

American Decency Association

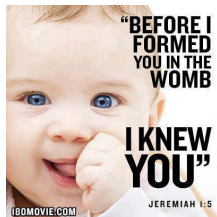
PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

February 2016

The Voice of the Church

By: R.C. Sproul



When Planned Parenthood adopted a strategy to win the debate on abortion and establish the legal right for women to have abortions on demand, it asked a strategic question: “From where will our strongest opposition come?” The organization anticipated that opposition would come most fiercely from the Roman Catholic Church. In order to offset the impact of the Roman community, Planned Parenthood adopted a strategy to encourage Protestant churches to support a woman’s right to abortion on demand. It encouraged the use of the mantras “A woman’s right to choose” and “A woman’s right over her own body.” A further part of the strategy was to use the slogan “prochoice”

rather than “pro-abortion.” In other words, the effort to legalize abortion on demand was wrapped in the flag of personal liberty.

The Planned Parenthood strategy was eminently successful. For the most part, the mainline liberal churches backed the feminist crusade in favor of “choice.” What was most distressing was the silence of evangelical churches, churches committed to the authority of the Bible and the classical Christian faith. It took many years for the evangelical church to come to a consensus on the evil of abortion but, more tragically, many evangelical churches still refuse to speak out against the destruction of babies made in the image of God.

Several years ago, I produced a series of video lectures, out of which emerged my book on abortion. We made an effort to get these educational materials to evangelical churches, to help them instruct their members concerning this profoundly serious ethical issue. I was

saddened to receive the same response over and over again. Innumerable evangelical pastors told me they could not use our materials in their churches because the issue of abortion is so controversial. If they took a stand against abortion on demand, they said, they would divide their churches. What? Divide these churches? What could be a greater evil than such a division? The answer is this: Remaining silent on the most serious ethical issue that the United States has ever faced.

If the slaughter of millions of unborn babies is to stop, the church must once again become the church. Those who hide behind the idea that the church should never speak to political issues have missed the scriptural accounts of what we would call prophetic criticism. It may have been politically incorrect for Nathan to confront David over his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah (2 Sam. 12:1–15a). It may have been politically in-

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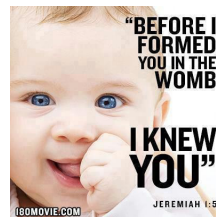
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correct for Elijah to confront Ahab for his sinful confiscation of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21). It may have been politically incorrect for John the Baptist to challenge Herod the Tetrarch's illicit marriage (Matt. 14). In these and other examples from sacred Scripture, we see representatives of the church not trying to become the state but offering prophetic criticism to the state—despite the potential consequences. The church is not the state, but it is the conscience of the state, and it is a conscience that cannot afford to become seared and silent.

The state is an instrument ordained by God. It is also governed by God. The church does not need to be the state, but it must remind the state of its God-given duty. The principal reason for the existence of any government is to

maintain, sustain, and protect the sanctity of human life. When the state fails to do that, it has become demonized. And it is the sacred duty of the church and of every Christian to voice opposition to it.

The evangelical church's chief strategies to end abortion have been to put pressure on abortion clinics and on elected officials. There is nothing wrong with these strategies; however, one strategy that has not been used or adopted widely is that of protesting those churches that support the ghastly murder of unborn babies. It is time for Christians to give prophetic criticism to the church, specifically to those churches that support abortion on demand or remain silent on this major issue.

In my own city, one of the largest evangelical churches has publicly welcomed the woman in America who is the most visible and vocal supporter of partial-birth abortions. That's a scandal to the Christian community. It's a scandal to the cause of Jesus Christ. That church needs to be called to account.

It is time for churches that

see the evil of abortion to stand up and be counted—no matter the risk or the cost. When the church is silent in the midst of a holocaust, she ceases to be a real church. Wherever human dignity is under attack, it is the duty of the church and of the Christian to rise up in protest against it. This is not a political matter, and neither is it a temporary matter. It is not a matter over which Christians may disagree. It is a matter of life and death, the results of which will count forever.

[Used with permission from Legionier Ministries, April 2013]

They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.

Psalm 106:38-39

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