



# Pro-Life: Beyond Abortion

by [Kim de Blecourt](#) on December 10, 2018

The biblical “pro-life” position means so much more than “anti-death.”

When I first saw him, he looked small and forlorn as he stood in the doorway of the orphanage office. His shaved head and mismatched clothing betrayed his orphaned status. He gripped the fingers of his caregiver and glanced tentatively at the others in the room. I was struck by his serious expression, especially for a three-year-old. He would not meet my gaze, but his standoffish demeanor only made me want to hold him even more and never let go. I knew at first sight my life was sealed to his.

That little boy would become our son, though our road to adoption was anything but normal. Together we walked through an erratic legal process that included a traumatic year of living in a foreign country, a journey of total dependence on [God](#). Our process of adoption came down to one thing. An exchange. I had to exchange my comfort for this boy’s life.

## TRADING COMFORT FOR LIFE

Comfort is not an easy thing to part with. For a Midwestern wife and mom, comfort meant security. It meant familiarity. It meant home and all the family, love, and support that come with it.

As any adoptive (fostering or special needs) parent will tell you, the loss of comfort is often part of the process. Living for a year in a Russian sector of Ukraine was a mind-boggling sacrifice I was unprepared for. Yet I knew we were giving him the family he so desperately needed. I chose to trade my comfort for his life. Some decisions, while difficult, are really not hard at all.

Comfort, and our addiction to it, is stagnating. Comfort causes our faith to shrivel and any [Christian](#) maturity we possess to deteriorate. Comfort keeps us earth-bound rather than heaven-focused. The right-to-life movement has become comfortable with a message centered on anti-abortion. But is there more to our position than what we are against?

If, like myself, we are pro-life and Christian, shouldn’t we display God’s love to the world by showing what we are for—caring for the fatherless (adoption and orphan care) and the vulnerable (orphan prevention and care of the birth mother and her family)—just as much, if not more, than what we’re against (abortion)?

## THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE

When I first saw our son in the orphanage, the profound words of [Genesis 1:27](#) took on flesh. It reminded me that every human life, regardless of their stage of development or societal acceptance, is precious to God and should be to his followers as well. In the first chapter of his Word, God explains why each life is so dignified: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” As humans, we bear the image of our tender, loving God.

Right from the start, we learn that the “image of our Creator” imparts dignity to every human life, regardless of developmental stage and physical or mental needs. To set an example, God recognizes and values dignity in each one of us, regardless of our depravity after our first parents fell. Therefore, an attack on any person is an attack on God (Genesis 9:6).

Throughout the [Bible](#), God has encouraged his children to care especially for those unable to care for themselves. God mandated that his children refrain from taking advantage of the fatherless ([Exodus 22:22–24](#); [Deuteronomy 24:17](#); [Malachi 3:5](#)), urged them to ensure that orphans receive fair treatment ([Psalm 82:3](#); [Isaiah 1:17](#)), and cursed those who prevented justice due them ([Deuteronomy 27:19](#)). God is even described as the Father of the fatherless ([Psalm 68:5](#)).

Knowing all of this begs the question: Why don’t we hear more about adoption, orphan care, orphan prevention, and care for the birth mother from the right-to-life movement?

## LOOK BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

In Scripture, we read how [Jesus](#) went out of his way to lift the vulnerable. He conversed with the Samaritan woman who had known many husbands ([John 4:18](#)). He healed the demon-possessed man who lived in a cemetery and was feared by his entire community ([Mark 5:2](#)). He welcomed children when others thought he shouldn’t be “bothered” ([Mark 10:13–16](#)). And in the end, he set aside his comfort to offer his own life to rescue those who couldn’t help themselves ([Philippians 2:3–8](#)).

Jesus called his followers to see everyone the way he saw them—as God’s image bearers for whom he chose to humble himself and become human to rescue. We were orphaned without God. Jesus’ sacrifice made it possible for us to join God’s family, no longer orphans but sons and daughters.

Given this priority, it comes as no surprise that James says, “Pure and unblemished religion [as it is expressed in outward acts] in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit and look after the fatherless and the widows in their distress, and to keep oneself uncontaminated by the [secular] world” ([James 1:27 \(AMP\)](#)). He carefully reveals that, to God, religion is purely expressed in two ways: lifting up the vulnerable and keeping ourselves free of worldly corruption and desires. More than writing this truth, James lived it.

Early Christians were known for helping orphans. Roman citizens ridiculed them for rescuing children rejected by their families and left to die of exposure. They raised the orphans as extended family and not slaves, contrary to the dictates of the surrounding culture (Sandra Silver, *Footprints in Parchment*, pp. 74–75). They recognized the dignity of each human being.

Perhaps we can learn how to better care for orphans today by considering the examples left to us by the early [church](#). We see faith displayed in its simplest terms by brothers and sisters, many of whom walked with Jesus Christ himself: simply caring for those who need help. We demonstrate something exquisite and profound in our loving care for others—a Christ-inspired beauty. But how do we duplicate this beauty in today’s world?

## SEEING THE NEED TODAY

The world presents us with ample opportunity to care for others, especially when we take a hard look at cases of discrimination. Discrimination abounds wherever people consider any other lives less valuable than their own. It is especially true where embryos and infants are concerned. We tend to think of the unborn and very young as less than fully human simply because of the developmental stage they are in. The same can be said for children, and even more for children who have been orphaned. In many cultures of the world, orphans are regarded as less because of their burden to society.

More than ever, the world is a dangerous place for unparented children. I previously served as a volunteer and staff for Food for Orphans. Traveling with that organization broke my heart even more for the orphaned and enabled me to fully understand why God mandated his people to care for them. Orphans are so vulnerable to the world around them. Now serving as the executive director of Nourished Hearts, a nonprofit ministering to orphaned and vulnerable children, I’ve observed the horrific living conditions of

children both inside the orphanages and on the streets. Unparented children are rarely reported missing and have become the feeder group to those looking to profit from exploiting them.

While the first goal is to save children from abortion or infanticide (such as being exposed to natural predators and weather or being placed in trash containers), we are responsible for the lives we rescue. To fully carry out our responsibility, we must become invested in family care for every child. Abandoning children to life without proper family care is, in many ways, condemning them to die a different kind of death.

Yet with 400,000 children in US foster care and an estimated 140 million orphans worldwide, the need seems overwhelming. How could we ever change laws or cultures? How could we hope to save every unwanted child from misery?

## **THE GOOD NEWS**

The wonderful news is that God has an answer to much of our world's unparented and orphaned children crisis: his people. In nearly every US town I've visited, regardless of its size, one constant exists: a church. The church also spreads beyond our community to the rest of the world, planting churches everywhere the [gospel](#) goes. We can be Christ's hands and feet in the present world, showing his love to those who are vulnerable and discriminated against.

Expanding our right-to-life focus to include orphan care only makes sense. A broader emphasis in the church on "adoption not abortion" is needed now more than ever. It's easy and comfortable just to vote a "pro-life" ticket or join a one-time demonstration against an abortion clinic. But devoting our lives sacrificially to others first requires a miraculous change of our hearts through Christ's saving grace and then the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

## **GET REAL**

Not everyone in the church can adopt a child—and God doesn't call everyone to adoption. But we can all devote our minds and lives to fulfilling God's vision for his people. How do we gain this vision, and then how do we implement it?

To gain God's vision, we begin with realigning our vision of adoption and orphan care to his. Do we truly see adoption and orphan care as being mandated by God for his followers, or do we simply accept all forms of orphan care to be merely a governmental concern and responsibility? We must start with this personal struggle to fully engage in what God expects. God's ways are often contrary to the culture around us. Only with his help can we truly begin to see the vulnerable and our obligation to them.

True religion changes us, James emphasized, and touches those around us. The gospel brings eternal life, and that affects how we live now.

God's Word tells us that he himself modeled adoption when he made it possible for Gentiles to join his family through adoption, by way of the sacrifice of his son, Jesus ([Ephesians 1:5](#)). The comfort-crushing question each of us needs to ask ourselves is "Lord, what can I do?"

Once we have a right vision of God, we need to recognize his mission for us. We need to ask what we can do to care for children whose birth parents choose adoption. If we can't adopt, how should we come alongside other families who can? How can we help our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world care for their orphaned and vulnerable children?

Beyond adoption, we need to consider orphan prevention and caring for the birth mother or birth family. This begins with families in crisis in our church but also in our community. Many families need help to care for and keep their families together. Through programs such as Safe Families for Children, foster care initiatives, and birth mother assistance, we can encourage family preservation (orphan prevention). Our right-to-life centers need the eternal life perspective we bring.

Imagine the impact a volunteer or small group of volunteers can have on a woman or family by simply caring for them during pregnancy and after. Meeting the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of the

birth mother or family is yet another way to show the world the dignity that God ascribes to human beings and puts into practice through his church.

## **PRO-ETERNAL LIFE**

Of course, we are made in God's image. But is that all there is to it—bearing his image as we live here on earth? God's image is eternal. This extends our definition of pro-life, urging us to introduce everyone to our Creator, who gives physical life and has made a way to receive eternal life. Jesus reminds us in [John 17:3](#), “This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” How then have we been truly pro-life if we haven't presented eternal salvation through Christ?

More than just being connected to local right-to-life centers, we must make every effort to invite the parent or parents of the unborn to a relationship with God through faith in the sacrificial work and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ, who is “the Life.”

By adding adoption and orphan prevention to our pro-life mission, we accomplish two things: a better reflection of what God holds dear (caring for the fatherless) and presenting God's spiritual message to a desperate world (spiritual adoption not eternal death).

We stand at a critical juncture in the pro-life movement. It's time to consider the image we want to show going forward. How do we best show the world what Christ's love empowers us to stand for—life? Can we go beyond the anti-abortion message we've become so comfortable with? Do we want to proclaim to the world what we are for, or simply what we are against?

## **THE FIGHT FOR LIFE AT EVERY STAGE**

The value of life is under attack, not just in the womb but at every stage of life. It's an ongoing global disaster that demands action.

The same pro-life concerns that drive Christians to battle abortion are pushing them into many other areas with Genesis' life-affirming message. Every person, at any stage of life, is of infinite value because we are made in God's image. If we get involved, we can make a difference.

**Abortion** - The number of abortions is estimated at over 1 million per year in the US and 56 million worldwide. Over 60 countries, including the US, have virtually no restrictions. Right-to-life groups remain active to change the laws. Meanwhile, many churches and Christian ministries help families stay together or offer adoption services rather than abortion.

**Destruction of Embryos** - During the process of in vitro fertilization, many embryos are created but not used for the procedure. An estimated 1 million embryos are currently frozen in storage in the US by private companies with no oversight, and many are lost or destroyed. Christians have begun embryo adoption programs to help couples adopt these embryos and bring them to full term.

**Infanticide** - While it is illegal in most countries, the murder of infants is rampant in regions that suffer extreme poverty, restrict the number of children per family, or follow tribal traditions of killing newborns believed to be cursed. Missionaries and mission organizations are spearheading efforts to bring more awareness and education to stop infanticide worldwide.

**Human Trafficking** - It is estimated that more than 40 million people live in some form of modern slavery, including forced labor, forced marriages, and sex trafficking. Christian groups are at the forefront of abolishing human trafficking worldwide.

**Assisted Suicide** - Eight states in the US permit “medical aid in dying” in cases of terminal illness. At least eight other countries allow physicians to help people die in some form. Several Christian advocacy groups are lobbying to change the laws to protect life, and church ministries are growing to help stem the suicide epidemic among all ages.

**Kim de Blecourt** is an international speaker and the author of *I Call You Mine* and *Until We All Come Home*. An adoptive parent and passionate orphan care advocate, she currently serves as the executive director of Nourished Hearts, an international orphan care nonprofit. Kim lives in Michigan with her husband and children.