

The position of Central Christian Church regarding abortion is that human life begins at conception, and that voluntary abortion is therefore the murder of an innocent person. All sin, even murder, can be forgiven because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ, so our message to those who have had abortions emphasizes the seriousness of sin and the availability of God's grace and forgiveness to all.

We believe that life begins at conception because of our understanding of God's Word. David said "for you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13-16). The baby in Elizabeth's womb (John the Baptist) "leaped for joy" when Elizabeth saw Mary and heard the good news that Mary would bear the Christ child (Luke 1:44).

Scientific discoveries in the modern era have confirmed the truth of God's Word. We now know that there is no organizational change needed for an embryo to become a fully formed human being. At the point of conception, something inexplicable - almost miraculous- occurs. The egg and sperm join, and a completely new organism is born - an organism which only needs the right environment to become a fully formed human being. Now more than ever we can be confident that life truly begins at conception and that abortion is taking the life of a human being.

Meanwhile, the practice of abortion is still prevalent in our society. Abortion is no longer a last resort in a dire situation but is often a preferred method of birth control. The most common reasons people give for choosing abortion are the high cost of raising children, the interference children cause to one's lifestyle, the burden of single parenting, and pressure from sexual partners to terminate the pregnancy. There have been innumerable personal and social consequences of this devaluing of human life.

The Bible says that sex is to be reserved for marriage because of the intimacy of the sexual relationship and the prospect that a child will result. Scripture and experience both teach that the healthiest environment for child rearing is a loving, two-parent home. The relationship between sex outside of marriage and abortion is clearly correlative. A person should not engage in sexual relations unless he or she is willing and able to support the life of a child. Children are intended to be a blessing from God to a loving husband and wife. The only birth control method with 100 percent certainty is abstinence.

Even so, when an unmarried person becomes pregnant, God's grace can still cover that sin and bring good out of evil. The unmarried parents may decide they are mature

enough to get married and raise the child together. Grandparents or other relatives may step in to help. Adoption is a difficult but loving option to abortion for the parents of these children.

Central Christian Church is attempting to respond to the abortion issue with both truth and love. It is our conviction that the church should serve as a conscience in the community, speaking out about moral issues from a biblical perspective. The best way to stop abortions is not through legislation but by winning people to Jesus Christ and changing one heart at a time.

We at Central feel a strong call to minister to those who find themselves dealing with a crisis pregnancy. We do our best to connect those in need to a local crisis pregnancy center in the St. Petersburg area called **New Life Solutions** which offers ultrasounds, pregnancy tests, maternity clothing, and counseling for expectant parents. This center not only offers alternatives to abortion, but also lends ongoing support and encouragement to those in need. We also support and encourage the partners of our church who are involved in adoption efforts both at home and abroad.