**4 Steps Churches Can Take to Advocate for the Unborn and Their Mothers**

**By Krissie Inserra**

When I worked at the local crisis pregnancy center in my community, I was frequently confronted with the reality of abortion. I saw women come into the center for pregnancy tests, counseling, and ultrasounds daily.

I heard their heartbreaking stories of past abortions, saw the fear in their eyes and realized they felt overwhelmed and had no idea how they would be able to parent this child in their womb if they chose life.

This is a real and prevalent issue. According to the Guttmacher Institute, a pro-abortion research organization, 24% of women will have had an abortion by the time they reach the age of 45.

If you’re not one of them, you undoubtedly know several.

There were 862,000 abortions reported in the United States in 2017 alone. Fifty-four percent of people seeking abortions are already parents.

As a Christian ministry, those who work and volunteer at the pregnancy center also were given the opportunity to share the gospel with each woman who walked in the door—many of whom were students and had little or no employment and no family support. They couldn’t see how it was possible to have a baby and finish college.

Others who came to us in crisis were working long hours, had unstable relationships, and many already had children at home they struggled to provide for. To them, abortion seemed to be the only realistic option.

I came home each day burdened by what I encountered, but also so encouraged by the individual stories of women who had, against the odds, chosen to give life to the child in their womb.

I became acutely aware of the abortion crisis and even now—with many years gone by since my daily involvement in the center—I haven’t lost that awareness and burden. It did, however, take being exposed on a regular basis to the reality of unexpected pregnancies to open my eyes.

I’m not suggesting that everyone go work at a pregnancy center, but I do think one of the most important things a church can do is to support, both financially and in time and talents, a local pregnancy center.

Ideally a church would find one that that isn’t only helping women in crisis pregnancy situations, but more importantly, giving them the hope that is only found in Jesus Christ.

This Sunday—Sanctity of Human Life Sunday—is a wonderful opportunity for churches to make their congregants aware of the abortion crisis facing our nation, and a pastor must champion these centers from the pulpit as well as demonstrate personal commitment.

There are several ways churches can take first or next steps in supporting the local ministry of a pregnancy center

1. ATTEND FUNDRAISING EVENTS FOR THE CENTERS.

While the local church should spend the bulk of its resources spreading the gospel around the world, it should also partner with ministries who share their gospel conviction and serve the community in unique ways.

Most churches aren’t equipped to counsel women in these crisis pregnancies and the vast majority of congregations don’t have medically trained staff who will give ultrasounds and provide support throughout the pregnancy.

But gospel-focused crisis pregnancy centers are trained and ready to care for these women and are a fantastic use of a church’s funds.

Attend their fundraising events and give generously throughout the year. Encourage your church members to do the same.

2. THROW BABY SHOWERS FOR THE CENTERS.

Most pregnancy centers choose to bless their clients by providing new and gently used items that babies and moms will need, such as diapers, baby and maternity clothes, and larger items like strollers, cribs, changing tables, bouncers, and car seats.

When a woman is faced with an unplanned pregnancy and she’s unsure of how she will make motherhood work, you can see the relief on her face when she finds out she can receive some of these items free of charge, simply as a gift.

Pregnancy centers, though, rely on donations for these items. A church can organize “baby showers” throughout the year and encourage different groups in the church (small groups, Sunday School classes, MOPS groups, etc.) to bring a new item for a family in need.

A few showers throughout the year would make a marked difference and bring joy and hope to the new parents receiving these necessary items. Have church members and staff take turns dropping donations off.

It’s amazing how simply walking into a pregnancy center can help spur someone on to see how they can get involved. Ask for a tour of the center. The staff and director will be eager to share about the daily activities.

3. BE A PLACE WHERE A SINGLE MOM OR A WOMAN FACING AN UNPLANNED PREGNANCY FEELS SAFE AND WELCOMED.

A 2013 LifeWay Research study found two-thirds of women who have had an abortion believe church members are more likely to gossip about a woman considering abortion than help her understand the options.

Create a culture in your church where the congregation goes out of their way to make people on the fringes feel welcomed.

Maybe a group of older men and women can act as surrogate grandparents. Young adults can come alongside women in crisis pregnancy situations and walk with them through things like budgeting, meal planning, and job training.

Don’t underestimate the power of companionship, either. A single mom or pregnant woman is often in a very lonely place and needs real friendship and encouragement.

4. DON’T JUST TALK ABOUT THE SANCTITY OF LIFE ON SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY.

It’s certainly fitting and appropriate to address the current situation of abortion in our country from the pulpit.

After all, abortion isn’t just a political issue; it’s primarily a spiritual issue. It’s the taking of a human life made in the very image of God.

However, the sanctity of life should come up on a regular basis from the pulpit. Leaders, please teach your congregation that each one of them is valued and loved because they are created in the image of God regardless of race, abilities, intellect, or anything else.

Your church should be place women feel safe to come, knowing they’ll be loved and cared for, that they’ll see the body of Christ at work as His hands and feet, and most importantly, that they’ll hear the truth of the gospel.

Many Christians’ only response to the abortion crisis is enacted in the voting booth.

We must remember while voting for pro-life candidates is important, there’s something we can do on a more regular basis to help those facing unplanned pregnancies.

When we get involved with the pro-life ministries already around us, we see not just the crisis of abortion but the names and faces of those who desperately need our love.

The above article, “4 Steps Churches Can Take to Advocate for the Unborn and Their Mothers,” was written by Krissie Inserra.

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This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”