



CHRISTIAN LIFE RESOURCES
— FOR LIFE • FOR FAMILY —

SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN A SECULAR WORLD:

Part 1: Pro-Life Political Realities



CLEARLY CARING MAGAZINE | SUMMER 2026

A recent issue of *Christianity Today* reported:

But this year, pro-lifers are not likely to get any new protections for the unborn from Congress or the Supreme Court, even though both are under the control of conservatives.¹

While political engagement matters, lasting protection for life depends on the spiritual condition of the electorate's hearts, which only the Gospel can address.

THE GOVERNED AND THOSE WHO GOVERN

As I navigate the highway system, I love the smooth road, straight and curved sections that keep me alert, and the lowering hills and rising valleys that eliminate the roller-coaster effect. Creating the policies that

gave rise to this reality, however, is far more complex. Road materials must withstand varying climates and different vehicle loads. Designing roads involves property lines, property rights, vistas, natural obstacles and openings, waterways, and subgrade integrity. And let's not forget the cost, which determines if we can afford a bridge or need more bends in the road. Politicians and legislation deal with these details. We just enjoy the ride!

The inherent value of human life, beginning at conception, should be obvious, but it is not. As technology has advanced, even pro-life people get confused. The IVF issue has many otherwise staunch anti-abortion folks willing to accept the destruction of embryos for the possibility of delivering a baby for a couple wrestling with infertility.

1 Daniel K. Williams, "This Year, Protections for the Unborn Won't Come from Washington," *Christianity Today*, January 2026, accessed June 3, 2026, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2026/01/protections-unborn-washington-trump-republican-congress-march-for-life/>.



I remember when the late Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) was a darling of the pro-life community until he came out in favor of embryonic stem cell research (ESCR). His logic that embryonic life in a Petri dish was not the same as embryonic life in the womb limped, but the greater reality was the political pressure he faced from constituents who strongly favored ESCR. Hatch risked alienating some pro-life support on this issue. He still supported mainstream pro-life legislation, but he also voted to allow embryo destruction in stem cell research.

Despite his support for ESCR, Hatch continued to win reelection for decades, illustrating how political reality often pressures pro-life politicians to compromise to survive electorally. This underscores that as long as the electorate's convictions are divided, even friendly officeholders will be tempted toward compromise.

Hatch is one of many examples of so-called “compromises” in political theater. Politically, a pro-life vote was preserved in the U.S. Senate. Who knows what

would have happened if pro-life politicking had caused him to lose reelection for his ESCR position? Perhaps he would have been replaced with a candidate who also supported ESCR and abortion rights, resulting in the loss of a valuable Senate pro-life vote.

One of the challenges of pro-life politics is that standing on your principles can get you elected, but the nuances of change will quickly challenge how you apply those principles. Standing ideologically strong will make you popular with your fans, but could get you unelected.

ABSOLUTISM VS. INCREMENTALISM

Anyone intimately familiar with pro-life politicking is aware that there has been a persistent tension between the philosophical approaches of absolutism and incrementalism.

Absolutism means never compromising on pro-life positions. Incrementalism means accepting partial victories. For example, pro-life Group A may support legislation that presumably reduces but does not eliminate abortions, but pro-life Group B opposes the legislation for not going far enough. Group A reasons that you take what victories you can in the hope of greater victories down the road. Group B reasons that incremental legislation betrays a lack of conviction and risks settling for a short-term gain without the assurance of being able to go for a bigger victory later.

In a sense, both groups could be correct. The difference lies in how confident they are that the incremental approach will work. The reality is that sometimes it works, and sometimes it does not.

Welcome to the frustration of worldly solutions to

deeply spiritual problems. Political strategies, whether absolutist or incremental, can restrain evil for a time but cannot regenerate hearts.

ABORTION LAWS AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE

In the aforementioned *Christianity Today* article, the author cited a connection between church attendance and restrictions on abortion:

In 10 of the 11 states where 40 percent or more of the population goes to church at least once a month, abortion is almost entirely illegal. The lone exception is heavily Mormon Utah, where the state government has adopted an abortion ban, but the courts have blocked it.

The question is whether this is a correlation or a causation. In other words, does it just happen to be the case that pro-life states happen to have

FURTHER READING: THE CHRISTIAN AND GOVERNMENT

The relationship between church and state is distinct but interconnected. God established government to maintain order and justice, while the church's mission is to proclaim the gospel and nurture faith. Christians are called to respect and obey governing authorities when possible, yet their ultimate allegiance belongs to God.

The article encourages believers to engage society as faithful citizens, support good governance, and recognize that both church and state serve different purposes under God's authority.



<https://bit.ly/3SLbeML>



better church attendance (correlation), or does better church attendance drive stronger pro-life laws (causation)? If stronger church attendance truly correlates with stronger pro-life laws, the deeper question is: what is happening in those churches? Are hearts being regularly confronted with law and gospel in ways that shape how people vote and govern?

I wish to argue for the latter case, but to do so, a bit differently, not by touting

church attendance as a bare statistic, but by focusing on what the Spirit does through Word and sacrament in the lives of hearers.

My own decades in pro-life work have confirmed what these statistics suggest. I have been involved in pro-life work since my college years (mid-1970s). It has been a whiplash of ups and downs as we celebrate and mourn pro-life victories and losses politically, legislatively, and judicially. Even with big victories like the overturning of the

infamous 1973 abortion ruling (*Roe v. Wade*) in 2022 (*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*), our ecstasy of victory was tempered when one of our pregnancy care centers was heavily vandalized, and now there are reports that abortions have increased since *Dobbs*.

I propose that the problem is what it always has been – the hearts of the people.

NURTURING THE HEART OF THE ELECTORATE

In our representative government, roughly 0.15% of the population is elected to local, state, and federal offices to set policies for about 349 million people in the United States. It is a Herculean task requiring navigation of the perspectives of approximately 375 organized religious traditions and approximately 1,500 different nationalities among people residing in 50 different

states and 5 inhabited U.S. territories. And the trick is to do this without it leading to a civil war or incidents of domestic terrorism, not to mention the ever-present reality of international terrorism.

The government creates a framework for nurturing the heart. Yet the actual work of heart-nurturing belongs to families and churches, as they bring God's Word to bear on consciences.

The government provides the freedom to do so, with allowances for speech, religious practice, and responsible parenting. Even this can feel like walking through a minefield, as these rights collide with deeply conflicting opinions. It would seem prudent, therefore, that we work hard to protect these freedoms so we can do what we need to do.

In this series of articles, I will talk about heart-nurturing, as Christians are uniquely

RELATED PODCAST EPISODE:

The Current Status of Abortion and Pro-Life Laws in America

In this episode, we examine the state of abortion in America following the *Dobbs* decision. Most importantly, we explore the Christian response—focusing on changing hearts, supporting mothers, and speaking for the sanctity of human life with compassion and conviction.



<https://bit.ly/4venNi2>

charged and equipped to do so. We have a substantial arsenal. First, we have the truth (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). We have the truth of God's Word, and the Gospel proclaimed and enacted in Word and sacrament, through which the Spirit works faith and renews hearts.

Second, we have the Gospel, which is the story of perfect love shown for us in the gift of Christ for our salvation. The Gospel is a subset of truth that encompasses the knowledge that we have an

eternity preserved for us in heaven through Christ, so that even death is not an obstacle (Job 19:25-26; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Moral directives can curb outward behavior, but only the Gospel creates new hearts that see every life as precious in Christ.

Finally, a Christian is not called to live in isolation but to belong to a local congregation and to befriend fellow believers, where we listen to God's Word together, instruct and encourage one another,

discuss matters of faith, and plan works of love in Christ's name. This is a network of Christian friends and family that permits the natural benefits of collaboration (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:11). On a more structured level, we have the congregation, which is a place of encouragement and instruction (Acts 5:42; Hebrews 10:24-25). Only the Christian church proclaims the crucified and risen Christ as the world's only Savior, and therefore only the church brings the one message that can truly change hearts.

Going forward, I intend to explore the obstacles to heart-nurturing. Specifically,

I will look at the "three I's" of challenges: our Inclinations (our flesh), the Influencers (the world), and the Instigators (the devil and his demons). If we do not recognize these three forces at work in the abortion debate, we will keep expecting from politics what only the Spirit can accomplish through the Word.

I will wrap up the series with some strategy suggestions. 



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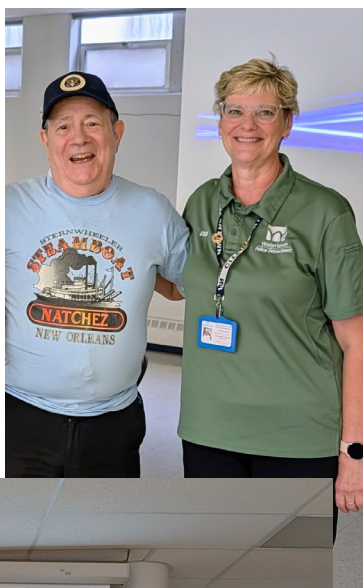
WOULD YOU KNOW HOW TO HELP SOMEONE IN CRISIS?

Have you ever seen someone in deep emotional pain and wished you knew how to respond? That's why Christian Life Resources partnered with Trinity Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wisconsin, to host a QPR (Question. Persuade. Refer.) Suicide Prevention Training, equipping everyday Christians with a simple, life-saving way to respond when someone may be at risk.

“So cool! In all seriousness, it was well done and well worth the time! As someone who has struggled with anxiety and panic attacks in the past I wholeheartedly support doing whatever is necessary to address mental health. I am looking forward to repeat events!” -attendee



If your church or group longs to speak hope into the darkness of suicide and mental health struggles, QPR is a powerful place to start.



**To explore hosting a training,
contact Rachel at Christian Life Resources
at rachelg@christianliferesources.com
or 414-376-0594.**



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