

Andrew Nicholls - Abortion 20191115c

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 November 2019

Preacher: Andrew Nicholls

[0 : 00] Thank you, Laurence. It is a great delight to be here and to see some old friends. I'm going to introduce you a little bit to the scale of the issue in various aspects of the world.

And 13 and a half years after it started. Now I've made a kind of assumption, haven't I, in the title of the talk, Love and Our Unborn Neighbors, that that is how we should think about unborn life.

But the reality is that the defining what it is that's growing inside the womb of a pregnant woman.

And really, this is the whole issue.

And there are lots of different words that are used. Some of them are more scientific, technical words like fetus or embryo. Some of them more relational, warm words like baby.

Others that sound really very deliberately impersonal, like ball of stale or blob of jelly, which is how it can be described in some settings.

[1 : 18] And the range represents the fact that there are very widely differing opinions on the status of the unborn, but on what options are legitimate for pregnant women.

And I know that the divisions are very wide and very deep. So I know that to speak into this area is to speak into an area around which people have often been used to living and thinking and debating at one or other pole of a very seriously called debate.

I also know, perhaps even more importantly, that because of some of the numbers I'm going to go on and look at with you, this is an issue which almost certainly affects people in this room.

You don't need to get very many people in a room before you find someone who's deeply personally affected by this issue. And it's very important and it's a matter of rejoicing to me that a church is taking time to look at the issue and discuss the statistics and what the Bible teaches.

And this is a talk that is thinking about those kinds of structural things, background. It's not the kind of thing you would say to someone if you were in a conversation about what to do with their unborn, what we decided to call it, or with someone who's been through an abortion in the past.

[2 : 46] That conversation is very different. But I want to, it's great to take the time to have this kind of discussion. We've got to do that, and that may mean that without intending to, I say things in ways that feel painful or hurtful or touch on areas which are tender and cause pain.

I don't intend to do that. I want to try and be as understanding and as mindful as I can. But at some point, we have to stand back from the very significant personal obligations and think carefully about what's really happening and how we really ought to respond.

Or indeed, if we ought to respond. Because when you read Scripture, when you read Matthew 28 and you realise that we're supposed to say everything Jesus commanded, it is long if you're reading the apostles that you realise there is quite a lot that Jesus commands.

There's quite a lot that God commands his people to do. And there are lots of priorities there for the church to consider and weigh. And church leaders have a tough job working out which of these many possible ways of loving our community, which of these many possible ways of glorifying the Lord have been to concentrate on.

I think it would be true to say that in most churches, we've spent many years thinking about some of the things that churches do, and a lot less time thinking about other things that churches might do.

[4 : 06] And I would argue that the issue of responding to abortion is one of those that Christians must be responding to in some way. And that implies that there's something for churches to be teaching all Christians about the issue, and to be teaching all Christians about how to respond to the issue.

So, I'm really glad to have the chance to be part of the process in this church and these churches here tonight. So, here are some facts. I want to start with some pictures, don't worry.

None of them are gruesome pictures. And these are a couple of slides that are taken from a DVD, which you can watch later if you want. I've got it with me. I'm not going to try and show it on here. It'll be too complicated. But these are the scenes in a DVD, which takes you through the whole of the development of an embryo. And you can see how much it develops at different stages of development.

By four weeks, that's four weeks from fertilization, the way this DVD is presented. So, by the embryo has been four weeks old, you can already see, and there's a video of an embryonic heart beating about 130 times a minute.

[5 : 11] By six weeks, you can see the ears and the diaphragm. And by eight weeks, 90 plus percent of all the major organs are already present in developing a new being that's only about that size.

And it grows over the coming weeks and months. So, by 18 weeks, they look like that. By 22 weeks, they look something like that. Now, to my mind, that 22-week-old baby should be called the baby. Because it looks exactly like a baby. But before we get to thinking whether that kind of instinct, that kind of reflex is right according to Scripture or not, let's just find out some more facts about what happened.

Because at 22 weeks, that baby or any baby could be aborted. And you might think, well, that's so obviously a baby.

That must be quite rare. Abortion must be quite a rare thing. And Lawrence has already told us some local facts. I checked the latest figures that were available to 2018. In 2018, there were 205,000 abortions in England and Wales.

[6 : 31] And if you add up all the abortions that happened since 1968, which is the year after I was born, so in my lifetime, there have been 8.7 million abortions in England and Wales. That's way over 10% of the population.

If you ask the question, of all the pregnancies that happen in a year, what percentage of pregnancies end in abortion? I wonder what you'd think it is.

Perhaps you know most people think it would be something well under 10%. If they thought about it at all. It's actually 22% of pregnancies end in abortion. So more than one in five, little lives that start in their mother's womb end in abortion.

Now there's lots of reasons for that. And I won't have lots of time to unpick those, because they're different situations. But it's an extremely high number.

If you ask the question, of all women by the age of 45, so all women in England and Wales by the age of 45, what proportion of those women would have had an abortion? The answer is one in three.

[7 : 41] Now you can break those numbers down a little bit more. So 22% of pregnancies, one in three when they were aged 45, 81% of abortions are done in women who are not married.

1.6% of abortions, so a very small, very small percentage of the total, were done where you would believe there was a risk of serious handicap in the baby. So in 2018, there were 618 unborn children, that were reported with Down syndrome.

Some of you will have friends with Down syndrome. You'll know people with Down syndrome. You'll know what they're like. You'll know they are people. You'll have, you'll count them as friends.

And there are 618 that are not alive now, because they were killed in this country. This is happening. And only 7 of the 205,7%, 7 were done to save life in an emergency.

So 97.7% are done for what is described in the legislation as ground C, that is, if there is a risk, greater than if the pregnancy is terminated, to the mental health of the woman.

[9 : 06] Now, that, the mental problem, is never specified. The official statistics confirm that in 99.9% of these abortions, the code that is given for the mental illness is F99, which is unspecified.

So no one's thinking about what the mental health problem is, because effectively they don't need to. The law offers abortion on demand. If a woman says, I don't want this baby, and they go and see a doctor who is willing to allow abortion, that is all they need to say.

And that means that you have this huge table, where more than one in five pregnancies, every year, end in abortion.

As I say, 8.7 million since 1968. Now, this is related. If we're thinking about what's the status of the wrong-born life, it's right that we think not only about abortion.

It's right that we also think about some other things, which, for other reasons, may affect people in this room very personally. Some of the mechanisms by which infertility is treated, IVF, some of those result in embryos being created, which then result in a baby.

[10:30] And it's a little bit hard to put the numbers together. But something like 170,000 embryos are lost in in-vitro fertilization treatments per year. Only about 7% of embryos created in the laboratory for these facility treatments end up in pregnancies.

All the others, in the end, die. Either because they're frozen, and when they're thawed, they don't reanimate, they don't continue dividing.

Or because they're used and destroyed in research and development. Or because they're implanted in cycles, and they don't implant there. So, we've got 205,000 abortions, and 170,000 embryos lost in IVF.

One more thing to mention before we start thinking biblically about what might be going on. This is a poster that I saw on the Tube a few years ago, which is, for Tommy's, the baby charity, and you may have seen, they're quite a big charity, they advertise quite effectively.

They're trying to research miscarriage. And here is the poster of a baby crossing its fingers with the statistic when anxiety pregnancies fail in miscarriage.

[11:41] And the proportions are roughly the same, therefore. There's roughly the same number of abortions, actually, a little bit more babies are lost in abortion than lost in miscarriage at the moment.

That data comes from a reputable source too. What that means is that every year, there is more than half a million embryos dying. Because, either because we're killing them in the top two, one way or another, or because they're dying in miscarriage.

And plus, there's an unknown number that, in some methods of contraception, they allow fertilization to happen and then prevent the fertilized egg from implanting.

And so, they work by disrupting barrier to pregnancy. And you can ask about that later if you want to. I need to keep moving. But in other words, from multiple angles in this culture, we have become used to a very high rate of loss of unborn life.

And the big question is, how do we process this? How do we process this as people? How do we process this as Christians? What are we to make of this extremely high number? Well, wonderfully, by God's grace, Christian ethics are not difficult.

[13:07] They're very straightforward because God tells us everything we need to know. And in fact, he summarizes it in two very straightforward commands. You'll know them from the Old Testament you mentioned in the teaching of Jesus. Love God and love your neighbor.

That's all we have to do. Love God and love our neighbor. There's a bit too loving God and there's a bit too loving your neighbor. But that is the essential center of the Christian life.

One of the big things we need to work out is who are my neighbors? Who are the people I should be loving? And I'm to argue very strongly that the evidence of Scripture is overwhelming that unborn life, unborn people are our neighbors that we should be loving.

And I've got four straightforward points to make in order to persuade you that. The first is that unborn life is created by God. I'm not saying anything remarkable here to a Christian because everything is created by God.

And whether we think about the Father from Genesis chapter 1 and the Father, the Son, the Spirit from Genesis chapter 1 or whether we think personally about the Word, Jesus Christ himself in John chapter 1 verse 3 through him the Lord God, Jesus, all things were made.

[14:13] Without him nothing was made that has been made. Now, this means before we start to think about whether there's a particular status to unborn life we have to acknowledge that like everything else that exists unborn life does not belong to us.

Unborn life belongs to its Creator, belongs to God, it belongs to Jesus. And whatever we think it is, is his, not ours.

And we must work out what he thinks of it and what status he wants us to give it, not just come to our own conclusion as if it belonged to us. We're used to the kind of language and in a sense there's nothing wrong with it because to be given a baby is a very high trust.

When God gives us a baby we feel, we feel the responsibility. But we use the language of my baby or our baby. And, in a sense it is. But first, it's God's baby given to us, loaned to us, put under our care by the Creator.

So, firstly, unborn life, like everything else that exists, is created by God and he's the one therefore that should tell us what to make of it and how to treat it. Secondly, not only creator but God creates a human unborn life is human I would argue.

[15 : 27] Here is one of the famous passages that I think absolutely explicit from Psalm 139. Psalm 139 is a beautiful psalm in which David is describing his total confidence that he will never ever ever be able to escape from the gaze and care of God.

And, to some extent, that's a little bit scary. I'll never be able to get to a place where you can't see me in everything I'm doing, David says. But, similarly, I'll never be able to get to a place where you can't be with me and help me.

And, one of the reasons for that is because for, you created my inmost being. You and me together in my mother's womb. Before I began to exist outside my mother, you were there, you were with me and caring for me there.

In fact, I praise you because I'm seriously and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, I know that so well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was working together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body.

David has confidence that God is going to care for him and be with him everywhere he goes in creation because God was with him and caring for him before birth in his mother's womb.

[16 : 37] It's one of his reasons for confidence in the care of God now as an adult is because under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he reveals his certainty that God was his God and caring for him in his life before birth too.

Similarly, in Psalm 22, which is the psalm that Jesus takes on his lips on the cross, begins, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And on the way through, reveals this, from birth I was cast upon you, from my mother's womb you have been my God.

It's an original psalmist, indeed, and Jesus himself. The relationship between the human being and God begins the full birth in the mother's womb.

Luke 1.31 Very similar words, we're about to hear them again, read a number of times in the church over Christmas. You will not give birth to a son and you'll call him Jesus, you will conceive and give birth to a son.

You'll give birth because you will conceive. So, Jesus' incarnation, a remarkable moment when the sovereign eternal daughter is united to a fully human nature, that happens not at a virgin birth, that's a nonsensical term in a way, it's a virginal conception and the birth that follows from it.

[18 : 03] So, Jesus' incarnation begins at conception, explicit in scripture and conception is the main of the way egg and sperm come together. Although, differently, we assume in Jesus' case we haven't been revealed to us exactly how the father made that one work.

And, in Hebrews 2, talking about Jesus, he's described as fully human in every way. So, it's not likely to think of Jesus' conception as abnormal and humans as different.

His, the whole of his human existence from his conception he was fully human. It wasn't that because he was somehow God and man and that his humanity was less than human.

He was fully human in every way all the way through. So, Jesus' own humanity confirms the witness of the rest of scripture that unborn life is human.

I think we can add an extra wrinkle to this too that the unborn child is unique. Especially sometimes in a kind of attempt to comfort people after miscarriage.

[19 : 10] The impression is given that unborn life is kind of replaceable. well-meaning people would say something like well, don't worry here I'm sure you can have another one. Kind of built on the assumption that, you know, one day it's pretty much like another baby.

And yet, what these two verses reveal is very plainly, if it wasn't already plain, that the individuality of the human beings and the consideration in these verses has begun in a way.

They're already the people they're going to be when they're born. So, Luke 1.44 is Elizabeth at the arrival of Mary. And Elizabeth feels her baby John.

And the text makes explicit that the Holy Spirit reveals to her why John the Baptist jumps in her day and it's for joy. So, the Holy Spirit is telling us that John the Baptist has begun his distinctive ministry of pointing to Jesus with all birth.

So, it's not just a block of jelly, it's not just any old human being who becomes John the Baptist when he's born. He's John the Baptist already, miraculously, of course. But he is. He's already a unique human being fulfilling the role that the prophets assigned and announced in advance to

Zechariah and Elizabeth.

[20 : 29] And in Genesis 25, 22, 23, you have a very similar thing. That is, Jacob and Esau twins. Some of you may have had twins or had the experience of having twins. It can be pretty uncomfortable. But for their mum, she feels an unusual amount of pretty strong movement.

And again, the text takes the trouble to tell us that it's God reveals to her why she's feeling it. Because two nations are in your womb, Rebecca.

These two babies are not just sort of impersonal beings. They are already playing out the personalities before birth that will so colour much of the rest of the story of Genesis after birth. Do you know some of the in your womb? So, when Scripture gives us a window onto life inside the womb, it tells us that not only is it part of the whole creation over which God is sovereign and to whom we are accountable, it tells us that unborn life is human and distinctively personal, unique already.

And therefore, there's another aspect to Scripture's teaching which is very important, which is the unborn child is weak. The unborn child is weak.

[21 : 41] The most dangerous place to be in the whole of your life in England and Wales, statistically speaking, is in your mother's womb.

You are never more likely to meet a violent death than in your mother's womb. Because never again does the death rate reach 22%. And at that stage of development, there is obviously no possibility whatever for the unborn child to express themselves and to exert their own on the situation they are as weak as it's possible for a human being to be.

And Psalm 82 is one of those places all over Scripture where God gets very crossed with his people when they overlook the cause of the weak and the fatherless.

So defend the cause of the weak and fatherless. Maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy. Deliver them from the hand of the wicked, God says to his people. And God is saying in part, is this not how I treat you? Haven't I taken you as a weak nation from among all the nations of the earth and protected you and loved you and cared for you?

[23 : 01] And now when you see weak people around you and do nothing, you're denying my character and you're inviting my anger. And we do well to hear such instructions today.

That if you ask who are the weakest, who are the fatherless, the way of abortion legislation, the way abortions work, is the father is legally deleted from the process. The father has no rights.

I don't understand why, because the baby is entirely growing in the woman's body. The father may or may not be keen to keep the child. It's irrelevant.

And fathers are often far too absent. But one way or another, this baby is made fatherless. And that's an issue we need to think about how to respond.

So summarizing what's seen from the Bible, I would argue, the unborn child is great by God, a unique and very weak human being. And therefore, they are our neighbors. They're in God's image to be loved.

[24 : 09] How are you that? It's a big question. Because it's quite hard to get to them. But that's the direction that Scripture, to my mind, necessarily pushes us.

Now, there are people that read the same Bible and they come to a different view and you may be one of those. I want to introduce you to this thing called the precautionary principle.

That's one thing you can call it. And I want to introduce it by telling you a little story. Imagine, this may be very far from anything you'll ever do, but imagine you're going hunting with a friend in a forest. And let's say you want to hunt deer.

And you split up in two directions. and you're waiting for some time before you see a deer. And you see something that's a shootable distance away in a bush.

And you're 99% certain that it is a deer. So there's just a 1% chance it could be your friend. I think everybody would know that was not acceptable odds.

[25 : 08] You ought to be absolutely certain that it's not a human being before you pull the trigger. And even for people who find scripture is less straightforward, less clear than me, I'd love to have a discussion about why, because I think it's very clear.

But, as I say, there are people who take the Bible as seriously as I do and come to a different view. And they'd better be 100% sure, before they say, before they come to a different view about abortion, they'd better be 100% sure that the lives we're talking about are not our human neighbors who need to be loved.

I argue that they are, and that if there is any doubt about it, we must be certain to treat them as they are. And the conclusion that I draw from these parts of God's word has moved me in my medical training as a medical student.

I was a Christian, but I hadn't thought about ethical things, and it was a routine part of medical students' training to be offered a chance to be involved in abortions.

And I never did a procedure, because only doctors can do it, and I was part of the care of women who were having abortions. And I knew it was sad, but I've come to think, under the teaching of Scripture, that in fact it is wrong.

[26 : 24] Abortion is wrong. And it's wrong for the reasons that I've seen in Scripture and shown you, even though it's legal. And it's hard, this, because in our country, wonderfully, most of the laws on which society organises itself are heavily influenced by the day of Christian values, and so they fit very well with the teaching of the Bible, by and large.

And it's a surprise for us to say, to come to the conclusion that this law is radically opposed to the main thing in the Bible, but I think it is. And if abortion is wrong because it's the ending of a human life, the kind that God rules out in his work, then it's wrong even in the really hard cases.

There's one exception, and that will be the exception where, as in for example in an ectopic pregnancy, where an embryo is developing outside the womb, as happens sometimes, it doesn't go quite far enough down into the womb, for example, but it's in the uterine tube.

When that happens, it's not possible for the pregnancy to develop beyond a certain size. What will happen if it does, is it will expand, it will burst the uterine artery, and then within a very few minutes, the mother will bleed into her tummy and die.

And there is no way to sustain the life of that baby when some mother died. In that setting, it seems to me right to intervene because you know without a doubt that you are saving one life from death.

[27 : 54] And there are Christians who would disagree with me, because they would say it's not a circumstance where it's okay to take human life even then. that it's one of those risks of having sex that people ought to accept and that could end up killing them.

But, for myself, I think that's the one exception. There will be one or two similar cases where there's no doubt that intervene now will save one life rather than a certain loss of two.

There are plenty of other hard cases where I don't think it is justified. And if you'd like to ask me a question about a particular one that relates to you, if your starting point is that if you have a pregnant woman, then you have two human beings, then you have to try and find a solution which doesn't result in one of them dying.

And even if the second life has come about, for example, as a result of a rape, which is a horrendous crime against a woman, and where that rape, let's say, has been of a Muslim girl who is now thrown out of her family because her family can't come to terms with what has been done to her.

And where she would be, you know, perhaps if she could get an abortion, it would be possible to cover it up and save her life from falling apart, you might think.

[29 : 19] Even in those cases, I'm forced to think it would be better to try and find a way of supporting her with her child, even if her family throw her out, because the alternative is ending in human life.

And there are some extraordinary books and testimonies written by people who have been raped. raped, and there's one quite well known one, a woman who had been raped, and had wanted to have an abortion, and the abortion had not succeeded.

And she ended up carrying the child to term. And she's able now to see, and to be so glad that she now has this child, because the child is not half its father.

It's not half a rapist. It's a new individual. And she celebrates and rejoices over her. There's more one, I've actually done it if it's a boy or a girl, but there's more one to say about parques, and you're welcome to ask me about them if you would like.

But our starting point, if we're thinking through them all, is a woman who's expecting a baby is two human beings. Now, having said that, it's really important to go straight on to say that forgiveness is always available, even for such things.

[30 : 45] And this is what Jesus meant when he was hung across and said, it is finished. I have paid for all sin, all the sin that I did. When I push God to do my life, I'm committing an infinitely serious sin against an infinitely powerful God, and thinking that I can replace him with me.

Christ died that even that can be forgiven. Christ died that all our sins can be forgiven. And in this beautiful picture in which the ministry of Christ is foreshadowed, it says, they or sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

That's what Jesus did for us. And that's the sweet offer and discovery in the gospel. But even where we've done wrong, and there'll be different reasons why we did it.

Many of them may have been because we were responding to advice that this was the right thing to do. As we discover the way the Lord views it, we can discover at the same time the ruin of the Lord has made us, let's forgive us, and have us as his children, clean and white and pure, because of Jesus.

And I always put a slide like this up. There may be closer ones to you, but that's the phone number for Oxford Wimbledon, and that's the website where you can find other Brexit centres while you wait for eating to start.

[31 : 59] If it affects you or someone you know, there are places to go to get help to discuss what's happened without you having to necessarily tell a friend.

Though if you can tell a friend, it's usually that way. Abortion is wrong. And while we're at it, we should probably say that some of those forms of contraception are wrong for the same reasons where they result in the failing to implant or the embryo that's been created.

Even though it's so common, everyone does it, you go to CGP and you ask for, you've had a baby, the standard standard of contraception after a baby is a mini-pill, a progesterone-only mini-pill, and it's likely that that works in a percentage of times by preventing implantation.

So, again, it's normal, it's entirely legal, but Christians who know this and get to find out about this will want to discuss another way of doing contraception than one of those methods. And again, if that's rather than to you, I can point in the direction for some more information about that.

And it also means that some infertility treatments are wrong for the same reason. Again, even though they're legal, and even though a baby itself is such a beautiful thing to long for, if the process results in the death of embryos, we're talking about a process that is creating and then resulting in the death of human beings.

[33 : 19] And I don't think that it's okay, because I think the Bible is encouraging me to see that it's not okay. And it also means that miscarriages are bereavements. But when a pregnancy ends in a miscarriage, it's right to be sad.

We don't just shrug it off. And we're not kind of prescribed that everybody has to respond in the same way. So it's a very odd time because there's a relationship which was anticipated and dreamt about in all kinds of ways, and then suddenly brought to them before it ever became very much more than a hope.

And so there's going to be a wide range of differences. But it's certainly wrong to assume that miscarriages should be the kind of thing you might have a day off working and you're back in and it's all just as it was. And I'm delighted that here's a secular charity miscarriage.

Let's enter silence around miscarriage. Yes, let's. Because it's a loss of human life. Now, if you share those convictions, I think it's one of the things that will change our view of the kind of country in which we live.

Because we are used in the West to pointing at civilisations and cultures that we think barbaric and that do terrible things to some of their citizens. And the way they treat women in some parts of the world.

[34 : 30] Or the way that they treat people from some religion in some parts of the world. And the history of torture and persecution and so on. And I think we need to turn a rather more perceptive gaze on our own country where you and I live.

Because we supervise the death of half a million of our population every year. The twin thousands were three and a half thousand. Two hundred and five thousand abortions every year in the world. How many people died during the Second World War? More have died from abortions than humans could get. But who knows this?

People with God's word in their hand know this and that means that Christians must leave the way. There's no one else who's going to. And there are some Christians that have, and Christian traditions that have a very strong and dignified history in leading the way or trying to.

But not very many and not mine and perhaps not yours. And it is so encouraging to discover that not only here in Ewing but in other places around the country, there's another one they're trying to start in Cambridge, at the same time as you, that people are beginning to realise, Christians are

beginning to realise that this is something we need to do something about.

[35 : 51] So the question is how will we love our humble neighbours? We've worked out that they are humble neighbours and we need to love them. The question is how? And I think there are two broad ways we can think about it. Here's the first one which I'm going to cover quite quickly, just on this one slide.

Challenge the culture, even try to change the culture. There are lots of ways we might do that. It's something we could and should be praying about. Not all the time, because there's lots of things that we're praying about, but we should be praying about a culture that finds it possible to kill so many of its citizens.

The one in which we live. And we should, we can write or speak, campaign, you know, like, that's a social media comment. I don't really know how it works, but you can like things, can't you?

You can let people know the causes that you think really matter with one click. You can do that. You can put your head above the parapet. You can get shot down for it. Because you won't get shot down for it, will you?

Your life will be fine. You can follow. Another social media thing. You can protest. I mean, that actually is saying, I know why they've done it, but you could protest about that.

[37 : 01] You can advertise. I know someone who is making a bit of money at the moment, and when they finish making a bit of money, what they quite like to do is spend a bit of money, buying cinema advertising, and just showing 4D ultrasound of unborn babies.

30 seconds before the main feature. By that advert, it's not making a pro-life message because that would never get shown in the cinema. But just a bit of feature.

You know the film 2001, Space Odyssey? It ends with a rotating baby, doesn't it? Well, similar image before birth.

That's what they want to do. Maybe you've got money if you want to know who it is, I'll tell you if you've got to get up. And to do these things with energy, this is going to cost us to do and have to pour out some energy to do this, have to make time in all the other things we're doing, if we're going to do it.

Strategy, we want to work out what's effective. So there's a whole bunch of campaigners in the States that have done a lot of study in how big social changes actually happen. Particularly, how was it that slavery got overturned?

[38 : 08] This great social horror which is not as bad as abortion, in my view. Horrible though it was, I think abortion is more serious. That in the end came to an end because the campaigners put images in front of people so they could actually see what was happening.

And I'm not going to share those images tonight, but I know why people do that in their campaigning. Because they care enough about what is happening to try and let other people know what is happening.

And when you see what is done, it's very hard to deny that this is the ending of human life. Here's another thing you could do as part of that campaign, or changing the culture anyway, changing the culture.

That is one of, I suspect, many websites that ehd.org produces apps that you can download. I didn't actually know about it until I came across it today. And if you've heard people who've been through printing, you must know all about them.

But this is called See My Baby, or My Baby. And it takes you through, it shows you pictures of what your baby looks like at each stage of pregnancy. And apparently my wife told me, oh yeah, they'll be around sometime.

[39 : 24] And pregnant women share links to say, oh, this is what my baby's doing right now. What a beautiful way to share real knowledge of what's happening and what it really means to be pregnant. It's not just a preparation for a new human life.

It's a new human life growing. So, in that way and other ways, challenge the culture, we could change our language. I mean, it would be a bit radical, but we could move our birthday. Or as well as our birthday, we could have a conception day party.

It's a bit odd, isn't it? Because no one's thinking about that. But maybe at least we could say, how old are you? Say, well, I've been born for 50 years, but I'm actually nine months older than that.

We could say, so, they say, tell me about the family. Well, instead of saying I have one younger sister, I could say, as is true, my mum had a miscarriage shortly before she became pregnant with

me.

So I'm in the middle of three. And there's a culture. And, you know, we can shrug this off and go and think there's something else to do tonight, but alternatively, we could go and look for something that we will begin living and be part of the change.

[40 : 33] And the same thing we do is we can create a new, microculture. That is, we still have a lot of freedom in this country. We don't have to do everything the way everybody else does it.

And we can create a microculture in which things look different. And I want to use my last very few minutes just talking about options, which is what we did in Wimbledon. And I'll just share very briefly how we do it, and there'll be some differences, great, glorious differences about animals, these things are annealing, and this is good.

But that we're doing something is really important. So options is down in Wimbledon. These are the services that we've been doing as for, I think it's 13 and a half years.

I've got to check the card date. We had our 12 anniversary a couple years ago. There must be more than that now. Anyway, pregnancy, crisis counselling. So that's when a woman knows she's pregnant, and it's a crisis for her, she doesn't know what to do, she may be thinking about abortion, but she's willing to have a conversation with someone who can help her think about what's going on, think about what she really wants, think about the fact that though some people may be telling her she must have an abortion, she doesn't have to.

But there's a possibility of keeping the baby, and the options will support her in any way during that process, or if keeping the baby seems impossible as the possibility of blessing someone else with a baby for adoption.

[41 : 57] There's a very long waiting list for babies between 0 and 2 in this country, because most of those that would otherwise end up for adoption are obviously being killed in the womb.

A good friend of mine, he's a pastor of the church in Sollum, St. Peter's Sollum, Ruth Standering, doesn't mind, who knows, that he was conceived shortly before the abortion act became law.

And he was given up for adoption. And if he'd been conceived just a few months later, he wouldn't have been. And so it's real people. Post-abortion or post-termination counselling.

Adoptions, we do offer that, because women who've been through an abortion and are feeling one or other of the effects of it, and one of our early clients was someone who had had an abortion 30 years ago, and there wasn't a day since when she didn't think about it.

And she came to us to post-abortion counselling. Women who've had an abortion are among our neighbours who we are to love. And we think a good way to love them is to offer them counselling.

[43 : 03] In that counselling, the model that we use talks about forgiveness, and we make explicit at the beginning that it will be an opportunity if they want to, to talk about forgiveness by God.

There's more than one woman in the Wimbledon area now, in church, a Christian, because they heard the gospel in post-abortion counselling.

Miscarion counselling, when someone's had a miscarriage, there is someone who understands the grief that other people don't have in options if they can't otherwise find someone. And they can be helped through a process that is in some ways similar and other ways different from post-abortion counselling.

We offer support for single-munch-to-be, whether it's in a group, an expected-munch-group, or whether it's giving clothes, or whether it's giving, we can't do car seats, second-hand ones, whether it's giving clothes or push-chairs, or any of the huge amount of clutter that accumulates as people grow out of the baby stage.

They're only too keen to dump it somewhere in the church property, so it can be waiting for a young woman who needs it. Material support for families with newborns.

When we had a camp centre, we had someone who learned an awful lot about debt and money, and we can offer that kind of support as well, because the camp centre's closed, and that skill is still around in the church.

[44 : 22] We've tried, from different times, to try to do some preventive work by doing relationships and such as the school, and the schools I've had ago, the others had, and we just haven't ever quite managed to get the resources to do it, and it just seems that in the Lord's hand, he's provided resources for us to do other things and not for that, and so we haven't yet sustained about it, but I think it's a great idea.

Also, but not quite publicised on the website, but strongly motivating us, we pray for our clients. We can pray with our clients, with their permission, if they want it.

It's never forced on them, but the offer is rightly made in some conversations, and we can share the gospel, and that's happened. And there are one or two counsellors who, you know, for all their Christian life, they have felt like they're rubbish evangelists.

They're never quite good at taking opportunities, and they just love this work, because they just see opportunities all over the place, and they feel that God has put them there to open up a conversation, which is very natural.

And so there are people in options who have been given the ability that they need to share the gospel with people in this thing. And it's not surprising, because we think God loves these people, and if he loves them, the thing he wants to do is give them eternal life.

[45 : 42] And so it's not surprising that he makes that happen. And it would be remiss of me to say anything other than that options have been the work of God's provision, and that if it's to happen anywhere else, it's to happen here in Ealing, that means God's provision as well.

And I mean, there's a huge amount of things he's done, but some of them, I mean, our most precious resource by far is a constant stream of amazing volunteers, and who give, I can't remember how many hours it is now, but certainly the first volunteers to train in course, it was 56 hours to train, just in crisis pregnancy counselling, and another whole chunk of hours to train in post-abortion counselling, and they would do it on Saturdays, they'd do it in the evenings, they gave their time for free, out of love for these women in the wrong one building.

I'm so impressed with both women and one man, and he only sees men by the way, and so grateful to God for them. We've had the centre directors that we've needed, and our first one was a volunteer, and then wonderfully we became going to employ one, and we've got one now, she's called Nikki, and she's great.

We've had a lot of help of cash and space from Don Donald, which is the church that it started from, which is part of a network of churches, because for a crisis pregnancy centre to run in a sustainable way, it's incredibly helpful to have a wider network contributing prayer and money and people, because the kind of very special people that you need to keep the volunteer body up, are not so thick on the ground you'll find enough of them in a church of 50.

Don't know there's a bigger church than that, but even in a church of 500, it's been good to be able to include volunteers from other churches. And now, we're operating another local GP practice, because we're one or two Christian partners, they're really glad of what we do.

[47 : 31] Many GPs who aren't Christian are very glad to have someone to send people so they can have a proper conversation about abortion rather than the ten minutes that's all they've got before they need to sign a form. And there's a very happy relationship there.

It's dependent on local circumstances, but it's been a great joy to us that the London church is now being demolished in order to make way for a new building. We've got a wonderful home that feels a much more normal place to be having discussions about these things down the church building, and that's been a great aspect.

And in Stratham, up the road from one of them, there's a new satellite centre being drawn together now, where there's a new team of volunteers and a director being trained in the world. And so, having been led to care about this issue, and to pray about this issue, however many years ago it was, the Lord led us to start, and has been sustaining us ever since.

And so, let me just finish my presentation, I hope we'll get some Q&A,; but finish my presentation by thanking God for what he's done in enabling our response to the ministry that I think he cares about more than we need to realize.

Thank you.