

Stop Demonizing This Important Cultural Issue

During an interview on Fox News, presidential candidate Nikki Haley said “while I’m unapologetically pro-life, I don’t judge anyone for being pro-choice. I think that we have to humanize this issue. We’ve got to stop demonizing this issue.”

Was she right? Or would this be like humanizing the issue of slavery or human trafficking or genocide?

When I asked this question on Facebook, the responses were extremely varied.

Some said absolutely not, explaining: “To compromise with evil is evil!” And, “It seems a like a bit of an oxymoron to humanize something so inhumane.” And, “I can respect no one who thinks it’s ok to kill the unborn.” (Comments like these were in the majority.)

Others said, “We should respect them and understand why they might believe in or choose abortion. We can have no effect on people until we truly understand their side.” And, “We should see them as God’s creation without the benefit of the Holy Spirit in their lives. If we don’t humanize the debate we will continue to lose the debate. There are two lives (at least) impacted by abortion; the baby and the mother and we must love both in our stance for life.”

Haley, for her part, had been asked by host Ainsley Earhardt to “be realistic with the numbers,” meaning the number of pro-life votes available in Congress.

She responded, “I mean, Ainsley, that’s the answer from my heart. You know, I am surrounded by blessings, and God has blessed me with an amazing husband and two wonderful children. But having said that, I think it’s really important that all

of us remember everybody has a personal story. So while I'm unapologetically pro-life, I don't judge anyone for being pro-choice. I think that we have to humanize this issue. We've got to stop demonizing this issue."

She continued, "I think the division in this country has gone too far. We have to start looking at the vision going forward. My vision is how do we save as many babies as possible and support as many moms as possible. If that's the case, be honest with the American people. Tell them what is possible and what's not possible, and let's bring people together based on humanity, not based on making people hate each other. And I think it's happened too long, and I'm just not going to be a part of that. I refuse to be a part of that."

Was she on to something here, or is this political compromise in its worst form?

Here are my thoughts.

First, we should distinguish between humanizing the issue of abortion and humanizing the people involved in the issue. Abortion itself is evil. It involves the shedding of innocent blood in the womb. It is culture-destroying in many ways, and it deserves the judgment of God. We can never move from that reality.

Second, when it comes to the question of "humanizing," let us focus more than anything on the humanity of the baby in the womb. This is how we change hearts and, ultimately, change laws. And this is why 4-D ultrasounds have been so effective in preventing abortions. That's not a mass of tissues or a clump of cells. That's your child.

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Third, there is a place for humanizing those on the "pro-

choice" side of the aisle. That's because many, if not most, women who have abortions are not radical feminists marching down the streets and shouting their abortions. Many agonize over their decisions, often regretting their choices for years to come. My friends who have ministered the gospel outside of abortion clinics have shared many a heartrending story with me.

Other women who had abortions would make clear that they are *not* pro-abortion, even though they made that choice themselves.

They should not be compared to an abortion doctor getting rich off of his despicable work.

They are not in the same class as a Planned Parenthood executive pushing for higher quotas of baby killing.

Many women, to be sure, view abortion as another method of birth control, allowing them to sleep around without lasting consequence. But even in their cases, some have been deeply conditioned to think of the "fetus" as a "something" rather than a "someone." They *are* responsible for their actions, but they are also the byproduct of decades of cultural programming.

✘ Here, too, we need hearts of compassion and backbones of steel—and not just compassion for the babies in the womb.

We can stand strong, immovable in our convictions and not minimizing the evil of abortion, while ministering with grace to those on the other side (in particular, to those who are hurting and conflicted).

We should also solicit input from pro-life women who had abortions in the past, hearing their stories and learning from their experiences.

By God's grace, may we turn the tide of the nation, one baby

and one heart at a time. May we become a pro-life people.
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