

3 Challenges the Church Faces as We Consider a Post-Roe World

Roe v. Wade, and the cases which followed, have cast a long shadow in the history of the United States with limitedly restricted abortion. However, the decision of Dobbs v. Jackson in June could overturn the pro-abortion legal regime established by the Roe decision in 1973.

As we face the prospect of a post-Roe world, a vital question confronts us, "Are we willing to be inconvenienced in order to defend life?"

Churches and Christians find ourselves in an unprecedented time of opportunity to answer this important question by demonstrating the scriptural command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31).

What will our talking points be if, by God's grace, abortion is made illegal? What action will we take? Will men step up and stop amusing themselves to death and join their wives in caring for the single mom in their sphere of influence to show her and her children a positive male role model? Will we be willing to sacrifice our time to mentor a woman or family in crisis who has lost children to state custody because of addiction, poverty or poor decisions?

Are we willing, no matter our stage of life, to use our home to foster children while they are displaced from their homes? Will we adopt children from the foster care system, from American women who need to place their babies instead of parent, and will we be open to adopt these children no matter their past trauma, special need or age?

You see, being pro-life is not just about eliminating

abortion. Being pro-life means putting our families and our churches into action to guard the *Imago Dei*. It means knowing that all life is created in the image of God our Creator and living accordingly with great intentionality.

Even if Roe is overturned, its lingering effects will not disappear with its federal elimination. We must stop and acknowledge that the legality of abortion will simply go back to the states.

Regardless of the Supreme Court's decision, pro-life Christians face three abiding challenges.

Challenge No. 1: Consistently Modeling and Defending a Biblical Theology of Life

In our world, we often see things as replaceable and disposable. Unfortunately, that worldview all too often extends to how we view human lives. All too often, we evaluate things and people by the same criterion: their benefit to us. Sadly, even those of us who follow Jesus can be lulled into determining value in utilitarian terms, rather than honoring the God-given intrinsic value of all life.

Our default mindset begins with ourselves, not with others or with God's plan.

But God beckons us to view life differently. Our God knits together all human life in the womb with beauty and excellence—all for His glory. God created us in His image and sacrificed His Son for us so that we could each live an abundant life, faithfully defending His image-bearers while preaching the good news of the kingdom.

This means that every life the Lord fashions in the womb bears His image and has a distinct purpose. Each life the Lord brings into the world demands our defense and witness. Abortion eliminates a life He created—a life that is rich, meaningful and intended to bring glory to Christ.

A post-Roe world will demand that we model the love of God to women, men and children who long to be loved and known for who God created them to be. We must live out the life of the *Imago Dei* in both word and deed.

This means not only lovingly embracing God's plan for ourselves, but defending His plan to others and showing them that they too are part of His beloved Creation. A biblical theology of life bears great fruit, if only we let it.

Challenge No. 2: Mobilizing a Slumbering Church

Advocates for abortions like to say there aren't enough families to adopt the children that will be born if Roe is overturned. That's not true—just look at the numbers.

About 600-650,000 abortions are performed annually in the United States. Experts estimate that somewhere between 1 and 2 million couples are waiting to adopt in any given year. That means that for every aborted child, at least in statistical terms, there are *multiple* possible adoptive families.

But these numbers don't capture the whole picture. A post-Roe world will need more than just families willing to adopt. It will need a mobile, active and zealous church.

We will need leaders who have a desire to unite and mobilize their churches for this moment. We need leaders who are proud and enthusiastic in their witness of biblical faith. We need leaders who will remind us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to care for the needy, leaders who will mobilize and guide us.

Let us be people who heed the call of Proverbs 31:8-9 (MEV): "Open your mouth for the speechless in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy."

We must speak for those who cannot speak for themselves and

help those who cannot help themselves. We must value all life because each of us is a life Christ valued enough to die for.

Challenge No. 3: Being Willing to Go Where God Calls

It's also important to recognize that a post-Roe world just isn't a world with zero abortions. If Roe is overturned by the Supreme Court, it will shift abortion decisions back to the states and away from the federal court.

Planned Parenthood's research arm, the Guttmacher Institute, notes that 26 states will instantly restrict or stop abortion if Roe is overturned. At the same time, however, some states will move to allow greater access to abortions by enacting some of the most permissive abortion laws in the world.

This is already the case in states such as California, New York and Illinois, and the elimination of Roe will open the door to an expansion of abortion in quite a few additional states. In total, nine states are poised to expand abortion access post-Roe, and another 13 states have put laws in place to legally protect existing abortion access.

If this is our future, we must join with other brothers and sisters to support vulnerable women and children living in states with progressive or liberal abortion agendas.

Following God's call to defend life means opening our homes and hearts to those who need ministry and witness, no matter what that looks like.

This could mean traveling across state lines to help destination states. It could mean moving your family to go help churches in those states reach out to the women traveling there to obtain abortions.

But it's important to remember that though God's call might mean moving to another state, it might just mean visiting your next-door neighbor. It could mean a new church home, or

renewed prayer, ministry and witness at your current one.

But when God calls, whatever He asks, we must answer. He can and He will guide us, but we must be willing to follow. And we don't need to wait until Roe is overturned to begin.

We can and must live out our faith each day, awaken our churches and follow Christ with new fervor. We can and we must pray and work for the end of abortion, no matter where we are and no matter what God's plan for us might be.

Faithful churches and fervent Christian witness can be an answer to our broken world. God calls us to sacrifice for the sake of others, and we must do so now as we seek to live out the gospel promise in a post-Roe world. {eoa}

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