Executive Assistant to Randy Alcorn

APPENDIX 2

FIELD TEST REPORT

The Organization Perception Questionnaire was field tested in two actively prolife churches. From this point forward, the two churches will be identified as church A and church B. Church A is located within the city of Detroit with a primarily African-American congregation. Church B is located in Plymouth, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, with a primarily Anglo or White congregation. The two churches were selected for participation in the field test in order to capture responses from ethnically diverse samples.

In both cases, I contacted the pastor of the church for permission to survey the female members. The pastor of church A asked for a face-to-face meeting with me. With respect to church B, the pastor spoke with me over the phone. I explained to both pastors my plan to have the women complete the surveys in a group setting, although the responses would not be shared with anyone other than myself. A group setting would allow the women to complete the survey together and the researcher to, subsequently, ask the women general questions about the survey, such as: Were the instructions clear? Was the survey too long? Were the items (questions) confusing or clear? I offered to provide refreshments and/or gifts cards as incentives for the women to participate in the field test.

Both pastors agreed to allow the female members of their congregations to be surveyed; however, the pastors reviewed the Organization Perception Questionnaire before the field test was advertised in their respective churches. Neither pastor asked questions nor provided comments about the questionnaire.

At his request, the pastor of church A required that I prepare a petition for female members of the church to voluntarily sign if they were willing to complete the survey. The petition was placed in the vestibule of the church, and the pastor promoted the field test during Sunday morning services to encourage the female members of the church to participate. Two African-American women signed the petition. I received their telephone numbers from the pastor of the church and called the women.

Without explanation, both women shied away from the suggestion of completing the survey in a quasi-group setting. Instead, each completed the survey in relative privacy. One woman invited me into her home as she completed the survey. As a result, this participant asked questions and discussed the items as she completed the questionnaire.

With respect to the church items, the participant questioned the meaning of items 15 and 17. She asked the meaning of item 15, and how the average member would know the meaning. She talked through item 17 without my input. The participant further questioned ministry item 3 and how the member would know?

Upon completion of the survey, I asked the participant to respond to general questions about the questionnaire. I asked, “Were the instructions clear?” The participant agreed that the instructions were clear, and the red color was good. She made a suggestion to print the words “My perception” in red on page 1 for emphasis. In response to the question, “Were the questions/items clear?,” the participant responded: “Yes, except the ones we discussed.” Finally, when asked if the questionnaire was too long, the participant said, “No—not too long.” A final comment from the participant was that the questionnaire is “making me think.”

The second female member of church A, who signed the petition, completed the survey online at her request. I asked her about the clarity of the instructions, the items

(questions), and the length of the survey. The participant responded: “Your questions were easy to understand as well as the scoring scale.”

Although I offered to provide a \$10 gift card as an incentive for women to participate, the pastor chose not to advertise this incentive. However, I gave each of these women a Target gift card in the amount of \$10.00.

Church B. After the pastor of church B agreed to allow participation in the field test, he referred me to a women’s ministry coordinator for the church. The coordinator and I discussed, in a phone conversation, the purpose of the research project and the specific questionnaire. We further discussed my background in the prolife movement and how I became aware of church B.

The coordinator was given a copy of the questionnaire to discuss with other women’s ministry leaders. The leaders agreed to participate in the survey. Although I offered to give each participant a \$10 Target gift card as an incentive, the coordinator decided not to advertise the gift card. When asked, she said that she did not want the gift card to be the motivation for completing the questionnaire. Twelve women responded to the questionnaire.

The coordinator was asked if she received any comments from the participants about the clarity of the instructions or the items/questions. She was also asked if any of the participants commented on the length of the questionnaire. The coordinator responded that two women refused to participate in the field test because the demographic items were too personal. The coordinator did not agree that the demographic items were too personal because those who participated in the field test were not asked to record their names. The coordinator further stated that of the incomplete questionnaires returned to me, one woman said she did not know about some of the items.

The coordinator chose not to publicize the Target gift card as an incentive because she did not want the women to complete the survey just to receive a gift card. However, I provided gift cards for all of the participants.

Results of the Field Test. Church A returned 2 surveys. One survey was incomplete. Church B returned 12 surveys of which 6 were incomplete. The incomplete surveys were not scored or considered. The completed surveys were scored according to the scoring and interpretation instructions for the Organization Perception Questionnaire.

The survey results reveal 12 change targets for church A. Change targets are those areas of the actively prolife church that require substantial change according to the perceptions of the women who returned completed surveys. Of the completed surveys for church B, the women identified 17 change targets.

Based on the results of the field test and input from the participants, I made one change to the wording of the OPQ, which is to print “My perception” on page 1 in red. The purpose of this change was to emphasize the purpose of the questionnaire, which was to capture the perceptions of the participants. No changes were made to the wording of the 17 church items or 16 ministry items because the women who participated in the field test had no adverse comments regarding the clarity of the survey items. Further, no changes were made to the six demographic items.

APPENDIX 3

THE ORGANIZATION PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRE (OPQ)*

This questionnaire asks you to indicate your perception of several aspects of your church (where you are a member), more specifically how the church responds to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion.

As you respond to the items on this questionnaire, think of how your church ministers to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, and/or abortion.

There are two response columns: A and B

Column A: My perception of how the church now responds to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion. (current)

Column B: My perception of how the church should respond to women who experience an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy and/or abortion. (desired)

Using the response scale below, record your perceptions of the church and ministry items listed, both as they are now and the way they should be, according to your perception. There are no right or wrong answers! Your perceptions are important!

Following the church and ministry items listed, there are a few items that ask you for demographic information. Your responses will not identify you personally. Instead, your responses to these demographic items will help us to better understand your perceptions. Thank you!

Please read the instructions on each page before responding to the church items, ministry items and demographic items.

RESPONSE SCALE

- 1 = Practically no or none; to a very small extent
- 2 = Not very often; not very much
- 3 = Moderately (on the low side)
- 4 = Moderately (on the high side)
- 5 = Very often; to a large extent
- 6 = Practically always; to a very large extent

*Mel Silberman, ed., *The Consultant's Big Book of Reproducible Surveys and Questionnaires*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2003), 312-14. McGraw-Hill Education makes no representations or warranties as to the accuracy of any information contained in the McGraw-Hill Education Material, including any warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. In no event shall McGraw-Hill Education have any liability to any party for special, incidental, tort, or consequential

damages arising out of or in connection with the McGraw-Hill Education Material, even if McGraw-Hill Education has been advised of the possibility of damages.

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to understand how Protestant women perceive Protestant churches that are actively prolife. This research is being conducted by Diane G. Brookins for purposes of dissertation research. In this research, you will be asked to record your perceptions of actively prolife Protestant churches as those churches are now and as they should be. 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.*

RESPONSE SCALE

- 1 = Practically no or none; to a very small extent
- 2 = Not very often; not very much
- 3 = Moderately (on the low side)
- 4 = Moderately (on the high side)
- 5 = Very often; to a large extent
- 6 = Practically always; to a very large extent

As you respond to these items, think of how your church, overall, and its leaders respond to the issue of unplanned/unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion. Refer to the response scale above and record the number that most closely corresponds with your perceptions of how your church responds now (current) in column A, and how your church should respond (desired) in column B.

A (Current)	B (Desired)	CHURCH ITEMS
		1. The church is a safe place for women to seek help without condemnation.
		2. The church supports (i.e. financial, volunteers) a pregnancy resource center.
		3. The issue of abortion and unplanned/unwanted pregnancy is a prayer concern for the church body.
		4. Abortion is a topic of preaching and teaching.
		5. The church is concerned with solving the problem of abortion in society.
		6. The church equips members to discuss the issue of abortion in public.
		7. The church makes changes as new or unique conditions and needs arise for women.
		8. The ministries and work groups that make up the church work together to minister to women.
		9. Leaders keep abreast of outside developments (i.e. legislation) affecting the church and how it ministers to women.
		10. The response of women being ministered to (members and non-members) influences changes made to the church.
		11. The ministry leaders correctly interpret the impact of current events and trends in the area of abortion and/or abortion-prevention on the church.
		12. The church meets its ministry goals.
		13. The church commits money, time, and knowledge to a solution for the problem of abortion both within the church and in society.
		14. I understand the goals of the church for ministering to women.
		15. The church is aware of new discoveries and methods of ministry.
		16. The church is directly involved in helping to alleviate the problem of abortion in society in addition to producing its primary ministry.
		17. The church foresees potential problems in the accomplishment of its ministry goals.

*Mel Silberman, ed., *The Consultant's Big Book of Reproducible Surveys and Questionnaires* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2003), 312-14.

RESPONSE SCALE

- 1 = Practically no or none; to a very small extent
- 2 = Not very often; not very much
- 3 = Moderately (on the low side)
- 4 = Moderately (on the high side)
- 5 = Very often; to a large extent
- 6 = Practically always; to a very large extent

As you respond to these items, think of the specific ministry or ministries (in your church) to women who experience unplanned/unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion. Refer to the response scale above and record the number that most closely corresponds with your perceptions of the specific ministry or ministries as they are now (current) in column A, and as they should be (desired) in column B.

A (Current)	B (Desired)	MINISTRY ITEMS
		1. The ministry is up to date.
		2. Those leaders responsible for the ministry provide leadership.
		3. Ministry leaders are concerned about how those outside the church view the effectiveness of the ministry.
		4. Ministry leaders want to hear how members feel--both pro and con.
		5. The ideas and desires of the church-members influence changes that are made to the ministry.
		6. I have the opportunity to use my abilities in ministering to women.
		7. The most knowledgeable people are consulted in making decisions.
		8. I am kept informed about the issues (i.e. medical, political) I need to know.
		9. I feel free to risk trying new ideas and methods.
		10. The ministry offers sidewalk counseling.
		11. I am involved in the planning and decision-making.
		12. I feel free to suggest new ways of ministering to women.
		13. Those in positions of authority are responsive to my suggestions.
		14. God's hope of healing is shared with women who have chosen abortion.
		15. Someone is available to pray with women, one-on-one.
		16. The ministry is useful to the community.

*Mel Silberman, ed., *The Consultant's Big Book of Reproducible Surveys and Questionnaires* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2003), 312-14.

DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS

Please check the response box that applies to you.

<p>1. What is your age range?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Under 20<input type="checkbox"/> 20-24<input type="checkbox"/> 25-29<input type="checkbox"/> 30-34<input type="checkbox"/> 35-39<input type="checkbox"/> 40 or Older <p>2. Have you had an abortion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes<input type="checkbox"/> No <p>3. Do you know anyone who had an abortion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes<input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>4. What is your marital status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Married<input type="checkbox"/> Not married <p>5. What is your ethnicity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> White<input type="checkbox"/> Black<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic<input type="checkbox"/> Asian<input type="checkbox"/> Other <p>6. What level of education have you completed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Less than high school<input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma or GED<input type="checkbox"/> Some college<input type="checkbox"/> College degree or higher
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Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX 4
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following open-ended questions were used to guide the interviews with the pastor and ministry leaders of OHCC. It was not necessary to ask all of the questions listed here, or to ask the questions as specifically worded. On the other hand, some impromptu questions were added.

Pastor and ministry leaders:

- What is the source of your passion for the unborn? How did you come to take a prolife position?
- How does the average person sitting in the pew on Sunday come to know that OHCC is a prolife church?
- Do you preach about the value of human life, especially in the womb? Do you preach from a biblical view of life or some other standard?
- How do you decide when and how often you will preach on this issue? Do you use a schedule or specific criteria?
- Do you equip the members of Oasis of Hope Christian Church to engage the culture on the issue of abortion? How do you equip them? What methods do you use?
- Are members of OHCC given opportunities to minister to women who are faced with the decision to abort their unborn children or women who are post-abortive? How? Please describe.
- Are single mothers and post-abortive members of OHCC given the opportunity to serve the church? How? In what capacity?
- How do you go about restoring or preparing Christians/believers for ministry? Specifically, those who may not be able to accept forgiveness because of past sexual sins, like abortion, fornication, pornography, etc.?

Church practices:

- How is the church structured? Org. chart?
- How do you communicate/train new members of OHCC's position on the sanctity of life/value of human life?
- Is the prolife position taught/communicated through every ministry of OHCC, or only through specific ministries? What ministries? How? Is the training ongoing?
- What ministries, if any, specifically serve women faced with unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancies or abortion?

Detroit Pregnancy Test & Help Center:

- How did the Detroit Pregnancy Test & Help Center come to be? How long has the Help Center been in place?
- What is the Center's mission?
- How is the Help Center funded?
- Does the Help Center serve female members of OHCC? Does the Center serve women from the community?
- Are there any conditions for receiving services from the Help Center? For example, must the woman have a saving relationship with Christ? Are they required to be members of OHCC or another local church?
- How is the Help Center promoted within the Church? How is it promoted in the community?
- How are women referred to the Help Center? From what sources? Through what channels?
- How does the Center respond when a woman decides to abort her unborn child?
- What is the Center's ultimate goal for the woman once she ends her relationship with the Center? What if she fails to achieve that goal?

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A MODEL OF THE ACTIVELY PROLIFE CHURCH FOR OASIS OF HOPE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
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This project was designed to provide Southern Baptist churches in Detroit, Michigan with a model of an actively prolife church. The model was based on Oasis of Hope Christian Church, a National Baptist church, which is also located in Detroit and subject to the same challenges as the Southern Baptist churches. The purpose of the model is to aid the Southern Baptist churches in responding to the epidemic of abortion in the city, and help the churches to move toward being actively prolife.

Chapter 1 includes an introduction of the project, along with the context in which the project was executed. The rationale, definitions, delimitations, purpose, goals, and research methodology are also included in chapter 1. Chapter 2 includes the biblical and theological basis for the value and importance of human life from conception. Chapter 3 includes the response of the local church to unplanned and unwanted pregnancies and/or abortion in the church. Chapter 4 includes a description of the methodology used to execute the project, and chapter 5 includes an evaluation of the completed project, including strengths, weaknesses, and other considerations.

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