



Accents & Issues

Abortion

In the last half of the 20th century, abortion laws were liberalized with the passage of the *Roe v. Wade* decision by the United States Supreme Court. This opened the door to new perspectives on abortion and women's rights.

The biblical witness concerning abortion is that human life is sacred because each person is made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27, Jas. 3:9, Ps. 8:4-5). Moreover, Jesus always sided with healing and preservation of life. While the Old Testament does not directly refer to abortion, it condemns child sacrifice (Lev. 20:2-5). The Mosaic law also describes a pregnant woman being injured so that she miscarries, representing the miscarriage as a loss to the family that entitles them to compensation. In several passages, writers acknowledge that even in their mother's womb God knew and cared for them (Job 10:8-12; Ps. 51:5-6; 139:13-16; Jer. 1:4-5). In the New Testament, John the Baptist leaped in his mother's womb in the presence of Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus (Luke 1:41). Clearly the Bible places value upon the developing child before birth. This principle has implications for abortion.

When not personally facing an unwanted pregnancy, it is easy to say no to abortion as a method of birth control. Nevertheless, there are situations that make the abortion decision more difficult — pregnancies that result from rape or incest or that would seriously threaten the health of the mother. Moreover, if the Church is to say no to abortion, it needs to address situations where abortion seems like a viable option. This proactive work includes:

1. Giving value to each living individual. When a person looks for affirmation, acceptance, or intimacy, one of the activities to which a person can turn is a sexual relationship. Such a relationship is not for the procreation of a new life but an affirmation of present life. A pregnancy in such a circumstance may be seen as a liability. The Christian community should recognize that the need for self-affirmation can lead to sexual activity.
2. Upholding the biblical teaching on premarital chastity and marital fidelity. Sexual intercourse signifies union in a covenant of marriage (1 Cor. 6:12-20). Commitment to this standard lessens the likelihood that abortion will be considered a necessary option.
3. Providing emotional, social, and financial support for bringing the fetus to full-term birth. Abortion may seem like the only option for persons who are financially destitute or socially abandoned. The Church must be committed to stand long term with those who face the hard realities of bringing a child into the world in difficult and unhappy circumstances.
4. Working with and supporting parachurch organizations, such as crisis pregnancy centers, adoption agencies, and other organizations that actively support sanctity of human life.
5. Adopting children from unwanted pregnancies.

We oppose the practice of abortion and affirm the sanctity of human life from conception to death. Our pro-life position takes a stand against war and capital punishment as well as abortion.