



National Pro-Life Religious Council, Inc. PO
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Uniting For Life

Summer 2007

How Can We Help Christian Pastors Strengthen Pro-Life Ministry?

NPRC Workshop Provides Experienced Wisdom

At the 2007 National Right to Life Convention, eight NPRC leaders answered some central questions about pro-life ministry during the annual NPRC workshop, "We are the Sheep, Where are the Shepherds?"

In responding to the first question, "What should we say to pastors afraid of offending women who have had abortions?" Vera Faith Lord of Alpha Omega Life pointed out that these women are already hurting and that it is the pastor's duty to minister to them. The first approach, she said, should be to have an experienced post-abortive woman speak to the congregation. This is a woman's health issue, and can open up a counseling ministry that will encourage women formerly afraid to approach the pastor to seek such counseling.

Another question often raised, "What if pastor sees proliferators as fanatical or 'single issue'?" was addressed by Rev. Kirk van der Swaagh of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, who encouraged pro-life workers to let their pastor know that they appreciate the breadth of responsibilities with which he has to deal. Then let him know you are there to help him and ask him how you can serve, he suggested. This may take some self-examination about your own attitudes.

What if the pastors says: "The pastor's job is to bring Christ to the congregation, but not to be involved in social issues." Rev. John Brown of United Friends for Life suggested asking what Christ said and did about social issues. Several gospel passages can show how Christ's ministry involved social issues and standing up for what is true. "To obey Jesus is to be involved with people, to care about them," Rev. Brown said. This necessarily includes pro-life concerns.

A regular question asked is, "What if my pastor fears losing the church's tax status?" Ernest Ohlhoff, Director of the NRLC Religious Outreach Department, emphasized the right of free speech and freedom to practice religion that is contained in the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The IRS cannot stop a pastor from speaking on the issue of abortion. It is only some "political correctness" people who keep telling pastors to be "cautious" and make them fearful of getting in trouble. But the only thing pastors have to be careful about is promoting a politician or one political party. As long as the pastor focuses on the issue as a spiritual and moral problem, he has no restriction on his speech, Ohlhoff clarified.

Georgette Fornay of Anglicans for Life spoke on the question: "How can post-abortive women help the pastor?" "Start with prayer!" she urged. Then be sure you know the facts so you can explain the problem, e.g. that 70% of post-abortion women claim a church membership, and that 43% of women

under age 45 will have had an abortion. She also said to keep in mind that men are also affected, and often couples are dealing with this in their marriage. Action items included making brochures available at the church, providing telephone numbers of crisis pregnancy centers and post-abortion ministries, and providing a sermon on repentance that can mention various sexual sins including abortion. She mentioned that the *Silent No More Campaign* provides a DVD and a web site that contain 15 testimonies of post-abortive women, as well as guidelines about how to give a testimony. Sanctity of Life Sunday in January is a good time to share such a testimony.

Rev. Clenard Childress of LEARN helped attendees consider "How can we motivate Black pastors to address abortion?" He suggested seeking a pastor with whom you share strong Gospel values, then helping him understand the abortion situation among black women and how post-abortion problems affect his church, approaching it as a civil rights or a moral issue, but avoiding politics.

Some have found pastors who say, "Abortions don't happen in my church. People know it's wrong." Marie Bowen of Presbyterians Pro-Life responded that women who believe abortion is wrong still have abortions. This is a problem in every church. Counseling and practical options need to be made available for each congregation.

Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director of Priests for Life, spoke to the question, "What things should we ask the pastor to do?" Begin with a daily prayer on abortion, he said. Bring an end to this killing among believers by announcing alternatives to abortion, with hotline telephone numbers permanently in the church bulletin. Offer healing. Organize prayer at a local abortion clinic. "We don't need a lot of people. We need people willing to take a lot of risk." he concluded.

NPRC Awards Archbishop Burke

During the Prayer Breakfast at NRLC convention in June, NPRC presented the National Pro-Life Recognition Award to Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis, MO, in order to demonstrate the esteem pro-life leaders in many different denominations have for Archbishop Burke's courageous actions in defense of the sanctity of life. He has called upon Catholic legislators to uphold the inviolability of human life from conception, fought against embryo-killing research provisions in Missouri, and protested the honoring of an abortion activist singer at a Catholic event.

"What I am doing is what a shepherd should be doing: calling the flock to respect the law written in our human hearts...to protect human life." the Archbishop responded.



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Harold O.J. Brown: *In Memoriam*

By Dennis DiMauro,

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

National Pro-Life Religious Council

The National Pro-Life Religious Council (NPRC) is a Christian coalition which acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and works to encourage every Christian denomination to affirm and witness to the biblical standard of the value, dignity and sanctity of human life, and to foster ministry to those vulnerable to the violence of abortion or euthanasia.

Member Organizations

Alpha Omega Life

Black Americans for Life

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC)

International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church (CEC for Life)

Life Education and Resource Network (LEARN)

Lutherans for Life (LFL)

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)

National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life

National Clergy Council (NCC)

NOEL for Life

Presbyterians Pro-Life (PPL)

Priests for Life (PFL)

Religious Outreach, National Right to Life Committee

Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality (TUMAS)

United Friends for Life (UFL)

On Sunday, July 8th, the pro-life movement lost one of its most devoted activists when Harold O.J. Brown was called home to be with the Lord. Shortly after *Roe v. Wade*, Brown was one of the great intellectual voices who energized the originally complacent Protestant churches into action in defense of the unborn. Brown's groundbreaking book, *Death Before Birth*, stressed the fact that Christians could not stand idly by and allow abortion-on-demand to become an accepted way of life in the United States. In the book, he pointed out that Christians would share the moral responsibility for the scourge of abortion unless they spoke out through the political system to enact change.

In 1975, Brown, along with C. Everett Koop, founded the *Christian Action Council* to create an evangelical group which would work to save the lives of unborn children. This organization became known as *CareNet* in 1993, and is now devoted to creating and supporting pregnancy centers around the country. In fact, *CareNet* supports over 1,090 pregnancy centers nationwide, and saves countless lives every year. Dr. Brown has also worked on the editorial staff of the *Human Life Review*, and wrote numerous articles on the sanctity of life in *Christianity Today* and many other publications. He has also trained thousands of men and women for Christian ministry in his professorships

at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, and Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC.

I had the privilege of having Dr. Brown as my thesis advisor at Reformed Theological Seminary, and he was one of my true heroes in the faith. Dr. Brown was a towering intellect and a man who



Dr. Harold O.J. Brown

possessed a deep faith in Jesus Christ. I remember discussing with him current efforts to end the tragedy of abortion that still deeply traumatizes this nation, and it was apparent to me that his devotion to the defense of the unborn was paramount. He was also a man of true independent conviction and courage, attributes that are not often seen in today's public discourse. Indeed, Dr. Brown was not a political person, nor did he adhere to a political "party line." Rather, he was a man motivated to living out God's plan for human life, and he expected our national leaders to speak out in defense of the unborn as well. Indeed, it is rare to find a person who possesses a love for God, a mind for God, and who also has the mettle to truly work for the Kingdom of God. I knew such a person in Dr. Harold O. J. Brown.

National Pro-Life Religious Council Offers Pro-Life Devotional

A booklet of 30 days worth of Scriptures, meditations and prayers on pro-life themes has been compiled and created by members of the National Pro-Life Religious Council.

To order copies of this devotional, contact:
National Pro-Life Religious Council, Orders Department
PO Box 61838 Staten Island, NY 10306
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