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THE REVIEW

Blasphemous Twisting of Words, An Ageless Struggle

By Pastor Mark Strangman, Moderator IBFNA

“Thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them” (Ps. 139:13-16).

How precious are these words the Lord has given to us through His servant David! When we think of how precious we are to the Lord because of His benevolent compassion, carrying us through the miracle of birth, we cannot help but have a reverential sense of awe at the wisdom and majesty of our Creator. How beautiful is each baby the Lord allows to come into the world and possess this magnificent gift of life.

However, as we are all so painfully aware, this wonderful truth is the battleground for a vicious battle that has been going on as long as babies have been born. Does the baby have a right to life? The battle continues to rage.

In an article on their website, the World Health Organization made this statement:

“Induced abortion is a simple and common health-care procedure. Each year, almost half of all pregnancies – 121 million – are unintended; 6 out of 10 unintended pregnancies and 3 out of 10 of all pregnancies end in induced abortion. Abortion is safe when carried out using a method recommended by WHO, appropriate to the pregnancy duration and by someone with the necessary skills. However, when women with unwanted pregnancies face barriers to obtaining quality abortion, they often resort to unsafe abortion” [who.int/health-topics/abortion].

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a paper written in February 2021, made this opening statement:

“In recent years pro-abortion groups have radically altered their messaging strategy, abandoning the slogan of ‘choice’ to claim instead that abortion is simply essential health care for women. References to abortion or abortion ‘services’ have been replaced in pro-abortion literature by the euphemism ‘abortion care.’ By claiming an



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objective basis in medicine, abortion supporters seek to marginalize health care providers and others who disagree with them, dismissing these Americans as not living up to 'the standard of care.'

"But this claim is contrary to the facts. Abortion is a marginal practice, neither performed nor accepted by most health care providers; it does not improve (and can even jeopardize) women's life and health; and American law has recognized for decades that it is not 'just another medical procedure.' Far from being integral to our health care system, abortion is something that supporters seek to impose on that system by force of law" [usccb.org/resources/abortion-not-healthcare].

These are just a sampling of the articles and papers which have been published and posted concerning the subject. But in June of this year, the battle gained additional momentum in our country. The Supreme Court overturned a five-decade travesty of law in its reversal of the nationwide sanction of abortion, thus giving the legal responsibility to each individual state, thereby bringing the issue much closer to each citizen of every state. Their decision was a great victory for the right to life of unborn babies, but it created another chapter in the ongoing war against the murder of these precious little ones. States now are drawing the line in the sand concerning their laws on abortion.

Many states are adopting firm laws for or against abortion. In my home state of Pennsylvania, we just experienced a bitter campaign for the Senate with the primary issue being abortion. One Democratic negative campaign against the Republican opponent began with the accusation that he believes abortion is murder, taking a cynical tone and implying how ridiculous it is for any rational person to hold that view.

But the Governor of California has taken the issue to a whole new level. In a series of billboards displayed in pro-life, anti-abortion states, he has invited those seeking abortions in these states to come to California where they would be welcome. As horrible and unethical an endeavor as this is, it is made worse by the blasphemous endorsements

included in the ads through the twisting of Scripture.

After declaring that California is ready to help those who need an abortion, some of the billboards include a biblical quote from Jesus saying "Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no greater commandment than these" (Mark 12:31). This statement is blasphemy at the highest level! To use the word of the Lord to promote the sin of murdering babies is not only evil, but the satanic tactic of twisting the word of God. Governor Newsome has stooped to the lowest level of sinfulness possible. In an open letter to the governor, Pastor John MacArthur made this statement:

"In mid-September, you revealed to the entire nation how thoroughly rebellious against God you are when you sponsored billboards across America promoting the slaughter of children, whom He creates in the womb (Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 45:9-12). You further compounded the wickedness of that murderous campaign with a reprehensible act of gross blasphemy, quoting the very words of Jesus from Mark 12:31 as if you could somehow twist His meaning and arrogate His name in favor of butchering unborn infants. You used the name and the words of Christ to promote the credo of Molech (Leviticus 20:1-5). It would be hard to imagine a greater sacrilege."

Brothers and Sisters, we are in a great battle against wickedness in this nation. The battle to stop the murder of the unborn is in my opinion second only to the battle to win souls to salvation. To accomplish the former, we must first strive for the latter. Let us focus on the spiritual needs of our leaders and neighbors as we strive to serve the Lord. In the letter, Pastor MacArthur rightfully emphasizes the spiritual need of Governor Newsome. This must be our emphasis as well. To make the utmost difference in our country and states, we must win souls!

The main issue in this struggle is not choice or safe healthcare. It is not opinion or culture or even semantics. The main issue is whether the mother or a doctor has the right or authority to take a human life. Does not the child have a right to live? I have seen the ultrasound of each of my own children and am absolutely sure that each precious

baby in the mother's womb is "fearfully and wonderfully made." Only the Lord can decide this question. No baby is an accident. Even as horrible as some instances of their conception might be, each baby is a precious life created by God. Let us together join in praying for the defeat of pro-

abortion laws and the salvation of souls, beginning with Governor Newsome and others in leadership positions.

Thank you and may God richly bless the IBFNA.

A Resolution On the Overturning of Roe v. Wade . . .

The American Council of Christian Churches

Editor's note: What follows is an ACCC resolution titled "Resolution on the Overturning of Roe v. Wade (1973) and Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992)," passed by the Council at its 81st annual meeting last October. The IBFNA is a constituent member of the ACCC. Pastor Dan Greenfield, the Executive Secretary of the ACCC, will be a keynote speaker at our 2023 Family Conference in June.

The prophet asked a question that recognized the equal human dignity of his neighbor from the womb: "Did not He that made me in the womb make him? And did not One fashion us in the womb?" (Job 31:15). In our mother's womb, we were "fearfully and wonderfully made" by the "marvelous works" of our Creator (Ps. 139:14). The murder of a human is sin, "for in the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:6). God's work in a mother's womb is His "reward" for the expecting mother and father (Ps. 127:3-4). As she carries their unborn child, the expecting father must love the expecting mother in the bonds of holy matrimony, as Christ loves His church (Eph. 5:25). Righteous homes exalt a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people (Prov. 14:34).

Throughout our nation's history, states passed laws restricting abortions in support of righteous homes and the protection of mothers and their unborn children. In their 1973 *Roe¹ v. Wade* decision, the Supreme Court countermanded this precedent when it struck down a Texas law that forbade abortion except in cases where the life of the mother was threatened. The Court cited a woman's right to privacy as it granted mothers a "constitutional right" to seek an abortion, but it also affirmed the right of states to regulate abortions to some degree. The Court outlined to what degree with a trimester framework, which divided

a pregnancy into three equal terms. The rendering allowed states to regulate later-term abortions more strictly than earlier-term abortions, even though the cited right of privacy never changes from term to term.

In 1992 the Supreme Court admitted the incongruities of *Roe v. Wade* in their decision regarding certain regulations placed on abortion by the state of Pennsylvania. In *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern PA v. Casey*, the opinion of the Court cancelled *Roe's* trimester framework and sought to replace it with the doctrine of viability, regarding the unborn child, and with protection from an "undue burden," regarding the child's mother. Rather than following *Roe's* discovery of a constitutional right to privacy, *Casey* found the right to abortion in the protection of liberty rendered in the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.² In so doing, the Court defined liberty as follows: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."³ Whereas our nation's *Declaration of Independence* teaches that the endowments of the Creator are the basis of liberty,⁴ the opinion of the Court substituted an existentialist view, where liberty involves the right to become one's own Creator.

On June 24 of this year, the Supreme Court rendered its 6-3 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, overturning both *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. It upheld Mississippi's Gestational Age Act that prohibits abortion after the first 15 weeks of a pregnancy unless the mother's health is threatened. The Court found: "Abortion presents a profound moral question. The Constitution does not prohibit the citizens of each State from regulating or prohibiting abortion.

Roe and Casey arrogated that authority. The Court overrules those decisions and returns that authority to the people and their elected representatives.”⁵

Prior to the pronouncement of this decision, its draft was leaked to the press in an apparent attempt to undermine its finalization.⁶ The leak incited threats and protests directed at the conservative members of the Court, including an assassination attempt.⁷ Buoyed by media-driven outrage, some Democratic politicians have begun swearing allegiance to the abortion industry, attempting to keep their midterm-election hopes alive. The abortion industry has mobilized both federal and state efforts to pass legislation securing a woman’s “right” to an abortion. Clearly, the disgrace of sin lingers over our nation in the face of this recent Supreme Court decision.

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches at its 81st annual convention, October 25-27, 2022, at Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA resolves to continue to preach the gospel of saving grace while decrying the destructive evil of abortion. We will pray for God’s mercy as Abraham prayed for Sodom (Gen. 18:22-33). We will minister to families in the cause of righteous homes. We will help expecting mothers to be thankful for the reward of the Lord, and we will exhort expecting fathers to love the mother of their child. We will expose the destructive lies that provide cover for the sin of abortion in our society, and we will hold our elected officials responsible for defending the lives of the unborn. “If they say, ‘Come with us, let us lay in wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause’” (Prov. 1:11), we will refuse. Instead, we shall endeavor to “defend the poor

and fatherless” and to “do justice to the afflicted and the needy” (Ps. 82:3).

Footnotes

1 Jane Roe was the pseudonym used for Norma McCorvey, who later became involved in the prolife movement. Her autobiography is titled, *Won by Love* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), and it contains the following “Dedication”: “This book is dedicated to all the children who have been torn apart by abortion—I’m sorry you are no longer here, but now you are in heaven with our Father—And to all the women who through abortion have had their lives changed—Amazing Grace can heal your heart, and you, too, can be won by love.”

2 The Amendment reads in part: “No state shall . . . deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”

3 505 U.S. 833 (1992) at 851.

4 The Preamble reads: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

5 See the decision’s Syllabus, p. 8. Justice Alito wrote the opinion for the majority: Justices Alito, Thomas, Gorsuch, Kavanaugh, Barret, and Roberts. Breyer, Sotomayor, and Kagan dissented.

6 Politico published the draft on May 2. See “Five Months Later, Supreme Court still investigating who leaked the abortion case” [(October 3, 2022) news.yahoo.com].

7 See “Pro-Abortion Protesters Demonstrate outside Kavanaugh Home after Foiled Assassination Plot” [(June 8, 2022) nationalreview.com]. These threats originated at the confirmations of Kavanaugh and Gorsuch. See “Sen. Schumer Threatens Kavanaugh, Gorsuch: ‘You Will Pay The [sic] Price’” [(March 4, 2020) thefederalist.com].

The Means of Revival

By Pastor Kevin Hobi

Before the IBFNA was a Fellowship, it was a call for revival. We called ourselves the “Regular Baptists for Revival” in those days. In this series of articles, we have given a definition of revival (Feb 2022), queried the possibility of revival (May 2022), and affirmed the surprise of revival (Aug 2022). In

this article, I would like to focus on the indispensable means of revival.

I came to study revival after being asked to preach a series of messages on the topic. When I was originally asked to preach, the host pastor shared with me his desire for the meetings: “God’s

at work, and we're wanting to make sure we are doing our part in continuing His work!" This brother put an exclamation point at the end of that sentence.

With the hope that we all share this desire, we are going to focus in this article and the next on doing our part. First, we want to understand the means that the Lord has chosen by which we can do our part, and then in the next issue we will look more specifically at the difference each of us can make in this regard as individual believers.

Scotland experienced revival around the time the Second Great Awakening came to our nation. In 1840 the Presbytery of Aberdeen desired to gain a better understanding of this work of the Lord among their churches. To do so, they sent out a questionnaire that inquired about each church's experience with revival. The inquiry included 15 questions, and the last one asked about the means of revival: "What special circumstances in the preaching or ministrations of the instruments appear to have produced the results in each particular case which may have come under your notice?"

Robert Murray McCheyne, who was able to report that in his parish in Dundee 600 to 700 people had contacted pastors the previous fall about the needs of their souls, gave a simple answer to the question about the means of that revival. He said: "I do not know of anything in the ministrations of those who have occupied my pulpit that may with propriety be called peculiar, or that is different from what I conceive ought to characterize the services of all true ministers of Christ. They have preached, so far as I can judge, nothing but the pure gospel of the grace of God. They have done this fully, clearly, solemnly; with discrimination, urgency, and affection. None of them read their sermons [Jonathan Edwards did read his, by the way].

"They all, I think, seek the immediate conversion of the people, and they believe that, under a living gospel ministry, success is more or less the rule, and want of success the exception. They are, I believe, in general, peculiarly given to secret prayer; and they have also been accustomed to have much united prayer when together, and especially before and after engaging in public worship. Some

of them have been peculiarly aided in declaring the terrors of the Lord, and others in setting forth the fullness and freeness of Christ as the Savior of sinners; and the same persons have been, at different times, remarkably assisted in both these ways. So far as I am aware, no unscriptural doctrines have been taught, nor has there been a keeping back of any part of 'the whole counsel of God.'"

According to McCheyne, the means of revival are very simple - preaching the gospel and the whole counsel of God and praying. The Apostle Paul mentions these in Rom. 10:13-17. We will take them one at a time.

Revival's Preaching

David Martin Lloyd-Jones pastored Westminster Chapel in London for almost 30 years. He was a medical doctor whom God called to preach, and so he gave up a lucrative and well-respected career to give his life to the work of preaching. He wrote an influential book on preaching called *Preaching & Preachers*, and his first chapter is titled "The Primacy of Preaching." Lloyd-Jones thought to start there because he felt that preaching had been devalued in his day. He wrote the book in 1971, three years after his retirement from preaching. The attitude he saw in the Great Britain of the 1970s toward preaching has only worsened in our day. Listen to this preacher's concern:

"Here is the great question therefore: Can we justify preaching? Is there need of preaching at all in the modern world? This, as you know, is part of a larger question. We are living in an age when not only preaching but the very Church herself is being questioned. You are familiar with the talk of 'religionless Christianity', with the idea that many have that the Church herself is perhaps the greatest hindrance to the Christian faith."

The Apostle Paul was never tempted by the idea that God's plan for preaching in the local church was a hindrance to the Christian faith. No, for Paul it was quite the opposite. His formula is very simple. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. You must believe before you can call on the name of the Lord for salvation, and you must hear before you can believe. Faith comes by hearing.

But did you notice from where hearing comes? Hearing comes by a source that has two labels in this passage – (1) *preaching* and (2) *the Word of God*. In verse 14 hearing comes from preaching, and in verse 17 hearing comes from the Word of God. Faithful preaching, therefore, is the declaration of the Word of God, which is living and powerful.

Peter put it this way, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; . . . that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet. 4:11). Paul emphasizes that it is through the preaching of the message, something the world sees as foolish, that it pleases God to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1:21). What is your attitude toward the preaching of God’s Word in the local church? I think the conclusion is inescapable that our churches will lack the means of revival to the degree we undervalue preaching.

Lloyd-Jones points out that when the enemies of the gospel tried to stop the apostolic revival in the book of Acts, they did not tell them to stop doing miracles. They did not tell them to stop befriending unbelievers. They told them to stop teaching and preaching in Jesus’s name.

In our day, Satan has not had to use the threat of persecution to get many Christians to stop believing in preaching. We speak a lot about the importance of redemptive relationships to our gospel witness, the idea that each of us needs to know unbelievers well enough to be able to influence them for the gospel. That is an important responsibility.

But how strongly do we feel the need for redemptive preaching today? It seems to me that it is far easier to find that emphasis in the New Testament than it is to find the apostles trying to befriend unbelievers in redemptive relationships. I am not trying to argue against those relationships, but rather to argue for desiring that those whom we befriend in this way would hear the gospel proclaimed to them through preaching. Preaching is a God-appointed means of revival.

Revival’s Praying

Perhaps you are saying, “Brother, I can see preaching in this passage, but where does Paul

mention praying?” That is a great question. I am going to answer by saying that when Paul mentions *sending*, he would say that he is necessarily including praying.

Clearly, Paul’s instruction tells us that sending is a part of God’s appointed means to the salvation of souls. So, the question immediately arises, “Who are these senders and how do they send?”

Scripture mentions two senders of gospel preachers in the New Testament. The first is the Lord of the harvest (Matt. 9:36-38). Jesus is the Lord of the harvest. So in what way does the Lord of the harvest become a Sender of preachers into fields white unto harvest? God’s people pray that He would, and He answers those prayers.

The second sender mentioned in the New Testament is the local church (Acts 13:1-3). Did you notice that praying and sending are connected in this passage (v. 3)? So it is revival’s prayer that is especially effective when it comes to sending.

Remember what McCheyne said about prayer in the Scotland revival: “They are, I believe, in general, peculiarly given to secret prayer; and they have also been accustomed to have much united prayer when together, and especially before and after engaging in public worship.”

Think for a moment about that last phrase. How prayerful are we before and after public worship? Have you ever noticed the way our enemy likes to ruin our lives just before church starts? I often get the sense that we are starting worship in a bit of a spiritual hole. It is as though we are coming to bat with two strikes already against us, because our hearts have not been prepared prayerfully for worshipping Christ together and hearing His gospel proclaimed.

In his book *Expository Listening*, author Ken Ramey talks about the importance of the local church’s prayer preparation for the ministry of the Word each coming Sunday: “You need to pray for the preacher. Pray that the preacher would preach with great liberty and boldness and clarity (Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:3-4); that God’s Word would run rapidly, transforming people’s lives for His glory (2 Thess. 3:1); that God’s Spirit would empower

the preacher and use him to help you grow in your understanding of God and His Word and accomplish His purposes in your life and the life of your church" (p. 40).

J. Edwin Orr was an evangelist and author of the last century who was known as a student of the revivals of history. In 1989 he wrote a book called *The Event of the Century* about the revival of 1857-1858, which he called "the most wholesome movement ever known in the Christian Church." He and other authors explained that this revival spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico [see Ian Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, pp. 331-332].

It all began with the financial "Panic of 1857," in which it was written that "men went to bed dreaming all night of their vast hoarded treasures, and woke up in the morning hopeless bankrupts" [Humphrey quoted in Murray, 342].

Just prior to this financial chaos and ruin, Jeremiah Lanphier met with five other men for prayer at noon in the lecture room of the North Reformed Dutch Church in Lower Manhattan. Week by week, their numbers doubled. When the financial crisis came, the weekly meeting became daily. More rooms became necessary as numbers grew, and then other locations sprung up. By February of the following year, the *New York Daily Tribune* was calling noon-time the city's "Hour of Prayer." Revival's prayer is one of its means.

Revival's Love

Revival means *live again*, and *symbiosis* means *live together*. In revival, living again is something believers do symbiotically. We live again together.

Our Creator made an interconnected creation whose symbiosis illustrates the love that exists in His nature as the Trinity. This, of course, is the opposite of evolution's survival-of-the-fittest theory. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul addresses one of the most beautiful displays of interconnected life the Lord ever placed on earth – the local church. It is the love of Christ and the love of the body of Christ that connects us in this very practical way.

Paul says much about this love, but I would only note that revival's preaching and revival's prayer profit nothing without it (vv. 1-3). Our commitment to preaching must be a commitment to preaching in love. Our commitment to the faith of prayer must be a commitment to it in love. Without love, the means of revival simply do not work.

The Psalmist put it this way: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalm 133). Let's preach, pray, and love for the blessing of revival from the Lord.

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