

Why There's Still Hope for Millennials in the Church

As a young millennial, your age group appears to be leaving the church and walking away from issues that have been at the forefront for the last 20 years. Why are you so passionate about the pro-life issue?

Yes, there are some concerns about our generation, but on the positive side, millennials are the ones leading the pro-life movement. If you're in Washington, D.C., at the March for Life on Jan. 22, you'll see over a half-million high school and college students who are marching in the freezing cold and who are passionate about rescuing children from abortion.

The mainstream media does not want to cover it, but we should. This young pro-life generation is being led by millennials, individuals such as Lila Rose (Live Action), David Daleiden (The Center of Medical Progress), both in their 20s. Just think about their undercover exposure videos that have been seen by millions and have led to states moving to defund America's largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood. Think about millennials such as Kristan Hawkins (Students for Life of America), who is leading over 900 chapters, and Shawn Carney, who has co-led 40 Days for Life.

Through the prayer movement co-founded by a young man in his 20s, 675,000 people have participated and 11,165 babies have been saved. And yes, I'm concerned that the mainstream media isn't covering it, but we're making progress, and I believe that 2016 is going to be a great year for the sanctity of human life.

I'm passionate about the pro-life issue because every human deserves protection, especially the most vulnerable. They need our help. Abortion is the No. 1 cause of death in America.

Abortion is the No. 1 cause of death worldwide! Why is that? Because every abortion takes the life of an innocent unborn baby. More humans die from abortion than heart disease, cancer, AIDS and car accidents put together.

I'm passionate about the pro-life cause because every unborn baby is a special, genetically unique, whole, living, human being. That's what the majority of the embryology textbooks say about the unborn. Today as Americans, most of us agree that it is wrong to mistreat or murder someone based on the color of their skin. Shouldn't it also be wrong to murder a child because of their size, level of development, their location or their degree of dependency? Yet, those are the only four differences between an unborn baby and a newborn baby.

You have created a one-day training curriculum and resource for the church. Walk us through the training and tell us why this is important.

Anyone can go to and receive a free, downloadable curriculum with discussion questions and videos that churches and small groups can use. We're coming alongside pastors, youth pastors and student leaders to provide them with training resources. And we've created a small group curriculum with videos that churches can use in small group, home groups and Sunday school classes.

Churches of all denominations, Catholic and Protestant, are coming together to use this curriculum. We also provide enough material for them to use for up to three one-hour gatherings. In these videos, I talk about the sacredness of human life and will train participants in how to answer the tough questions about abortion with clarity, conviction and compassion.

In addition to my teaching, the video includes short, three-minute stories from people like Ramona Trevino, who found forgiveness after quitting her job at Planned Parenthood;

Melissa Ohden, who survived a failed abortion attempt and now ministers to others; and Lila Rose who has courageously exposed Planned Parenthood. We will talk about some of the dilemmas and also train thousands of people to answer the tough questions in way that is both winsome and non-threatening.

Are churches engaging in the sanctity of human life? How is We Choose Life different?

Historically, the Catholic Church has always been pro-life. Many Catholics and Protestants are participating and leading the We Choose Life groups. We talk about the grace and forgiveness found through Jesus in this curriculum, which has been designed primarily for Christians. We are uniting with that “common” conviction that we are all created in the very image and likeness of God. At the time of *Roe v. Wade*, the Southern Baptist Church (my denomination) was actually in favor of abortion, but later made a change in the late '70s. Sadly, only 12 of the 28 major Protestant denominations currently take a pro-life stance, but I believe the tide is turning.

My church, Prestonwood Baptist Church, is very excited about using a portion of this curriculum with about 8,000 people in Sunday school in the spring of 2016. We have groups like Texas Right to Life, Students for Life for America, Wisconsin Right to Life, Awaken Atlanta and many more that are very interested in this curriculum. I think it is realistic to say that this curriculum is going to help bring about unity and healing for the cause of life across denominations and will be used in campus ministries as well.

Share a couple of the stories that have been the most compelling to you.

All of these stories are amazing. There is Rebecca, who was conceived as a result of rape and is now speaking up on behalf

of children and women. Dr. Mike Adams has an interesting story. He was a liberal, pro-choice professor who only wanted to date women who were pro-choice. That way, if he got a woman pregnant, he could take her to have an abortion.

But Mike watched a film called *The Silent Scream* by Bernard Nathanson that really got his attention. One of the stories featured in our video and curriculum is that of Melissa Ohden, who survived a failed saline abortion attempt in 1977. She talks about her journey to meet her biological parents and find answers.

She wrote, "Despite not yet having the chance to meet my biological parents or the majority of my biological family, I see abortion through the lens of each of our lives. I have seen how my biological mother's forced abortion didn't just affect my life and hers, it's affected all of our lives. Secrets have been kept, relationships have been changed. Some relationships have ended. Shame, guilt and resentment have abounded in our lives.

"I live each day of my life knowing that if the abortion had succeeded in ending my life, my two daughters never would have existed. This the most difficult part of it all for me. Every decision has a consequence; every abortion has a ripple effect that impacts generations. That is the biggest reason why I came forward publicly in 2007 as an abortion survivor, to turn back the tide in the opposite direction, to bring truth and love to the world that has been devastated by abortion."

Why is it important for Christians—and especially for millennials—to engage in this dialogue?

Every millennial is a survivor. Every millennial has been born after 1973. So millennials have been brought into this world at time when it was legally permissible for our mothers to kill us. But we survived *Roe v. Wade*. Many of our brothers and sisters have not survived. Fifty-seven million babies have

died. But we have an opportunity to change history; to rescue those being led away to the slaughter; to speak up for those who can't speak for themselves. Our generation has technology, innovation and a strong desire to make a difference.

It won't be easy, and I believe we need a spiritual awakening from God. Some people think it is impossible to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, but it is not. Yes, we need to elect a president who will nominate constitutionally true Supreme Court justices, but we all need to change the hearts and minds of our friends, family and neighbors too—that begins with us at home.

It starts with learning, repenting of our own sins, receiving Jesus' forgiveness and then sharing our stories of hope to those who are looking to us. We Choose Life is all about real answers, real stories and real hope. Just when we think it is impossible to see abortion abolished, we must remember that William Wilberforce was going up against 500 years of tradition when he sought to make the slave trade illegal. We're going up against 43 years of abortion being practiced in America.

Wilberforce said, "Let us not despair; it is a blessed cause, and success, ere long, will crown our exertions. ... Never, never will we desist till we have wiped away this scandal from the Christian name, released ourselves from the load of guilt under which we at present labor, and extinguished every trace of this bloody traffic, of which our posterity, looking back to the history of these enlightened times, will scarce believe that it has been suffered to exist so long a disgrace and dishonor to this country."

May we say the same thing about abortion. May we never give up until we have wiped away the scandal of abortion from America. After we expose the evil, may we extinguish every trace of this bloody traffic. May we one day look back and tell our grandchildren that we can't believe we allowed such an evil to exist in our great nation.

Dave Sterrett is an evangelist, educator and ethicist. He is the founder of Disruptive Truth, a nonprofit organization dedicated to disrupting culture with the truth of the gospel. In the last decade, Dave Sterrett has been a director, spokesman or board member for some of the most innovative Christian organizations that are reaching millennials with the hope of Jesus Christ.