

the Scriptures—something I had not done thoroughly enough. After a period of searching, God spoke to both of us at the same time. Jeremiah 1:5 was the verse God used to change my mind. “Before I formed you [Jeremiah] in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you...” If the Lord knows him, then he has to be alive.

There was considerable guilt over my involvement. I still struggle with it. Maybe my work didn’t have that much of an effect, but I was a part of the movement. That haunts me very seriously at times. Then when I realize the grace of God, the haunting begins to disappear and I’m better able to accept His forgiveness and forgive myself.

Nevertheless, it amazes me that we Christians can be so blind, especially when I consider that the reasons society gives for justifying abortion today would have killed our Christ before He was born: He was conceived out of wedlock, conceived in an impoverished woman, uncared for by society, and an embarrassment to family members.

“...*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*” (Matt. 25:40 KJV)

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is also on the Board of Directors for the Leon County Christian Action Council and the Women’s Pregnancy Center.

*We at Americans Against Abortion deeply admire and respect Dr. Phillips for openly sharing his testimony. We believe it is people like him who, unafraid to admit their past mistakes and take a stand for righteousness, demonstrate the power and grace of Jesus Christ. Thank-you pastor Phillips. May Jesus multiply your ministry greatly!*

### Know Where Your Church Stands

Many people don’t know where their church or denomination stands on abortion. Several major denominations support “pro-choice” organizations and activities with the tithes and offerings of their membership. If you’re not sure about your own church, we encourage you to find out.

Except where otherwise noted, all Scriptures are quoted from the New American Standard Bible, ©The Lockman Foundation 1977.

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# I Changed My My Stand My Struggle Over Abortion

Pastor Zolton Phillips, III

**I** was a member of the Clergy's Advisory Council to the Virginia League For Planned Parenthood in the early 1970s. That was before the Roe v. Wade decision, back when states were allowed to make their own laws in regard to abortion. Planned Parenthood had launched a campaign to liberalize the abortion laws of Virginia and I participated in that effort, talking with people in the state legislature at Richmond where I lived.

Down in the university area of Richmond was the Fan Free Clinic, a medical facility for students and the underprivileged in the Fan District. The clinic provided treatment for anything from the common cold to venereal disease. They also saw young ladies coming in that were butchered, really torn up from abortions. In desperation these women had chosen to risk their lives rather than face the disgrace of an unplanned pregnancy, or bear a child they did not want or were unprepared for.

***Free contraceptives and "safe" abortions seemed a reasonable solution. I made my decision to support Planned Parenthood's goals on the basis of these observations...***

At Planned Parenthood, I heard doctors make presentations saying that a legal, professionally performed abortion was safer than having a baby<sup>1</sup> and that access to contraceptives would decrease the rate of pregnancy.<sup>2</sup> Free contraceptives and "safe" abortions seemed a reasonable

solution. I made my decision to support Planned Parenthood's goals on the basis of these observations—not on the basis of any biblical study. My congregation, the Village Presbyterian Church in Richmond, knew what I was doing. I didn't preach it from the pulpit, but in private conversation, I certainly was an advocate for abortion.

***I told them that if they wanted to have an abortion, it was understandable and that I would arrange one for them if I could.***

Other ministers and I—members of the Clergy's Advisory Council—would be called in to meet with the Chairman of Planned Parenthood of Virginia to give our advice about the different projects he was working on. I was never totally comfortable with my position, but I wasn't quite sure why until later on.

The campaign to liberalize the state's abortion laws was successful, and I made myself available as a counselor for the first abortion clinic in Richmond. When women came seeking counsel, I told them that if they wanted to have an abortion, it was understandable and that I would arrange one for them if I could. But always in the back of my mind there was something that prompted the question, "Is this really right?" I would push it down, but it gnawed at me for a long time.

Finally, I asked the state Chairman of Planned Parenthood to let me witness an abortion. I'll never forget that day. Inside the dilapidated brick building, a former minority hospital, I was greeted by a nervous nurse and two hurried doctors. I donned the standard white coat and entered a room where I saw a very pretty young lady, anxiously sitting on the edge of an old hospital bed. There were brief introductions and then I stepped to the back and listened to the doctor tell this woman what would happen. He emphasized three things: 1) "There will be no pain to speak of." 2) "You will walk into the room." 3) "You will walk back from the room." I'm not sure what prompted them to say such things,

except possibly to reassure her that this was not a major medical operation.

We went into the procedure room. I stood at the head of the lady as her legs were placed in the stirrups, the doctor sat down, and the nurse stood at his side. Following four cervical injections that were painful to the lady, she was dilated by a series of rods increasing in size. Then an ominous-looking machine with a gauze bag inside a jar was pushed close to her. The vacuum tube was put in position, the machine turned on, and a sucking sound I'll never forget filled the room. As a mass of fluid and blood went into the jar, the gauze bag caught the fragmented body parts where I saw what appeared to be a tiny hand catch in the bag.

I asked the nurse, "Is that what I think it is?" She said, "Yeah."

After it was over, the ashen-faced woman staggered back to the other room, supported by no one until I went to her aid. The rest of my day was filled with gloom.

I spoke with some people at Planned Parenthood about my uneasy feelings and was told they would disappear after seeing a few more abortions.

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I did see other abortions—two vacuum-curette and one saline. After the saline abortion, the baby was born alive. Shocked, I appealed to the nurse saying, "Hey, he's trying to live, help him!" She replied, "I can't because they've signed the papers that he's dead."

When I came home, my wife and I began to do a lot of talking and praying and searching

1) When reporting deaths, pro-abortion people only include first trimester abortions (1 to 2 deaths per 100,000 performed), conveniently omitting the deaths from second and third trimester abortions (40 to 50 deaths per 100,000 performed). Deaths in childbirth occur 10 per 100,000. *Abortion—Questions & Answers* by Dr. & Mrs. J.C. Willke, Hayes Publishing Co., Inc., 1985, p. 100.

2) "More teenagers are using contraceptives and using them more consistently than ever before. Yet the number and rate of premarital pregnancies continues to rise." Quote from Planned Parenthood's own publication, 10 years later. *Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 12, No. 5, September/October 1980, p. 229.