

## ABORTION: BIBLICAL CONSIDERATIONS

by Dónal P. O'Mathúna\*

### Introduction

This is the second of two papers written in response to two recent books by Christians on abortion. Allan R. Bevere addressed the theological and philosophical issues raised by these books.<sup>1</sup> This paper will deal with the more specifically biblical issues brought up in the books. We have somewhat arbitrarily divided the themes addressed by our papers, so they would be best read in conjunction with one another. The book edited by Anne Eggebroten claims that its pro-abortion position is "another valid, Bible-based alternative."<sup>2</sup> Close examination of her position will reveal that she has failed to make a convincing case for this. On the other hand, the book edited by Paul Stallsworth develops sound biblical arguments for opposing abortion in ways that do not drift into the extreme positions taken by a few in the pro-life movement.<sup>3</sup> Neither will they permit indifference to this important issue.

### Revelation Versus Experience

Eggebroten points out that the Bible does not directly address the morality of abortion. Others have claimed that this silence shows that the Bible should not be used to condemn abortion.<sup>4</sup> Eggebroten acknowledges that other biblical themes can guide abortion decisions, but since the Bible is used both to support and to oppose abortion, no one position should be viewed as better than another.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, people should be free to make their own decisions, and all laws against abortion should be eliminated.

As such, Eggebroten's position is a postmodern one.<sup>6</sup> She accepts the possibility of many valid interpretations of a text. In place of this, she relies on experience to validate her position. She notes that God teaches much of the truth of the Bible through story-telling and not "dry discussion."<sup>7</sup> Advocating the same in discussions of abortion, her book is primarily a collection of stories about women dealing with abortion.

Stories are certainly useful teaching tools. Eggebroten's stories clearly show the pain experienced by many women with crisis pregnancies. However, stories cannot be the primary source of moral teaching. Even biblical stories must be filtered through the ethical principles and guidelines given in the rest of the Bible. Otherwise, experience becomes our authority, not God's revelation.

In spite of her use of biblical themes, Eggebroten has shifted to a post-

\*Dónal O'Mathúna (Ph.D. - Ohio State, 1988; M.A. - ATS, 1994), teaches chemistry and medical ethics at Mt. Carmel College of Nursing (Columbus, OH)

modern reliance on experience as the primary source of guidance. Instead of solid biblical exegesis, she encourages women to find guidance. By listening to “the spirit of God in my heart,” or to the “wise woman” within themselves, or to the “special tribe” of good and strong women.<sup>8</sup> Different stories commend women for changing their beliefs based on new experiences.<sup>9</sup> She claims we form our values and beliefs through grappling with our experiences, not through rational analysis.<sup>10</sup> In spite of her stated desire to be biblically based, her position is, in fact, experience based.

For example, she claims that people love God because they experience his love, not because of intellectual decisions based on God’s existence.<sup>11</sup> As attractive as this position may seem, it is very problematic. Many claim never to have experienced God’s love, and question whether a loving God even exists. Does this mean that he does not exist for them? In contrast, the Bible says that we love God because he first loved us (1 John 4:7-14). We know he loved us because of the historical fact, known intellectually at first, that Jesus came and died for us (v. 10). Experience is an important aspect of Christianity (Ephesians 3:14-19). The Holy Spirit does guide Christians. However, all our insights must be evaluated in light of biblical teaching.

Ruth Brown’s article reveals another problem with experience-based ethics. She vividly shows that many women have had painful experiences with abortions, and very rewarding ones from keeping the babies of unwanted pregnancies.<sup>12</sup> Does this mean that all we can say is that abortion is right for some and wrong for others? This perspective fits well with our postmodern, relativistic culture, but actually leaves people without any guidance. For example, one story in Eggebroten’s book relates the counsel some Christian friends gave a couple considering abortion: “We won’t tell you what to do, but we do have something to suggest. Make a decision together, make it quickly; and then don’t look back.”<sup>13</sup> How tragic to offer nothing more to people honestly searching for answers!

Ironically, Eggebroten’s reliance on experience actually undermines her own position. She frequently critiques the way some Christians respond to women who have had abortions. However, these Christians could, like Eggebroten, claim they were simply responding to their life’s experiences. They might even claim that God led them to act the way they did. Eggebroten’s position leaves her no basis upon which to object to anyone’s actions. We agree that some women who had abortions have been mistreated by Christians. However, we do this by evaluating that treatment in light of the standard of truth, the Bible. Even some postmodern ethicists will now admit, without an authoritative standard, disagreements become one person’s opinion against another’s.<sup>14</sup>

Stallworth’s book also seeks to ground its position in biblical teaching. While it does not describe a method of biblical interpretation, Gorman’s article addresses the Bible’s silence on this issue. Like Eggebroten, he notes a number

of general principles relevant to abortion. He also sees the historical views of the church on abortion as important. Godly men and women who reflected deeply on Scripture came to conclusions which should not be discarded lightly. These reveal "early Christianity's clear and consistent rejection of abortion."<sup>15</sup>

If we assume that the Bible brings messages from God, there must be a true meaning which we can discover. This meaning must be independent of our experiences, even though these will influence how well we understand the message. A method of interpretation which seeks the original meaning of the author must take into account the original meanings of the words used and the context of passages. Different interpretations can then be evaluated. This implies that contradictory interpretations cannot be accepted. God would not hold abortion to be both right and wrong. If this was so, each person would be the final authority in every situation, not God. As one of Eggebroten's stories puts it, "We must trust that our *own* choice is the right thing to do"<sup>16</sup> (emphasis original). But this promotes what God sees as humanity's core problem: the desire to decide right and wrong for ourselves (Genesis 3:22; Numbers 15:37-41; Proverbs 14:12; 21:2; Romans 3:10-12).

We must hold on to the belief in the truth of the Bible (Proverbs 12:17; 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 3:14-17). We must then seek to find that truth. We do this through using a reliable, well-tried method of exegesis (2 Timothy 2:15), and through significant involvement in the community of believers. Stallsworth's book repeatedly mentions this role of the church. We need guidance from one another, but this guidance must be based on biblical perspectives (Proverbs 5:12-14; 12:15). Putting experience as our final authority provides no real guidance, and no way to avoid the pain of wrong choices.

### Judging Others

One of the central arguments of Eggebroten's book is that "as Christians we must not judge those who have found themselves in need of an abortion."<sup>17</sup> We are often reminded that Jesus said "Judge not, lest you be judged" (Matthew 7:1). Because of this, Christians should not proclaim that abortions are wrong, nor should we have laws curtailing access to abortions.

In spite of this, Eggebroten's book contains much judgment. One story claims that anti-abortionists are like pagan fertility worshipers who value the capacity for life more than life itself.<sup>18</sup> Another claims that abortions are restricted by society's "white heterosexual patriarchy."<sup>19</sup> Eggebroten claims that well-known men oppose abortion to gain public acclaim.<sup>20</sup> Even her premise that Christians should not judge those who have abortions is a judgment. Obviously, Eggebroten believes that some judgments should be made. However, she does not explain how we can make appropriate judgments. The Bible does.

Jesus and the apostles do say we are not to judge others (Matthew 7:1; Romans 14:3-4, 13; 1 Corinthians 4:4-5; James 4:11-12). However, they also command us to make judgments (Luke 12:57; Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 5:12; 6:3; 1 John 4:1-6). This apparent ambiguity exists because the New Testament teaches there are both appropriate and inappropriate ways to make judgments. In both cases it uses the same Greek word (*krinos*), which simply means, among other things, to distinguish, give preference, consider, decide or judge.<sup>21</sup>

Sometimes the authors explicitly state what type of judgment is meant, such as when Jesus commanded the people to “judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24). Other passages call us to judge correctly (Luke 7:43), soundly (Romans 12:3; 1 Peter 4:7), or rightly (1 Corinthians 11:31). However, most passages leave it to the reader to determine from the context whether proper or improper judgment is being described. From these passages we find clear guidance on how to judge righteously.

When we judge others we are to remember that, ultimately, judgment is God’s (Romans 2:2-3, 16; 14:10-12). Therefore, we are to judge according to his standards as found in the words of Jesus (John 12:48) and throughout the Bible (1 Corinthians 9:8; Galatians 1:8; Hebrews 4:12; 1 John 4:1-6). We can also judge others by the fruit in their lives (Matthew 7:15-20). Paul describes both good and bad fruit in terms of people’s character qualities (Galatians 5:16-26).

The right attitudes are also important when we judge others. We are to be humble as we approach others (Romans 12:3). We should not be hypocrites, practicing the same things we judge in others (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 2:1). We should not judge based on external characteristics (John 7:24; Romans 14:3-4, 13; Colossians 2:16). Overall, we should judge others as a way to love them and to help restore their relationships with God (1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8; 7:9-10).

We must agree with Eggebroten that some Christians have judged unrighteously concerning abortion. Some of these incidents have been more akin to unrighteous rejection than righteous judgment.<sup>22</sup> Some of the behaviors of anti-abortion protesters do not reflect the fruit of the Spirit and have been hypocritical.<sup>23</sup> Discussions on abortion should be carried out with an attitude of gentleness and respect, not arrogance.<sup>24</sup> The Durham Declaration described in Stallsworth’s book makes it clear that Christians have much to confess in this area.<sup>25</sup>

However, we should not thereby reject all forms of judgment. Rather, we must learn to judge properly:

Just as God is a righteous judge, so men are to judge righteously...The Christian is expected to show discrimination and judgment in moral matters, and the ability to do so is a sign of true maturity (Lk. 12:57; Jn. 7:24; Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 2:15; 6:1-6; 10:15; 2 Cor. 13:5; Phil. 1:9f.; Col. 1:9; 1 Jn. 4:1).<sup>26</sup>

All believers will play a role in judging the world and the angels, therefore we ought to judge "matters of this life" (1 Corinthians 6:1-3). If we refuse to declare right from wrong we condemn others to suffer the consequences of wrongful choices. Some of these may occur in this life, such as the many physical, emotional and spiritual harms that come from abortion.<sup>27</sup> We must also judge one another righteously because of the eternal consequences of our actions in this life. In due time we will all be judged by the Righteous Judge (Romans 14:10; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11-15). Our refusal to judge rightly may help people avoid confronting their need for forgiveness and a personal relationship with God (John 3:19-21).

### The Biblical Arguments

Postmodern thinking ultimately comes down to an issue of power. When people reject the notion of objective right and wrong, decisions are made on the basis of who has the most power and control. According to Eggebroten's book, opposition to abortion is really one way to further repress women's power.<sup>28</sup> For her, choice and control are the central issues.

Eggebroten claims to find support for her position in a number of biblical issues.<sup>29</sup> First, since the Bible is not explicit on when the fetus becomes a person, it does not make sense to establish laws granting the fetus full personhood rights. At six or seven weeks, the fetus is "a bunch of cells with no soul."<sup>30</sup> "Equating a fertilized egg to human life has no basis in the Bible."<sup>31</sup> However, we could also claim that since the Bible does not tell us when the fetus becomes a person we should extend the benefit of the doubt to the fetus and refuse to kill him or her.

Elsewhere I have argued that the main problem with this issue is not the Bible's silence, but the very question being posed.<sup>32</sup> In declaring that we are images of God, the Bible calls us to act as faithful images. Our actions should exemplify the character of God. Since God values and nourishes all human life, especially the weakest, we should do likewise. As Hauerwas notes, "the Christian approach is not one of deciding when life has begun, but hoping that it has."<sup>33</sup>

When Jesus was asked to explain who our neighbors are, he rejected the question (Luke 10:30-37). Instead, he calls us to focus on *being* good neighbors to all. As we do this, we will discover that our neighbors include strangers. In the context of abortion, instead of trying to figure out if the unborn are persons, we ought to treat them as such. When we do, we will discover that they respond as persons.

Eggebroten's second reason for advocating full procreative choice is that God has given people dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:27-28). This dominion involves making a covenant to love and care for our children. If parents are not prepared to enter this covenant, they should be able to abort their children. This

argument is clearly unbiblical. She advocates destroying those whom we are unwilling to care for! The Bible has many examples of people who chose to act this way. Saul was not commended for failing to carry out his responsibility to care for Israel (1 Samuel 9:16). Rather, God judged him for his sin and replaced him with David (1 Samuel 15:11; 16:1). If people refuse to raise children conceived by them, they should find others who will. It can be difficult to welcome and raise children, but we must make a commitment to do this, and engage the help of God and others.<sup>34</sup>

Her third argument is that since childbirth is a sacrifice, it should never be done unwillingly. She finds support in John 16:21-22. Jesus compares the joy of a mother upon receiving her child to the joy the disciples will experience after the resurrection. Since Jesus' sacrifice must have been voluntary, a woman should only go through childbirth if freely chosen.

There are problems with this interpretation. Jesus states that he is using figurative language here (John 16:25). This passage is not teaching about childbirth. In the same way, it would be inappropriate to use John 15 to teach about growing vines. Instead, throughout John 16, Jesus encourages the disciples to endure the coming suffering. Eggebroten's conclusion is actually the opposite of the main point of this passage. It calls us to endure pain and suffering because of the eternal joy awaiting us. Properly applied to childbirth, this passage would encourage women to bear with the pain and sacrifice of pregnancy because of the future joy of receiving a child into their arms. Many women can attest to this, even those who did not want to get pregnant, as revealed in Ruth Brown's article.<sup>35</sup>

However one interprets this passage, Eggebroten's logic is flawed. It is clear that Jesus made a good choice when he willingly went to the cross. We make good choices when we willingly make sacrifices. But these choices do not become good just because we freely choose them. The choices were good whether chosen or not. So, when we refuse to make a good choice, we are wrong. Her argument seems to be that it is better to willingly choose the wrong thing than to unwillingly choose the right thing. The right thing remains right, whether we chose to do it willingly or not.

Her fourth argument concerns free will. She argues that since God allows people the freedom to make their own choices, we should do likewise. "Thus both the Sovereign One in heaven and Jesus on earth demonstrated a willingness to live with the consequences of human wrong choices--in order for humans to have free will."<sup>36</sup> Condemnations of abortion, or laws restricting them, are attempts to make people's decisions for them. They reveal how "we resist allowing others to bear the consequences of their free will."<sup>37</sup>

Eggebroten reflects the postmodern rejection of all authority. She advocates no restrictions on a woman's decision regarding childbirth, "even if that decision means ending a human life in its beginning stages within her."<sup>38</sup> This

argument could be used to permit anything. We were not given free will to do whatever we want (Romans 6:1-2). As images of God we have the "ability to choose between good and evil."<sup>39</sup> God values free choice, but he also desires that we chose what is right. He wants us to live according to his will, as Jesus did (Matthew 16:21-6; John 5:30; 8:29). Gorman summarizes this well when commenting on 1 Corinthians 6:12-20:

[Christians] no longer live for themselves, looking to assert their own rights, but for the God to whom they now belong. Freedom consists not of asserting one's desires and rights--this is giving opportunity to the "flesh" (see Gal. 5)--but of yielding one's body, soul, and mind in the service of God and others.<sup>40</sup>

As humans with limited knowledge, we need help making good choices. God has given us governmental authorities for this reason (Romans 13:1-7). It is appropriate for them to pass laws that promote good behavior and restrain evil. God certainly has used laws to teach us what is right and wrong (Romans 7:7, 12).

Another way God helps us make good choices is through the wisdom and discernment of others (Colossians 1:28; James 5:19-20). Church leaders are his delegated authorities, whom we are told to obey (Hebrews 13:17). In addition, all Christians are to speak God's truth to one another in love (Ephesians 4:15). Because of the consequences of some choices, people should condemn them, and even work to have laws against them. Respect for others' free will means we must allow them to make their own decisions. It does not mean we refuse to judge those actions or that we must idly stand by while people get hurt.

EGGEBROTEN'S fifth argument is that God's grace covers all sins. She describes how unbiblically some Christians have treated unmarried pregnant women. These are sad accounts. But her solution is to have Christians "help young women keep their babies or choose abortion."<sup>41</sup> On the basis of Jesus not condemning the woman caught in adultery (John 8), she advocates a non-judgmental attitude. She even suggests that if the woman had become pregnant from the adultery Jesus might have miraculously caused a miscarriage!

However, EGGEBROTEN fails to mention that this passage ends with Jesus' clear statement: "From now on sin no more" (John 8:11). We are to avoid sinful actions, even though God's grace will cover our sin. For EGGEBROTEN, the fallenness of the world means "young women must have recourse to safe, legal abortion."<sup>42</sup> Jesus says they need biblical love and forgiveness. Elsewhere, Jesus is clear that biblical love can involve confronting people over their sin (Matthew 18:15-17).

Paul rebukes the Corinthians for their unwillingness to confront and discipline one of their members engaged in immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1-8). We can imagine the Corinthians boasting about their ability to show grace to a man sleeping with his father's wife! Grace means love and acceptance, but it also

means calling sin wrong and admonishing people to avoid it (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). Jesus did this with the woman caught in adultery, and we should do likewise with people contemplating abortion. This should always be done in love, as a form of righteous judgment (Galatians 6:1).

Eggebroten's final argument is that Christians are called to help bring the kingdom of God into our society. This involves protecting the oppressed, among whom she sees women with unwanted pregnancies. Laws against abortion only further oppress these women. However, easy access to abortion actually *promotes* oppression against women. Men benefit more than women when the consequences of promiscuity are removed.<sup>43</sup> Abortion as birth control leaves women with fewer reasons to refuse intercourse, but then traps them. A woman who interviewed women after abortions noted that "in nearly every case, the abortion was undertaken to fulfill a felt obligation to another person."<sup>44</sup> They felt they had no other choice.

Eggebroten wants a form of justice where women who cannot afford children would be able to abort them. This is not God's vision of justice, but a worldly one. It allows the underlying injustice to remain unaddressed. The majority of the world's resources are at the disposal of a small proportion of the world's population, being used for their pleasure. The injustice is not that a woman cannot abort a child she cannot feed; it is that anyone is hungry while others make gluttons of themselves.

Eggebroten's solution actually promotes another injustice: against the unborn. Who, of all the weak and innocent are more in need of protection than the unborn? "They have no clothes, no money, no property, no power. They cannot speak or organize to defend themselves. If their right to life is not recognized and protected, then they are completely vulnerable to power and violence and death."<sup>45</sup> The church has traditionally seen abortion as a form of social injustice and violence.<sup>46</sup> It has been rejected for that reason.

### The Issue of Control

Eggebroten's position on where control resides is clear: "The Bible... places full responsibility for procreative choice in the hands of parents. By the term *procreative choice* we mean *the full range of conditions necessary to insure that a couple will have a child only when they decide to do so*"<sup>47</sup> (emphasis original). In reality, she wants this control for women alone. "The Creator...gave custody of all children-in-the-making to women, who alone decide whether or not to complete a pregnancy once begun."<sup>48</sup> If the parents disagree on whether to have an abortion, "the woman's choice must take precedence."<sup>49</sup>

The Bible actually teaches that we need to give control of our lives to God. James reproves some merchants for making business plans without first

acknowledging God's sovereignty over life (4:13-16). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus expressed his preference, but left control in God's hands (Luke 22:42). All of humanity's problems can be traced back to our desire to be in control, rather than acknowledging God's rightful control. Striving for control leads to anxiety. Instead we should be willing to trust our loving Father (Matthew 6:25-34).

Eggebroten believes full procreative choice involves "Safe, 100% effective birth control methods."<sup>50</sup> When contraceptives fail, as all do, people feel justified in using abortion as a back-up. This assumed right to perfect birth control comes from an inability to accept that we do not have control over some things. These include many issues related to health and illness, birth and death. Our problem is that we *want* control, not that we don't *have* it. The Old Testament teaches that God controls conception, not parents (Genesis 29:31; 30:1-2, 22-24; Deuteronomy 28:11; Psalm 127:3). God forms the child in the womb (Job 10:8-12; Psalm 139:13-16). He is the one ultimately in control of procreation, not us. Once we learn to accept this, we can be truly content (Philippians 4:12).

Eggebroten promotes the idea that our bodies are our own to be controlled as we choose. The authors in Stallsworth's book take a more biblical view. They see our bodies as gifts from God and therefore not our own.<sup>51</sup> God is the source of life (Psalm 36:6; John 4:14), and all we have comes from him (Acts 17:25; 1 Corinthians 4:7). Christians have an even bigger reason for viewing their bodies as gifts. Because Christ has paid a price for us, our bodies are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:12-20). Paul shows how this should impact our behavior in the area of sexual ethics. Interestingly, Eggebroten does not comment on the fact that ten of her fourteen stories involved intercourse outside of marriage. Hauerwas addresses the importance of this issue.<sup>52</sup> The need for abortion would drop dramatically if more people obeyed God's advice on sexual intercourse.

Christians should be learning to depend on God in all areas of their lives. Instead of saying, "I can't deal with this situation; I need to change the circumstances" we should be saying "How is God going to help me deal with these circumstances?" This help often comes in the form of changed attitudes and values. Prayer is essential here. As Eggebroten says, "Only prayer can really *stop* abortion for only God's Spirit can change lives"<sup>53</sup> (emphasis original). Yet her emphasis on control goes against this idea.

Viewing our lives as gifts should also affect how we view the unborn. "Life is the gift of a gracious God. As part of the giftedness of life, we believe that we ought to live in a profound awe of the other's existence, knowing that in the other we find God."<sup>54</sup> This awe should prevent us from trying to destroy that gift, regardless of how we might feel about its timing.

## Servanthood

The two books agree on one major point. Eggebroten puts it well: "The Christ-like way of reducing the number of abortions is through servanthood--helping women with unplanned pregnancies to have other options that are better than abortion."<sup>55</sup> She notes that Christ came to serve, not to rule over others (Luke 22:25-27). Likewise, one of the organizing themes of Stallsworth's book is Christian hospitality.<sup>56</sup> Both books give similar practical suggestions for serving women with crisis pregnancies. When abortion advocates ask what will happen to the 1.5 million unwanted babies who will be born annually if abortion is made illegal, Christians should be saying: "We'll take them! We'll care for them!" We should follow the example of early Christians who rescued and raised unwanted babies left to die by exposure.<sup>57</sup>

However, the two books disagree on the compatibility of hospitality and support for abortion. Hauerwas sees it as impossible to be the kind of person who welcomes children into the world, especially children with disabilities, and also be supportive of abortion.<sup>58</sup> Eggebroten seems to think we cannot help these women if we believe abortion is immoral. She completely underestimates the power of grace. If we appreciate the immensity of God's grace and forgiveness towards us, we can extend that forgiveness to others and care for them, even if we believe they are in sin (Ephesians 4:32). Claiming that abortion is not wrong, just an alternative response to tough circumstances, makes God's grace out to be less than what it truly is: a miracle.

Stallsworth's book calls on all Christians to serve sacrificially.<sup>59</sup> Eggebroten believes sacrificial giving is for everyone, except pregnant women towards their unborn children. Many of the stories in her book justify abortion as a way for women to care for themselves.<sup>60</sup> The woman's physical pain takes precedence over any pain the father may have at the loss of his child.<sup>61</sup> Even though she wants to value life and promote servanthood, her advocacy of abortion devalues life and promotes self-concern. This is most clearly visible when the unborn child is seen as the property of the mother.<sup>62</sup>

Tragically, women have suffered much from the self-interest of others and abuse of power. Unfortunately, Eggebroten condones similar treatment for unborn and unwanted children by their mothers. The irony of postmodern thinking is that once it deconstructs current power structures it can only replace them with another, arbitrary power structure. In contrast, the Bible teaches a view of power which comes from giving to others. True servanthood places the needs of others ahead of one's own (Mark 10:45; Acts 20:35; Philippians 2:3-4). We serve others regardless of their abilities or degree of development because we are motivated by what we have already been given, not by what we can gain (1 John 4:10-11).

This calls for a complete change of character. Christianity is not just

about curtailing violent events, or promoting welcoming acts. It is about changing people into God-dependent, hospitable persons. Christians can do this by serving women with unwanted pregnancies, unwanted children, and the men and women who have had abortions. We are to think of the needs of others even in the midst of our own crises. And we are to admit that we cannot do this on our own.

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Allan R. Bevere, "Abortion: Philosophical and Theological Considerations," *Ashland Theological Journal*, this issue.

<sup>2</sup>Anne Eggebroten, ed., *Abortion: My Choice, God's Grace* (Pasadena: New Paradigm, 1994), 18.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Stallsworth, ed., *The Church and Abortion: In Search of New Ground for Response* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

<sup>4</sup>Roy Bowen Ward, "The Use of the Bible in the Abortion Debate," *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* 13 (1993): 391-408.

<sup>5</sup>Eggebroten, 8-9, 32, 210, 216.

<sup>6</sup>For a thorough treatment of the application of postmodern thinking to many areas of Christian concern see: Dennis McCallum, ed., *The Death of Truth* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1996).

<sup>7</sup>Eggebroten, 9.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 32, 117, 153, respectively.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 32, 37-8.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 211.

- <sup>11</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup>Stallsworth, 67-82.
- <sup>13</sup>Eggebroten, 69.
- <sup>14</sup>H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. "Personhood, Moral Strangers, and the Evil of Abortion: The Painful Experience of Post-Modernity," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 18 (1993): 419-21.
- <sup>15</sup>Stallsworth, 36.
- <sup>16</sup>Eggebroten, 127; this emphasis on circumstances is seen in many of the stories: xi, 216, Chapters 1-4, 7-11, 13, 14. Willimon points out that making the decision a private matter, also makes the pain private which leads only to loneliness (Stallsworth, 21).
- <sup>17</sup>Eggebroten, 198; also, xv, 8.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., 46.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., 128.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., 231-2.
- <sup>21</sup>Colin Brown, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 2:364.
- <sup>22</sup>Eggebroten, Chapters 1, 3, 6, 9.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., Chapters 6, 17, 18.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., 228-30.
- <sup>25</sup>Stallsworth, 12-13.
- <sup>26</sup>*New Bible Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. "Judgment," by B.A. Milne.
- <sup>27</sup>Stallsworth, 77-9.

<sup>28</sup>Eggebroten, 179.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 209-33.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>32</sup>Dónal P. O'Mathúna, "The Bible and Abortion: What of the 'Image of God'?" in *Bioethics and the Future of Medicine: A Christian Appraisal*, ed John F. Kilner, Nigel M. de S. Cameron, and David L. Schiedermayer (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1995), 199-211.

<sup>33</sup>Stallsworth, 57.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 54-5, cf. 17-24.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 67-82.

<sup>36</sup>Eggebroten, 221.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>40</sup>Stallsworth, 28.

<sup>41</sup>Eggebroten, 224.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>Stallsworth, 21, 59-60.

<sup>44</sup>Frederica Mathewes-Green, "Why Women Choose Abortion: Postabortion interviews reveal what would have changed their minds," *Christianity Today* 39 (Jan. 9, 1995): 25; see also Stallsworth, 37, 46-7.

<sup>45</sup>Mary Meehan, "More Trouble than They're Worth? Children and Abortion," in *Abortion: Understanding Differences*, ed. Sidney Callahan and Daniel Callahan (New York: Plenum Press, 1984), 151.

<sup>46</sup>Stallsworth, 34.

<sup>47</sup>Eggebroten, 213.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>51</sup>Stallsworth, 28-9, 37, 51-2.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 59-60.

<sup>53</sup>Eggebroten, 232.

<sup>54</sup>Stallsworth, 58.

<sup>55</sup>Eggebroten, 231.

<sup>56</sup>Stallsworth, 12, 17-24, 49, 67-82.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 31-2. Or, as Hauerwas suggests, we could work to help poor women support their children (*Ibid.*, 63).

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 20-21, 28, 35, 61, 67-82.

<sup>60</sup>Eggebroten, Chapters 1-4, 12, 13.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, Chapters 2, 6, 14.