

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



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Equipped to Defend

-- By Ryan Cox

Abortions in 1970: 193,491 (52 per 1,000 live births, 530 per day).

Abortions in 1973: (year of *Roe v Wade*): 615,831 (196 per 1,000 live births, 1,687 per day).

Abortions in 1990: (peak year): 1,429,247 (345 per 1,000 live births, 3,915 per day).

Abortions in 2013: (most recent data, lowest year since *Roe*): 664,435 (200 per 1,000 live births, 1,820 per day).

State with the highest percentage of abortions: New York at 24% of pregnancies (36.3% for New York City, 13.4% for the rest of the state).

Of the 1,671 abortion facilities in the U.S. in 2014, 512 were in California.

The U.S. has gone from 2,176 surgical abortion facilities in 1991 to 517 in 2015; an 81% drop.

54 abortion facilities closed in 2015: more than one per week.

Medical abortion clinics have risen from 131 in 2009 to 213 in 2015.

Many surgical clinics have closed and reopened as medication clinics to avoid regulations and licensing requirements.

90% of U.S. counties do not have an abortion provider.

57% of California's counties do have an abortion provider.

Average wait time for an abortion is 8.5 days.

85.2% of women who obtain an abortion are not married.

59.8% of women who obtain an abortion have had one or more children.

45.0% of women who obtain an abortion have had more than one abortion.

Less than 1% of all abortions are because of rape or incest.

Since 1973, there have been 495 reports to the CDC of women dying from an abortion procedure.

But here is one more statistic for you to ponder: would it surprise you to know that 36% of woman who obtain an abortion attend Church services at least once a month?

According to Care Net and LifeWay Research's 2015 national survey, 36% of women (over 1 in 3) who have obtained an abortion were attending Church services once a month or more when they received their abortion. 20% of them (1 in 5) were attending Church services weekly.

In a survey conducted in 2015 by the American Culture & Faith Institute (Executive Director, Dr. George Barna), 22 social and political issues were identified as important to conservative and moderate Christians, about which they would desire their preacher to preach or provide more information. Of the 22 issues, 94% of the respondents ranked abortion as "very" or "extremely" important for the congregation to receive Biblical teaching. That landed the topic of abortion at #1 of the 22 issues.

That's what the people in churches want, but only 59% of "theologically conservative" preachers say they preach on abortion. In fact, when asked to prioritize their sense of importance for 20 current issues, 79% deemed religious freedom as "critical", 67% deemed the national debt as "critical", and 62% deemed abortion as "critical". Same-sex marriage came in at 56% of "theologically conservative" preachers deeming it as a "critical" issue.

In fact, only 50% of Church members could recall their preacher teaching on abortion, and only 46% of members could recall their preacher teaching on same-sex marriage.

The Church of Jesus Christ Needs to be Informed and Active.

To assist with this in regard to abortion, the materials by John Michener and the Oklahoma United for Life are highly recommended. Here is a brief synopsis of their witnessing techniques:

ADJUSTING THE MORAL COMPASS

If someone is arguing that a woman should be able to have an abortion because she is too poor, 1) Agree that some women are poor and it would be hard for them to raise a child, 2) Pretend there is a toddler beside you and ask, "If say a two-year-old's mother was too poor to raise him, would it be okay for her to kill him?", 3) If they say "No", kindly keep asking, "Why not" until they give a principle that it is wrong to kill an innocent human being, 4) Finally respond to their *moral* answer, "Ah! Then the issue isn't poverty, but whether or not we can kill innocent human beings. If the unborn are human beings, then shouldn't we protect them just like we protect our two-year-olds?"

DEFENDING OUR HUMANITY

When someone is arguing that an unborn baby is not a living human being, one can use the "Ten-Second Pro-Life Apologist": 1) Is it living? It is eating (metabolizing food), growing (cellular reproduction), and responding (reacts to stimuli and environment)?, 2) Is it human? It has human parents and human DNA, 3) Is it an individual? All of its parts (the entire genome) is there developing (not constructed one part at a time), 4) Conclude, "Then if the unborn are growing, eating, and responding, they must be alive. If they have human parents and DNA, they must be human. So don't you think that living humans, or human beings like you and me are valuable and should be protected?"

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS & VALUE

Question: "Do you believe that everyone should have the same basic rights such as life and freedom? Should we be treated equally under the law? Yet there are so many differences between us: men and women, big and small. We are all so different from one another yet there is something that is the same or equal about all of us that demands we should be treated equally. What is the same about all of us?"

Answer: "We are all unique, individual human beings."

If someone gives any explanation about born human beings having rights and unborn humans do not, ask if that explanation for equal rights applies to adults, infants, the handicap, to animals, etc. and then ask why a living human being inside a womb or outside a womb makes a difference as to whether he or she has equal rights and protection of the law.

DEFENDING BODILY RIGHTS

Bodily Rights arguments usually involve the slogan "My body, my choice" and include the arguments of a "Sovereign Zone" and a "Right to Refuse".

Sovereign Zone argument: A woman has an absolute right to do whatever she wants with her body. 1) Clarify by asking, "Do you mean the unborn is a literal part of the woman's body, like an arm or kidney?" 2) Challenge the Sovereign Zone: "If you believe pregnant women have a right to do anything with their bodies, do you think it should be legal for them to use hard drugs that will cause severe birth defects?" 3) If they answer, "No", ask: "If it is wrong for women to take drugs that will lead to deformations of a baby when it is their body and they have a right to do what they want, then why is it not wrong for women to take drugs that will lead to the death of a baby?"

Right to Refuse argument: A woman is no more obligated to donate the use of her body to sustain a fetus than she is obligated to donate one of her kidneys to help a stranger. 1) Clarify by asking, "Are you saying the decision to donate a kidney and choosing to continue a pregnancy are equivalent? Can you see any differences between the two?" 2) Differences between the two: temporary (pregnancy) vs indefinite (kidney gone forever), stranger (didn't choose his condition) vs parent (made decisions that led to treatment vs killing, not responsible vs responsible, etc. 3) Focusing on Responsibility: "Why is it wrong for parents to ignore their child's well-being (DCFS will take the child) but not wrong for a mother to end her child's life (abortion)?" If men can be held liable for child support, even if they no longer want the responsibility, should women be held to the same standard? If men are expected to support a child for 18 years after birth, shouldn't women be expected to support that same child for 9 months before birth?"

The members of our churches need to be armed with the Truth of God's Word and the means of defending it. They also need to know that the Church is a place of love and help, including those who find themselves pregnant and have contemplated abortion.

Every congregation should be ready to love on and help the repentant individual who is going through enormous amounts of pressure, stress, and fear. Would Jesus not offer His arms of love and support, making it all the more possible to welcome that precious mother and child into His Church?

We obviously do not condone sex or pregnancy out of wedlock, but we most certainly do not withhold the love of Christ from anyone, either. How, then, would any of us be saved if the love of Jesus and His sacrifice for our sins had not been shown to us?

May we all be about the business of saving lives, both physical and spiritual.