

**BIBLICAL COUNSEL**  
*from the*  
**Protestant Pastors**  
**of the Church in Nebraska**

*to the*  
**49 Senators**  
**of the Unicameral Legislative Branch**

**FOR THE DRAFTING AND APPROVING OF A LAW**  
**PROVIDING LEGAL PROTECTION FOR ALL LIFE IN THE WOMB**



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# Letter to the Honorable Civil Magistrates of Nebraska

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There are a lot of proposals and opinions floating around in Nebraska after the reversal of *Roe*. Abortion legislation seems to present complex issues, especially today. And yet, Scripture speaks practically and authoritatively on all of the questions we face. What we, as ministers in Nebraska, hope to have done is to present enough support of biblical ethics that you can craft legislation with confidence.

At the outset, we pastors<sup>1</sup> want to affirm that the church and state are separate jurisdictions. Each has its own officers and roles in society. But we also want to affirm that separation of *church and state* does not mean separation of *God and state*. The constitution of our beloved state acknowledges our dependence upon God.<sup>2</sup>

Here are our suggestions on how to use this document:

- As you read through “Biblical Guidance on Abortion Legislation,” please know that the meat is in the biblical support. If we have not spoken according to the Word, then our guidance carries no weight. If it is, however, according to the Word, you can be confident it is the path God wants you to take.
- Following the biblical guidance, we provide a brief one-page summary for your easy reference.
- We include as an appendix an article titled, “Abortion, the Church, and the Civil Government: A Fascinating History You May Not Know.” We think you may find it interesting and encouraging for the fight ahead.

Many of our recommendations will be different from what you have seen in the Pro-Life movement over the last 50 years. We appreciate the intentions of the committed men and women who have been part of that movement; however, the Lord is bringing a new movement that is more in line with the Bible and calls for the abolition of abortion.

We recognize that politics lives in the realm of the possible. But we also affirm that all things are possible with Christ. Things are changing in conservative states as equal protection and the complete outlawing of abortion are seizing the narrative.

We are honored to be fellow Nebraskans with you. You are ministers appointed by God,<sup>3</sup> and God has commissioned you to promote good and punish evil.<sup>4</sup> We stand with you in prayer, and we are ready to help in any way.

Alongside you, for the King,

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, the word *pastor* (from the Latin *pastor*: i.e., shepherd) is used as synonymous with *elder*. The Bible uses the terms *shepherd* (that is, of souls) and *elder* interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> The preamble of Nebraska’s constitution says, “We, the people, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, do ordain and establish the following declaration of rights and frame of government, as the Constitution of the State of Nebraska.”

<sup>3</sup> “For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” (Romans 13:1, ESV).

<sup>4</sup> “For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer” (Romans 13:3–4, ESV).

# Signatories of the Pastors of the Church in Nebraska

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# Qualifications and Convictions of the Signatories

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We come from Protestant congregations across denominations and across Nebraska. We are not a nonprofit organization per se, but rather ministers in Christ's church by his appointment and authority.

- We are all duly ordained ministers in active churches in the state of Nebraska.
- Our churches practice the marks of true churches according to the Bible:
  - We preach the Bible as the very Word of God, living and active, and sufficient for all things pertaining to life and godliness.
  - We administer baptism and the Lord's table according to the Bible's direction.
  - We affirm the requirement for local church membership, and we practice church discipline.
- We affirm biblical and historical Christianity as stated in the Apostles' Creed<sup>5</sup> and the Nicene Creed.
- We affirm that the Bible is inerrant, infallible, and sufficient for all areas of life and that it is declared by God to be the ethical standard for all mankind for all of history.<sup>6</sup>
- We affirm that Jesus Christ has all authority on earth and in heaven. Following his ways brings societal blessings and disobeying his ways brings societal curses.
- We affirm these doctrines as necessary for salvation and a righteous society:
  - *Sola Scriptura* — Scripture is mankind's only ultimate authority.
  - *Solus Christus* — We are saved by Christ alone.
  - *Sola Fide* — We are saved through faith alone.
  - *Sola Gratia* — We are saved by grace alone.
  - *Soli Deo Gloria* — All our works, thoughts, and emotions, both individually and collectively, are to be for the ultimate end of God's glory alone.

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<sup>5</sup> The use of the word *catholic* in the Apostles' Creed means *universal*.

<sup>6</sup> We uphold the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy.

# First, the Gospel

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All mankind was thrust into a depraved condition when Adam yielded to temptation. We are sinners from the start because of Adam's sin and our own. We stand guilty before the thrice holy God, and deserve death and eternal punishment.

God did not have to save anyone, but Jesus left heaven because of God's love for the world. Jesus was eternally God but then he also became man. He did this because of the Father's merciful love for lost sinners.

The Messiah — Jesus — lived perfectly: every thought, emotion, word, and action was righteous in the Father's eyes. He fulfilled the law on behalf of his people. He was crucified for us and for our transgressions.

He took our sin and gave us his righteousness. By his stripes, we are healed.

There is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.

We are not saved by our works in any way. We are saved through faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone, as revealed in Scripture alone.

In an act of power that only God can have, Jesus arose victorious from the grave. He lives today as the firstfruits of the resurrection. Christians are risen in unity with Christ, and they await the resurrection of their own bodies at his second coming.

Jesus ascended into heaven. He rules now and is in the process of reconciling all things to himself ... as far as the curse is found. All authority has been given to him in heaven and on earth. All nations are to obey all that he has commanded.

Jesus is coming back to judge all of us. To those who do not repent and obey, there will be eternal punishment. But to those who have trusted and obeyed, he will grant eternal life with him in paradise.

# Biblical Guidance on Abortion Legislation

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## Principle 1: Human Life, Bearing the Image of God, Begins at Fertilization

We must get our definition of human life from *the Giver of human life*. Conception occurs at fertilization, and this is when a new life with a new soul is created. Man is created in the image of God from this point.<sup>7</sup>

**BIBLICAL BASIS** In Psalm 51, David says that his existence began at conception:

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin my mother conceived me.<sup>8</sup>

David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, says that he was a human being from conception.

**CONSIDERATIONS** Medical science corresponds to the truth we see in the Bible. With an understanding of DNA, medical scientists state, “During fertilization of an egg with a sperm, the haploid genomes of each parent are unified to form the diploid genome of a new and unique individual.”<sup>9</sup>

Some mistakenly believe that pregnancy does not begin until the fertilized blastocyst implants the uterine lining (the implantation view). This view must be rejected because fertilization could have begun up to six days prior to implantation.<sup>10</sup>

**RECOMMENDATION** *Draft and approve legislation that affirms that human life begins at fertilization and that each new life is an individual human being.*

Note: The term *conception* could be used as it is biblically correct, but *fertilization* most clearly and accurately conveys the timing.

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<sup>7</sup> “So God created man in his own image, / in the image of God he created him; / male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27, ESV).

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 51:5 (ESV). This is also the “forming in the womb” that Jeremiah 1:5 mentions. Psalm 139:15–16 shows that fashioning of a human being happens in the womb. See also Isaiah 44:24 and Galatians 1:15.

<sup>9</sup> Dean Clift and Melina Schuh, “Re-starting life: Fertilization and the transition from meiosis to mitosis,” *Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology*, 14 (2013): 549–62, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4021448/>.

<sup>10</sup> The implantation view is growing in popularity and supports IUD and Plan B usage (see change of definition from 1995 to 2000 in Stedman’s Medical Dictionary). Other views on when life begins: the embryological view — life begins 12–14 days after fertilization; the neurological view — life begins at 20–26 when neural pathways have developed; the ecological view — the fetus is human when it can exist outside the mother’s womb; and the birthday view — life begins when the umbilical cord is cut. Note the variety of opinions that can exist on moral questions when the authority of God’s holy Word is discarded. Without Scripture as the standard and basis for determining the answer to a question as important as when life begins, there is no limit to the arbitrariness employed to find a solution.

## Principle 2: Every Human Being Is Entitled to Equal Protection

A child on day one in the womb is no less a human being made in God's image than he is a day after he is born. The principal difference is that life in the womb is even more helpless. It is the civil magistrate's God-given role to protect this helpless life.

**BIBLICAL BASIS** It is on account of being made in God's image that all humans, without exception or distinction, whether old or young, deserve to be protected under the law. Our Creator states this plainly in Genesis 9:

Whoever sheds the blood of man,  
by man shall his blood be shed,  
for God made man in his own image.<sup>11</sup>

The Bible is repeated and emphatic that all human beings are deserving of impartial justice under the law: "You shall not be partial in judgment."<sup>12</sup> Again, "You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality."<sup>13</sup> And note in particular Proverbs 18:5: "It is not good to show partiality to the guilty, denying an innocent person justice."<sup>14</sup> Every time a preborn child in our state is deliberately aborted, and the law does nothing to hold the perpetrator(s) to account, justice to the innocent is denied, while partiality is shown to the guilty. In this way justice is perverted.

The Bible instructs us to seek justice and correct oppression.<sup>15</sup> Human beings in the womb are by far and away the most oppressed class of people in our society, and justice for them has been neglected for decades.<sup>16</sup>

**CONSIDERATIONS** The Nebraska Constitution says, "All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain inherent and inalienable rights; among these are life, [etc.] ... and such rights shall not be denied or infringed by the state or any subdivision thereof."<sup>17</sup>

The Nebraska Constitution also says, "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor be denied equal protection of the laws."<sup>18</sup>

And our state's motto is: "Equality before the law."

Yet every day more innocent preborn children in our state are put to death without any recourse under the law. How long will we continue to maintain laws that

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<sup>11</sup> Genesis 9:6 (ESV).

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 1:17 (ESV).

<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 16:19 (ESV).

<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 18:5 (CSB).

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 1:16–17.

<sup>16</sup> "[W]oe to you," Jesus proclaimed, who "neglect justice" (Luke 11:42, ESV).

<sup>17</sup> Neb. Const. art. I, § 1.

<sup>18</sup> Neb. Const. art. I, § 3.

reject our state’s constitution, ignore our state’s motto, and contradict the higher law of God?

RECOMMENDATION *Draft and approve legislation that affirms all human life must be afforded equal protection under the law.*

### **Principle 3: The Act of Abortion, Being a Violation of the Sixth Commandment, Is Murder, and Must Be Abolished**

Since the Bible confirms life begins at fertilization, any willful termination of this life can be nothing other than murder.

BIBLICAL BASIS The Sixth Commandment is: “You shall not murder.”<sup>19</sup> And God tells us that the reason for this prohibition is because human beings are made in his own image.<sup>20</sup>

The Bible also gives an explicit case of a baby being killed in the womb. If two men were fighting and one of them hit a pregnant woman causing the death of her baby, the man was to be put to death, demonstrating the value of the human life.<sup>21</sup>

Modern-day abortion is akin to the practice of child sacrifice which is repeatedly condemned in the Scriptures. Instead of sacrificing a child to an idol to bring rain or peace from war, parents today sacrifice their children on the altar of comfort, or sexual “freedom,” or career goals. Child sacrifice is a practice for which God says he will set his face against both those who commit it and those who turn the other way when it is committed, and he has destroyed cities and nations for persisting in such crimes of injustice.<sup>22</sup>

CONSIDERATIONS Current Nebraska law allows murder of preborn children to take place through the first twelve weeks of pregnancy, and beyond that time as well, depending on certain conditions. Note that the overwhelming majority of abortions (above 90%) are committed in the first trimester.<sup>23</sup>

To have laws on the books which formulate the how, why, when, and where abortions can take place is to regulate the practice. This is to treat abortion as if it were not inherently wrong, but more akin to healthcare. And indeed, the Preborn Child Protection Act (which legally permits most abortions) is located in the Nebraska Revised Statutes in Chapter 71, Public Health and Welfare.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17.

<sup>20</sup> Genesis 9:6.

<sup>21</sup> Exodus 21:22–25.

<sup>22</sup> Leviticus 20:1–5, 18:21,24–28, Jeremiah 32:29–35.

<sup>23</sup> “Abortion Surveillance Findings and Reports,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductive-health/data-statistics/abortion-surveillance-findings-reports.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 71-6912 – 71-6917.

But because abortion is murder (and we all know this), abortion should not be *regulated*, but rather, it must be *abolished*.

We understand this intuitively in the context of intrinsic evil. If someone were to suggest that it would be acceptable to have laws explicitly stating how, when, and why rape or child abuse could be committed, would we not recoil in horror? Yet do we not do the very same thing — and yes, even worse — when we regulate a practice of abusing preborn children *to death*?

RECOMMENDATION     *Recategorize abortion as murder in the first degree.*

## **Principle 4: Every Party Involved in Committing an Intentional Abortion Is Culpable**

The Bible requires equal punishment for equal crimes. If parents voluntarily have their preborn child murdered, they are complicit in the crime.

BIBLICAL BASIS     The Bible demands that all people be under the same laws, irrespective of their station or position. “Unequal weights and unequal measures,” God’s Word declares, “are both alike an abomination to the Lord.”<sup>25</sup>

Scripture holds those with knowledge of an evil deed to a greater punishment.<sup>26</sup> In an abortion, there is none more knowledgeable than the parents.

Proverbs 17:15 is important: “Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent — the Lord detests them both.”<sup>27</sup> Any law which permits one human being to murder another and get away with it is to acquit the guilty and condemn the innocent. The God of the universe says he *detests* this.

CONSIDERATIONS     The Nebraska code currently does not assign guilt to the mother, for it states that “no woman upon whom an abortion is attempted, induced, or performed shall be liable for a violation of the Preborn Child Protection Act.”<sup>28</sup> This violates the concept that the punishment should correspond with the crime. Upholding a punishment with severity befitting a crime of homicide will both prevent women from committing abortions and prevent the emotional harm that comes from it.

To exempt any principal actor, co-conspirator, or accomplice (including a woman or mother) from punitive action after murdering a preborn child is to acquit the guilty. This is plainly prohibited in the Scriptures, as shown above.

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<sup>25</sup> Proverbs 20:10 (ESV). See also Exodus 12:49 and Leviticus 24:22.

<sup>26</sup> “And that servant who knew his master’s will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more” (Luke 12:47–48, ESV).

<sup>27</sup> Proverbs 17:15 (NIV).

<sup>28</sup> Neb. Rev. Stat. § 71-6917.

States that say they have “banned” abortions but write explicit exemptions for mothers into their laws still have thousands of preborn homicides taking place within their jurisdictions every year. One estimate is that ~94,000 self-managed abortions occurred over a 12-month period in the 14 states with abortion “bans.” These abortions are not reported to state or federal agencies.<sup>29</sup>

The law of the Lord is good. If we follow God’s plan of appropriate punishment, applied to all guilty parties, crimes will decrease and women will not endure the guilt from sin and emotional distress of murdering their own children.

Murdering anyone should be illegal for everyone.

**RECOMMENDATION**     *Do not exempt anyone involved in the act of an abortion from punishment, nor lessen the punishment based on status or position (such as medical or familial).*

## **Principle 5: Exception Clauses Are Immoral, Unjustified, and Prejudicial**

The Bible requires that we treat all human life on an equally valuable basis. If we allow under the law the termination of a human life because it came from rape or incest, or permit the purposeful destruction of one life in order to attempt to save another, we are punishing the innocent, which is specifically forbidden by God.

**BIBLICAL BASIS**     Scripture only authorizes the taking of a human life for someone guilty of a capital crime,<sup>30</sup> in self-defense,<sup>31</sup> or of an enemy in a just war. These are not murder.

God, who possesses all wisdom, and whose understanding is beyond measure, commanded: “You shall not murder.”<sup>32</sup> When he did so, he did not give any exceptions to this command. Are we wiser than our Maker, to create exceptions where he has given none?

Again, God says, “[D]o not kill the innocent and righteous.”<sup>33</sup> Who should be considered more innocent under our laws than a child who has not even been born yet, and has committed no crime? Exception clauses allow the innocent to be put to death without mercy or trial.

The Word of God also tells us, “Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers.”<sup>34</sup> A crime of sexual assault committed by a man who becomes a father because of his wicked act should never result in the law permitting his child to be put to death. Rather, it is the rapist who should be punished.

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<sup>29</sup> “Babies Unprotected: An Analysis of Self-Managed Abortion Numbers in States with ‘Bans,’” Foundation to Abolish Abortion, January 2024, <https://faa.life/sma>.

<sup>30</sup> “Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death” (Exodus 21:12, ESV).

<sup>31</sup> “If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him” (Exodus 22:2, ESV).

<sup>32</sup> Exodus 20:13.

<sup>33</sup> Exodus 23:7 (ESV).

<sup>34</sup> Deuteronomy 24:16 (ESV).

## CONSIDERATIONS

Nebraska’s Preborn Child Protection Act provides exceptions for sexual assault and incest, as well as for medical emergencies.<sup>35</sup> These exceptions undermine the biblical moral stance that all human beings without distinction are entitled to equal protection under the law.

We do not believe it is necessary to have a law allowing a doctor to perform an abortion to save the life of a mother. Rather, a good doctor knows that when he is treating a mother with child, he has two patients: the mother and her baby. He will not under any circumstances purposely kill one to try to save the other. If a mother’s life is at significant risk due to pregnancy, and doctor and parent(s) make the decision to have the doctor prematurely relocate the baby from inside of the womb to outside of it, and the child expires despite the medical staff’s every effort to keep him alive, that is one thing. But killing a child first and then removing him is murder — the intentional destruction of innocent human life.

Many physicians have explicitly and publicly declared that abortion is never necessary to save a mother’s life. To provide an example, over a thousand medical professionals have signed the Dublin Declaration, which states:

As experienced practitioners and researchers in obstetrics and gynaecology, we affirm that direct abortion – the purposeful destruction of the unborn child – is not medically necessary to save the life of a woman.

We uphold that there is a fundamental difference between abortion, and necessary medical treatments that are carried out to save the life of the mother, even if such treatment results in the loss of life of her unborn child.

We confirm that the prohibition of abortion does not affect, in any way, the availability of optimal care to pregnant women.<sup>36</sup>

RECOMMENDATION     *Do not include any exceptions, whether for rape or incest or life of the mother.*

## **Principle 6: The Specific Method Used to Commit an Abortion Is Immaterial**

Murder does not become any less murder because the perpetrator uses a particular method. Any premeditated, intentional destruction of innocent human life is murder, irrespective of the technique employed.

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<sup>35</sup> Neb. Rev. Stat. § 71-6916.

<sup>36</sup> “Dublin Declaration on Maternal Healthcare,” Dublin Declaration, <https://www.dublindeclaration.com/>. Plenty of other examples could be provided. To supply just two additional quotations: Abortionist-turned-OB/GYN Anthony Levatino said, “During my time at Albany Medical Center, I managed hundreds of such cases by ‘terminating’ pregnancies to save mothers’ lives. In all those cases, the number of unborn children that I had to deliberately kill was zero.” “What Percentage of Abortions Are Medically Necessary?” Human Life International, October 2021, <https://www.hli.org/resources/what-percentage-of-abortions-are-medically-necessary/>. Former president of Planned Parenthood Alan Guttmacher acknowledged, “Today it is possible for almost any patient to be brought through pregnancy alive, unless she suffers from a fatal illness such as cancer or leukemia, and if so, abortion would be unlikely to prolong, much less save, life. Alan F. Guttmacher, “Abortion—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,” *The Case for Legalized Abortion Now*, ed. Alan F. Guttmacher (Berkeley, CA: Diablo Press, 1967), 9.



**BIBLICAL BASIS**      The instruments or methods of killing innocent life in the womb (whether surgical, chemical, or by “discarding” embryos) do not lessen the evil of the crime of homicide or the severity of punishment in the Bible’s ethics. The Bible is concerned about the activity and result of murder, not the method.<sup>37</sup>

Since human life begins at fertilization, all fertilized eggs are living human beings deserving of equal protection. IVF as is commonly practiced today consistently results in doctors and parents choosing which human beings have a right to life and which ones will be murdered through selective reduction. “Woe to those,” God’s prophet Isaiah cried out, “who ... deprive the innocent of his right!”<sup>38</sup>

**CONSIDERATIONS**      To say, as the Mayo Clinic does, that abortifacients can be used to “end an unintended pregnancy,”<sup>39</sup> is a deceptive and evil understatement. Chemical abortions may not be as gruesome as surgical abortions, but they are still ending an innocent human life. Deliberately poisoning a two-month-old born child so that he dies is no less murder than any other way of killing him.

Medication abortions accounted for nearly two-thirds of all abortions reported nationwide in 2023.<sup>40</sup>

Elective single-embryo transfer (eSET) IVF with no option for cryopreservation would not be affected by an equal protection law.

The selective reduction and cryopreservation of present-day IVF is not unlike the chattel slavery of antebellum America. Though the circumstances were different, the level of oppression is no less despicable: humans are treating other human beings as if they are not image bearers of God at all, but only property, to be locked up at will indefinitely, abused to death in experimentation, or discarded as so much waste when no use is found for them. If an embryo could speak, we are sure he would say something like, “Am I not a human being and your neighbor?”<sup>41</sup>

Upwards of 1.5 million human beings are unjustly and indefinitely imprisoned in America in the present day, putting image bearers of God into bondage.<sup>42</sup>

**RECOMMENDATION**      *Make no distinction in the law between various methods of committing the act of abortion, but instead treat all methods alike.*

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<sup>37</sup> Genesis 9:5–6, Leviticus 24:17.

<sup>38</sup> Isaiah 5:22–23 (ESV).

<sup>39</sup> “Medical abortion,” Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/medical-abortion/about/pac-20394687>.

<sup>40</sup> Deidre McPhillips, “US abortions reach highest level in over a decade, sparked by surge in medication abortion,” CNN, March 19, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/18/health/abortion-data-gutmacher/index.html>.

<sup>41</sup> For a biblical look at the topic of IVF, the reader is directed to Dusty Deevers, *Loving Your IVF Neighbor: In Vitro Fertilization, Assisted Reproductive Technologies, & Loving Your Neighbor As Yourself* (Muskogee, OK: Rescue Those, 2022).

<sup>42</sup> Gerard Letterie, “In re: the disposition of frozen embryos: 2022,” *Fertility and Sterility* 117, no. 3 (2022): 479, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0015028222000012>.

## Principle 7: Public Repentance Is Required for the Healing of Our State

God holds our entire state, and particularly the civil magistrates, responsible for allowing abortions to occur in the state and permitting them to go unpunished.

**BIBLICAL BASIS** Romans chapter 13 says that the civil magistrate is appointed by God and is duty bound to be God’s minister “for good” and to “execute wrath on him who practices evil.”<sup>43</sup>

Only after confessing the public sins will a state and the land be healed.

[I]f my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.<sup>44</sup>

The civil leaders play a primary role in this confession.<sup>45</sup>

**CONSIDERATIONS** The public confession needs to be in the name of our Lord Jesus for this to be honored by his current reign.<sup>46</sup>

**RECOMMENDATION** *Proclaim a Nebraska Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer.*

President Lincoln provides a very good example in his proclamation for “Appointing a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer.”<sup>47</sup> We highly recommend you read it as an example of a civil magistrate honoring God.

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<sup>43</sup> Romans 13:4 (NKJV).

<sup>44</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:14 (ESV).

<sup>45</sup> Various kings covenanted with God in contrition — e.g., Jehoiada (2 Kings 11:17), Josiah (2 Kings 23:3), and Asa (2 Chronicles 15:9,12).

<sup>46</sup> Rulers are commanded to “Kiss the Son,” which means to give him public recognition (see Psalm 2).

<sup>47</sup> Abraham Lincoln, “Proclamation 97—Appointing a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer,” (Washington, DC, March 30, 1863), The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-97-appointing-day-national-humiliation-fasting-and-prayer>.

# One-page Summary from the Church in Nebraska

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Based on the foregoing seven principles, which we repeat here without detail —

- Principle 1: Human Life, Bearing the Image of God, Begins at Fertilization;
- Principle 2: Every Human Being Is Entitled to Equal Protection;
- Principle 3: The Act of Abortion, Being a Violation of the Sixth Commandment, Is Murder, and Must Be Abolished;
- Principle 4: Every Party Involved in Committing an Intentional Abortion Is Culpable;
- Principle 5: Exception Clauses Are Immoral, Unjustified, and Prejudicial;
- Principle 6: The Specific Method Used to Commit an Abortion Is Immaterial; and
- Principle 7: Public Repentance Is Required for the Healing of Our State

— we therefore in summary make the following two recommendations:

- 1) **Draft and approve a law which immediately abolishes abortion as murder without exception or compromise.** Such a law would, as described above:
  - a. affirm that human life begins at fertilization and that each new life is an individual human being;
  - b. affirm that all human life must be afforded equal protection under the law;
  - c. recategorize abortion as murder in the first degree;
  - d. not exempt anyone involved in the act of an abortion from punishment, nor lessen the punishment based on status or position (such as medical or familial);
  - e. not include any exceptions, whether for rape or incest or life of the mother; and
  - f. make no distinction between various methods of committing the act of abortion, but instead treat all methods alike.
  - g. Such a law would also, of necessity in order to have an effect, both repeal or supersede any other contradictory laws which would permit or regulate abortion, as well as, if need be, defy any tyrannical law or ruling which would seek to override it.
- 2) **Proclaim a Nebraska Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer.**

Contact: Would you like to move forward with one or both of these recommendations? Or perhaps you have a question, concern, or thought? Please see the contact information on the final page.

The unborn child is human, and at all periods differs in degree and not in kind from the infant and the adult. Therefore, we must regard it as a human being with an inalienable right to life, and that its destruction is homicide.<sup>48</sup>

– *American Medical Association, late 1800s*

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<sup>48</sup> James Macaulay, *Current Heroes: Examples of Faith of our Time* (New York: American Tract Society, 1879), 56-57. Quoted in George Grant, *Third Time Around: A History of the Pro-Life Movement From the First Century to the Present*. Vol. ed. (Legacy Communications, 1991), 96.

## Appendix: Abortion, the Church, and the Civil Government — A Fascinating History You May Not Know

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Abortion has been around for a very long time. Even abortifacients were used thousands of years ago. It is amazing the amount of writing from the early church on the topic. And there were two reasons for this vast amount of writing. First, when Christianity came to the Western world, it brought a clash of cultures. The old culture had a low view of children, and the new one loved children and saw them as created *imago Dei*, in the image of God. Second, early Christians saw the Bible and Jesus' reign as a reality to be lived out. To not have cultural norms based on the Bible made no sense to them.

Our survey will start with Basil of Caesarea in the fourth century AD.<sup>49</sup> A man of recognized scholarship, he began his career in law but transferred to the ministry of the gospel. When he traveled to the Cappadocian region, it was clear they had not been affected by the gospel. Abortion was practiced prominently. When he approached the community leaders about this grotesque practice, he was shocked to learn the practice was completely legal. And there was no shame.

Basil was moved to action. He preached a series on the sanctity of human life. He mobilized the members of his church to help care for families and women who were facing crisis pregnancies. From the start, Basil took a simple approach from the Bible. He wrote:

She who has deliberately destroyed a fetus must bear the penalty for murder. Moreover, those who aid her, who give her abortifacients for the destruction of a child conceived in the womb are murderers themselves.<sup>50</sup>

Basil was going to take the issue of abortion head-on. The town had a shrine to celebrate infanticide, and he and several deacons from his church destroyed it. Word began to spread. Emperor Valentine heard of Basil's strong biblical arguments against abortion and took appropriate action: "All parents must support their children conceived; those who brutalize or abandon them should be subject to the full penalty prescribed by law."<sup>51</sup>

And this was how abortion was dealt with. The teaching of the Bible brought a brilliant clash with the pagan cultures that celebrated death. The church preached several things. She preached that abortion was against God's will as the creator of life. She preached it as murder and that it should be handled legally as such. Reading the quotes by the early church and political leaders, it almost

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<sup>49</sup> George Grant, *Third Time Around: A History of the Pro-Life Movement From the First Century to the Present*, (Legacy Communications, 1991).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 20. *Canons*, 188.2.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. *Code of Justinian*, 8.52.2.

seems unreal. It seems too strong, too simple. What about exceptions? What about certain fetal development? What about consent requirements and federal funding and all the rest?

None of that was there because abortion was seen for what it is. And the Bible was seen as simply binding on all people.

## The Apostolic Church

The quotes below are from early church history on abortion and show a simple approach. You will notice a remarkable consistency. Here is one from the *Didache*, a Christian treatise that appeared around the close of the first century:

There are two ways: the way of life and the way of death, and the difference between these two ways is great. Therefore, do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant.<sup>52</sup>

Soon after the *Didache*, in the second century, the *Epistle of Barnabas* was written. Clearly the author was not one for pulling punches. He lays out the Christian perspective in clear absolutes:

You shall love your neighbor more than your own life. You shall not slay a child by abortion. You shall not kill that which has already been generated.<sup>53</sup>

The respected third-century writer Tertullian would later assert in his works that:

Our faith declares life out of death. Therefore, murder is forbidden once and for all. We may not destroy even the fetus in the womb. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man killing. Thus it does not matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. In both instances, destruction is murder.<sup>54</sup>

Around the same time the theologian Clement of Alexandria would teach:

Our whole life can proceed according to God's perfect plan only if we gain dominion over our desires, practicing over our desires, practicing continence from the beginning instead of destroying through perverse and pernicious art human offspring, who are given birth by Divine Providence. Those who use abortifacient medicines to hide their fornication cause not only the outright murder of the fetus but of the whole human race as well.<sup>55</sup>

Jerome, the Latin scholar renowned the world over, wrote this:

They who drink poisons to ensure sterility are guilty of rebuffing God's own blessings. Some when they learn that the potions have failed and thus are with child through sin, practice abortion by use of still other potions. They are guilty of three crimes: self-mutilation, adultery, and the murder of an unborn child.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 24. *Didache*, 1.1: 2.2.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 24. *Epistle of Barnabas*, 19.5.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 25. *Apology*, 8.6: 9.4.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 24. *Paedagogus*, 2.10.96.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 25. *Letter to Eustochium*, 22.13.

Augustine, a man that God used to show us the riches of God's grace, said this,

They provoke women to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to murder the unborn child.<sup>57</sup>

## **The Medieval Church**

This period is sometimes referred to in a derogatory way as the “Dark Ages.” This idea comes from those who love the latter period called the Enlightenment, when human reason became so highly thought of. But the Middle Ages were not dark. They saw much progress, such as the founding of the great universities of Oxford and Cambridge. This is the period of Michelangelo and Leonardo de Vinci.

And during this time, we see the church and the civil magistrate agreeing on abortion. In the late sixth century, we have the Byzantine Emperor Justinian making this decree:

Those who expose children, possibly hoping they would die, and those who use the potions of the abortionists, are subject to the full penalty of the law — both civil and ecclesiastical — for murder.<sup>58</sup>

There were multiple church councils that met in the 9th and 10th centuries. A council that met in Vaison said that children are the greatest heritage of all.

Therefore any and all means must be effected to safeguard their well-being — from their quickening in the womb to their assumption of powers.<sup>59</sup>

In sum, the Middle Ages saw a continuation of the early Christian civilization's war against abortion. Abortion was still prevalent in some areas of the West. However, with the penetrating growth of Christian influence, abortion was seen more and more as a grotesque perversion. It was seen that way because the church in the Middle Ages had a message consistent with the Bible and the early church.

## **The Renaissance and Enlightenment**

During the Renaissance and Enlightenment, we have what George Grant calls the “Renaissance relapse.” There was a trend back toward the acceptance of pre-Christian, pagan culture. As the Bible began to lose its place as the top book for life, academic study, and philosophy, abortion started to become acceptable again. Societal leaders became imbued with ancient philosophies. Plato's *Republic* was common reading, and this is the book where Plato said the state owns children and it is perfectly acceptable to set children

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 25. *On Marriage*, 1.17.15.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 38. *Code of Justinian*, 18.51–52.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 39. *Concilia Galliae*, 7.884.

out to die outside without food (the practice of exposure).<sup>60</sup> Another popular philosopher of the day, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, bragged about abandoning all six of his illegitimate children.<sup>61</sup>

All of this indicates a shift towards humanist thinking. Europe began to put man's reason above the Bible. By the middle of this period, as many as one out of three children were killed or left for dead by their mothers.<sup>62</sup>

## **Abortion in America**

Fast forward to America in the late 1800s. Surprisingly, there was a prominent subculture of abortion in New York. In 1871, *The New York Times* dispatched a reporter named Augustine St. Claire and an undercover female to investigate. St. Claire and his assistant discovered that there were abortion clinics all across New York, and they were surprisingly up-kept and professional-looking.

After completing his investigation, St. Claire wrote a hard-hitting three-column article in the *Times* titled "The Evils of this Age." He wrote:

Thousands of human beings are thus murdered before they have seen the light of this world, and thousands of adults are irremediably robbed in constitution, health, and happiness.<sup>63</sup>

The article exposed the practice of abortion to a wide audience in America. Our country's conscience was pricked. The American Medical Association denounced the "perverted views of morality" underlying abortion. They wrote:

The unborn child is human, and at all periods differs in degree and not in kind from the infant and the adult. Therefore, we must regard it as a human being with an inalienable right to life, and that its destruction is homicide.<sup>64</sup>

Suzanne B. Anthony, a feminist, also wrote about abortion. You wouldn't expect a feminist to be against abortion. But her quote shows the widespread understanding that America once had:

I deplore the horrible crime of child murder ... No matter what the motive, love of ease, or a desire to save from suffering the unborn innocent, the woman is awfully guilty who commits the deed, but oh, thrice guilty is he who drove her to the desperation which impelled her to the crime.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> John Llewelyn Davies and David James Vaughn, translators, *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Macmillan, 1945), V, 461; p 170 f. Quoted in Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* Vol. 1., Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1973), 264, 265.

<sup>61</sup> Kevin Swanson, *Apostate: The Men Who Destroyed the Christian West*, Generations with Vision, 2013), 65.

<sup>62</sup> Grant, 55.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 92. Quoted in Marvin Olasky, *The Press and Abortion 1838–1988*. (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1988), 26.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 96. James Macaulay, *Current Heroes: Examples of Faith of our Time* (New York: American Tract Society, 1879), 56–57.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 100. *The Revolution*, July 8, 1869.



So the American understanding before the late 1800s was the same as the early church and the Medieval period. It would take a significant influence to change this culture so unified against abortion.

## Modernism

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, modernity came on the scene and was a gentle (but deliberate) backslide into pre-Christian thought. Basically, Western society, after almost 2,000 years of uniformly being against abortion, now started to legalize it.

Theodore Roosevelt saw the danger of this thought culture in America. He was seeing the material and economic progress we were making, but he was concerned about our culture and ethics. He writes,

I believe that the next half century will determine if we will advance the cause of Christian civilization or revert to the horrors of brutal paganism.<sup>66</sup>

We have given many quotes of people who have directly opposed abortion and did not shirk from calling it murder. But was this based on an old order, an old ethic that for the American embracing modernity, no longer applied? President Roosevelt challenged that idea:

There are those who believe that a new modernity demands a new morality. What they fail to consider is the harsh reality that there is no such thing as a new morality. There is only one morality. All else is immorality. There is only true Christian ethics over against which stands the whole of paganism. If we are to fulfill our great destiny as a people, then we must return to the old morality, the sole morality.<sup>67</sup>

President Roosevelt's concerns came true. So-called Progressivism took hold. Thomas Malthus, a professor of political economy, wrote an article in 1798 titled, "An Essay on the Principle of Population." His calculations showed that populations increase exponentially and agriculture production only arithmetically.<sup>68</sup> He advocated that we should limit the number of children we have to keep the population "to a desired level."<sup>69</sup> Some of his methods were: stop recommending cleanliness to the poor, make the streets narrow, and crowd more people into houses to encourage the plague.

Hitler, Stalin, and our own Margaret Sanger embraced Malthusian thinking. Sanger was, of course, the founder of Planned Parenthood in the U.S. She believed in "inferior races" and believed that "human weeds" were a menace to civilization.<sup>70</sup> She also encouraged promiscuous sex. These are the people who were influential in bringing abortion into our culture, making it like the culture before Christianity.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 118. Quoted in Noah Brooks, *Men of Achievement: Statesmen* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 317.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 119. Quoted in David L. Johnson, *Theodore Roosevelt: American Monarch* (Philadelphia: American History Sources, 1981), 44.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 121. Cited in Alan Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism*. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1977), 7.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 123. Margaret Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization* (New York: Brentano's, 1922), 23.

## The Road to Abortion in the United States

The following timeline shows how pagan-era abortion has come back into our culture. Starting with socialist countries, it swept Europe and landed in the U.S.<sup>71</sup>

- In 1925, abortion was legalized in the Soviet Union.
- In 1931, Hitler also legalized abortion and launched his eugenics plan for Germany and Eastern Europe.
- In 1938, Sweden became the first free nation in Christendom to revert to pre-Christian abortion legislation.
- Between 1949 and 1956, abortion was legalized in 11 other European nations.
- In 1954, Planned Parenthood held an international conference on abortion and called for “reform” of restrictive legislation.
- In 1962, the American Law Institute proposed that abortion be decriminalized.
- In 1966, the National Organization of Women was established with the liberalization of abortion laws as a major goal.
- In 1967, the American Medical Association reversed its century-old commitment to the lives of the unborn and also began calling for the decriminalization of abortion.
- During that same year, three states — Colorado, California, and North Carolina — loosened restrictions on certain child-killing procedures.
- In 1968, the United Kingdom legalized abortion.
- In 1970, four more states — Hawaii, Alaska, Washington, and New York — enacted abortion-on-demand legislation.
- By the end of 1971, nearly half a million legal abortions were being performed in the U.S. each year.
- Then in 1973, the Supreme Court issued its momentous *Roe v. Wade* opinion, and despite the ruling being terribly unconstitutional, every single one of the fifty states fell in line.

## What About Today?

Today a remarkable thing is happening. We are seeing what looks to be an almost exact parallel to the condition of the early years of Christianity. There are two elements that make up this parallel.

First, our cultural situation today resembles what it was when Christianity first met paganism. Western civilization today has, at least on the issue of abortion, turned the clock back to pre-Christian times. The Progressives have succeeded, and they celebrate, thinking we are today in *post*-Christian times. Continuing in the philosophy of Marx and Hegel and the other secularists that came out of the Enlightenment, they have been successful at pushing back biblical thinking to an almost impotent level when it comes to the civil code on abortion. This first item is not encouraging. To say that all of the good

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<sup>71</sup> This list is taken from Grant, 128–29.

brought by Christianity in protecting the unborn has vaporized is a lamentable condition. It is one that brings us sadness for our future generations, and it is one that puts our land under bloodguilt before God.

But the second parallel to the first century is tremendously encouraging. Today's fight against abortion is returning to the simple, straightforward position of the Bible. For the last fifty years since *Roe*, the organizations in America fighting for the unborn have taken different strategies than the early church. We have seen these strategies up close: incrementalism, politicization, exception clauses, heartbeat bills, different laws based on which trimester, and criminal laws that leave the mother (and father) and the doctor guiltless before society.

But in the last decade, we've seen something new. Organizations have emerged such as Foundation to Abolish Abortion, End Abortion Now, Abolitionists Rising, Southern Baptists for Abolishing Abortion, Liberty Rising Institute, and in our own state, End Abortion Nebraska and Abolish Abortion Nebraska. Interestingly, they have returned to the simple position of the first century. They are unified in that they are basing their position on the Bible: life begins at conception, abortion is murder, and the human being in the womb is entitled to equal protection under the law, which means parent(s) and doctor are guilty of murder in the civil criminal code. And in recent years, no less than 19 states have seen legislators introduce bills to abolish abortion without exception.<sup>72</sup>

The Lord seems to be lining up things to completely abolish abortion as murder.

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<sup>72</sup> "States," Foundation to Abolish Abortion, <https://faa.life/states>.

# Contact Information

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Queries and interest concerning this document and its recommendations may be directed to:

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