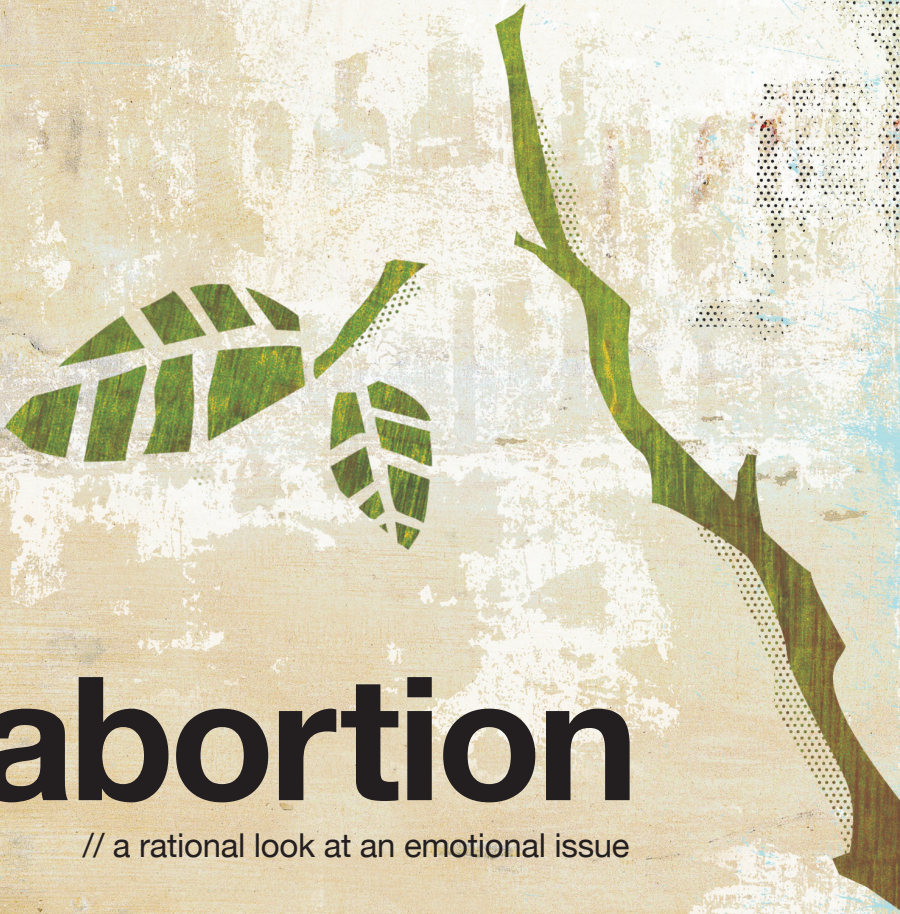


twentieth anniversary edition



abortion

// a rational look at an emotional issue

R.C. SPROUL

foreword by **George Grant**

Endorsements

“This is an important book for all Christians interested in bringing their beliefs to bear upon the world around them. Abortion is one of the most critical issues of our day, and R. C. Sproul looks at it through the lenses of theology, philosophy, and reason. This book is refreshingly free of hyperbole, and yet does not compromise the truth.”

—JIM DALY
President, Focus on the Family
Colorado Springs, Colo.

“R. C. Sproul’s rapier logic will put to flight rationalistic defenders of abortion. Those torn between conflicting claims about the humanity of the unborn, the role of government, and the rights of women will find this book particularly instructive.”

—MARVIN OLASKY
Editor-in-chief, *WORLD* magazine (retired)
New York City

“When I read R. C. Sproul’s book on abortion twenty years ago, I was still a pastor. I recall how grateful I was that a respected theologian had spoken out so clearly on the critical issue of abortion. At the time, such voices were few and far between, with many evangelical theologians seemingly silent about the plight

of unborn children. Sproul’s logic is sharp and penetrating, and his reliance on biblical authority is refreshing. The appendix, in which Dr. Jerome Lejeune offers courtroom testimony, is a great bonus. I’m happy to recommend the re-release of Dr. Sproul’s book on this vital subject, and I pray God will use it to enlighten many new readers.”

—RANDY ALCORN

Founder and director, Eternal Perspective Ministries

Sandy, Ore.

Author of *ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments* and *Why Prolife?*

“R. C. Sproul covers the issues candidly and objectively—without the emotion and demagoguery that so often pervade the abortion debate. You are the jury; you decide the verdict.”

—DR. JOHN MACARTHUR

Pastor-teacher, Grace Community Church

Sun Valley, Calif.

“Staying silent on the issue of abortion is no longer an option. It is time for those who are respected and capable to speak out and say it straight. I know of no one who qualifies better than R. C. Sproul.”

—DR. CHUCK SWINDOLL

Senior pastor, Stonebriar Community Church

Frisco, Tex.

“Classic Sproul! Logical, clear, fair, attempting to understand the pro-choice views while all the time making a solid, biblical pro-life apologetic that seeks both to convince the opponents but also to bring about in practical ways the end of this North American holocaust. Add to that the foreword of George Grant and you have a winner.”

—DR. PETER JONES
Executive director, truthXchange
Escondido, Calif.

“I am delighted to see this Twentieth Anniversary Edition of *Abortion: A Rational Look at an Emotional Issue*. It was and continues to be an important contribution to the pro-life movement and to the defense of the sanctity of human life.”

—DR. JOHN JEFFERSON DAVIS
Professor of systematic theology and Christian ethics
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
South Hamilton, Mass.

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R.C. SPROUL



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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to Andrea Krazeise

for her heroism in ministry to pregnant women in crisis

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Foreword

In the two decades since this landmark book was first published, four different presidents have occupied the White House, seven justices have come and gone on the Supreme Court, and eleven sessions of Congress have held sway in the Capitol.

These federal magistrates have faced economic booms and busts. They have weathered terror attacks and foreign wars. They have witnessed the end of the Cold War and the rise of the al Qaeda menace. They have wrangled over corporate bailouts and health-care reforms. They have endured Tea Party protests, campaign scandals, personal embarrassments, and policy failures. They have been plagued on every side by mounting demands, frustrated expectations, declining resources, and diminished prestige.

Through it all, the divisiveness of the abortion issue has remained constant. The many and varied political turns of events during the past twenty years have done nothing to ameliorate it—much less, to resolve it. If anything, the divide over abortion has become more pronounced, more acrimonious, and more entrenched. While political gridlock on nearly any and every other issue ultimately has been overcome, no rapprochement on the issue of abortion is anywhere in sight.

Of course, matters have not exactly been helped by the fact

that the politically protected international abortion business has grown into a multibillion-dollar industrial complex. Utilizing its considerable wealth, manpower, and influence, the abortion industry has proven itself adept at muscling its way into virtually every facet of modern life.¹ It now plays a strategic role in the health and social-services community.² It exerts a major influence on education, providing the majority of sex-education curricula and programs in both public and private schools.³ It carries considerable political clout through lobbying, campaigning, advocacy, and litigation.⁴ It is involved in publishing, broadcast media production, judicial activism, public relations, foreign aid, psychological research counseling, environmental policy-making, sociological planning, demographic investigation, pharmacological development, contraceptive distribution and sales, mass advertising, and public legal service provision.⁵

Planned Parenthood, the oldest, largest, and best-organized provider of abortion and birth-control services in the world, has become a tenured player in all the great social and political issues of our day.⁶ From its ignoble beginnings around the turn of the twentieth century, when the shoestring operation consisted of an illegal back-alley clinic in a shabby Brooklyn neighborhood, staffed by a shadowy clutch of firebrand activists and anarchists,⁷ it has expanded dramatically into a conglomerate with programs and activities in 134 nations and on every continent.⁸

In the United States alone, Planned Parenthood has mobilized more than twenty thousand personnel and volunteers along the front lines of the confrontational and vitriolic battle over

abortion. Today those minions man the organization's more than 150 affiliates and its nearly one thousand clinics in virtually every major metropolitan area, coast to coast.⁹ It boasts a national headquarters in New York, a legislative center in Washington, regional command posts in Atlanta, Chicago, Miami, and San Francisco, affiliate offices in 49 states and the District of Columbia, and international centers in London, Nairobi, Bangkok, and New Delhi. With an estimated combined annual budget—including all its regional, national, and international service affiliates—of more than a billion dollars, this leading light of the abortion industry may well be the largest and most profitable nonprofit organization in history.¹⁰

As if that were not enough, the current Democratic administration in Washington—aided and abetted by the Democrat-controlled Senate and House of Representatives—is the most ardently pro-abortion in American history.¹¹ With a bevy of executive orders, appointments, and administrative policy changes—to say nothing of its 2,407-page monolithic, partisan “health-care-reform” legislation, which removed the longstanding ban on federal funding of abortions in favor of a much more easily overturned executive order—the abortion industry has logged more gains during this administration's short tenure than in the rest of its history combined.¹²

Yet the great divide persists. Despite its obvious cultural clout, its cavernously deep corporate pockets, and its carefully crafted public-relations efforts, the abortion industry has yet to prevail in the battle for the hearts and minds of most Americans. Public-opinion polls conducted during the first year of the

Obama administration found that 51 percent of Americans now call themselves “pro-life” on the issue of abortion, while only 42 percent call themselves “pro-choice.”¹³ In addition, the number of Americans who favor making it more difficult to obtain an abortion is up six percentage points in just five years. In 2005, 59 percent of respondents agreed it would be good to reduce abortions. Today, 65 percent take this view. One poll also found that fewer Americans, and fewer pro-life activists, are willing to compromise on abortion by finding some “middle ground.” Indeed, support for finding a middle ground on the abortion issue is down twelve percentage points among conservatives and six points among all Americans.¹⁴ Yet another poll found that 58 percent of Americans say abortion is morally wrong most of the time. Just 25 percent disagree, and the rest have no opinion. The poll found women are more strongly pro-life than men, with 64 percent of women asserting that most abortions are morally wrong, a view shared by 51 percent of men. Meanwhile, still another survey found a majority of Americans, 52 percent, think it is too easy to get an abortion in America. That’s up seven percentage points from two years ago, when 45 percent thought it was too easy.¹⁵

So why does it seem that the abortion Goliath’s grassroots support is slipping at the very moment when its power and resources have reached their zenith? At least part of the reason may be the very nature of the abortion business itself—along with the inevitable fallout that accompanies it. Consider:

- Although heralded by the abortion lobby as both “safe and legal,” it is now apparent that abortion is merely “legal.” The

complications of this, the most commonly performed medical procedure in America today, are legion. They include sterility—occurring in as many as 25 percent of all women receiving mid-trimester abortions; hemorrhaging—nearly 10 percent of all cases require transfusions; viral hepatitis—occurring in 10 percent of all those transfused; embolism—occurring in as many as 4 percent of all cases; cervical laceration; pelvic inflammatory disease; genital tract infection; cardiorespiratory arrest; acute kidney failure; and amniotic fluid embolus.¹⁶

- As a result of these sundry complications, women in America have seen a massive increase in the cost of medical care. While the average cost of normal health maintenance for men has increased nearly 12 percent over the past fifteen years due to inflation, the average cost for women has skyrocketed a full 27 percent.¹⁷

- A spate of medical malpractice lawsuits from botched abortions has intensified the industry's already looming insurability crisis.¹⁸

- At the same time, the cultural and political stigmatization of abortion providers has dramatically reduced the number of qualified physicians willing to serve them. As a result, many clinics have been forced to rely on less adequately trained personnel—nurse practitioners and doctors who more often than not have failed in private or institutional practices.¹⁹

- Revelations about deliberately suppressed research data on various procedural risks—particularly concerning the established links between abortion and breast cancer—have raised new questions about the industry's medical objectivity and professional integrity.²⁰

- New clinical evidence exposing the grave hazards of several of the other forms of treatment championed by the industry—from the deleterious effects of the RU-486 abortion drug and the Norplant contraceptive surgery to the inherent risks and complications in the use of intrauterine devices—have raised the specter of “wholesale institutional quackery.”²¹

- The shadow over the industry’s iatrogenic carelessness has been further darkened by its enthusiastic defense of the horrifying second-trimester “dilation and extraction” surgical procedure—commonly known as D&X or “partial-birth” abortion.²²

- In addition, the industry has staked its tenuous reputation on the therapeutic usefulness of two very dangerous new chemical treatments—the Depo-Provera long-term contraceptive injection and the Methotrexate-Misoprostol abortifacient. Both drugs present grave hazards to women’s health, according to a battery of recent clinical tests.²³

- Horrifying new evidence of barbaric human-rights violations—including forced abortions, coercive sterilizations, and torturous disfigurement—associated with the Planned Parenthood-designed population program in Communist China has cast an ominous shadow over the industry’s innumerable other tax-funded international activities.²⁴

- Not surprisingly, the bridling of information about viable alternatives to the abortion industry’s clinical, educational, and surgical services has provoked the wrath of a variety of health-care consumer advocates.²⁵

- Parents, outraged at the promiscuity-promoting content of the abortion industry’s affiliated sex-education materials,

AIDS-awareness programs, and community-advocacy projects, have begun to organize grassroots efforts to bar organizations such as Planned Parenthood from schools, charitable networks, and civic coalitions in communities all across the United States.²⁶

- Several punitive lawsuits initiated by the abortion industry—filed in an effort to close down pro-life adoption agencies and abortion-alternative crisis pregnancy centers—have begun to reinforce a perception that the organization is more concerned with the ideological enforcement of its agenda than with the health and welfare of its clients.²⁷

- A series of negative public-relations campaigns launched by the well-heeled abortion lobby—against cultural conservatives in general and Christian conservatives in particular—has highlighted the industry’s immoderate aims and set the standard for the increasingly shrill rhetoric and hysterical extremism of the pro-abortion movement.²⁸

- Conflict-of-interest accusations have begun to circulate in Washington concerning the cozy relationships between certain past and present federal officials and the industry’s voluble lobbyists on Capitol Hill.²⁹

- A backlash against the massively unpopular “health-care-reform” legislation passed in early 2010 not only has brought renewed support for pro-life organizations, crisis pregnancy centers, and principled politicians, it has brought renewed scrutiny to the grisly abortion trade. New calls to enforce existing laws and enact stricter new ones bode ill for the industry’s plans for growth and expansion.³⁰

In short, one scandal after another has hit the abortion industry, its medical personnel, its educators, its researchers, its lobbyists, and its administrators. As a result, its “Teflon” reputation is starting to wear a little thin and its “grand illusion” has begun to lose its luster.³¹

As a result, Dr. Sproul’s incisive analysis in this book is as relevant and necessary today as it was in the last decade of the twentieth century. Indeed, he points the way to the only possible resolution of this deeply emotional issue.

Once before in American history, a national pro-life consensus was forged, laws were changed, and life was protected. At the outset of the nineteenth century, abortion was actually legal—if only marginally—in every state in the Union. By the end of the century, the procedure had been universally criminalized.

Most of the legal changes came during a relatively short twenty-year period, from 1860 to 1880.³² In less than two decades, Christians were able to recruit hostile journalists, ambivalent physicians, reticent politicians, and even radical feminists to the cause of mothers with crisis pregnancies and their unborn children. They succeeded overwhelmingly despite the vast wealth, power, and political clout of the burgeoning abortion industry. At a time when the nation was riven with strife over the recalcitrance of chattel slavery, the proliferation of abortion, and the challenging of the most basic principles of American liberty, they demonstrated in word and deed that every human being is made in the image of God and is thus sacred.

The popular press made information about abortion available to the average man on the street. The medical associations made

physicians aware of the physical risks and the moral compromises inherently involved in the procedure. Lawyers, politicians, and judges enacted the legal constraints necessary to criminalize abortion profiteers. But it was the church that catalyzed and spearheaded the wildly successful pro-life efforts of the nineteenth century.³³

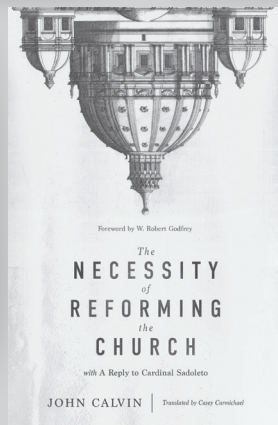
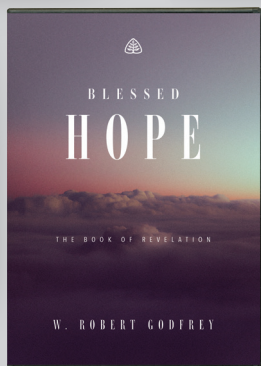
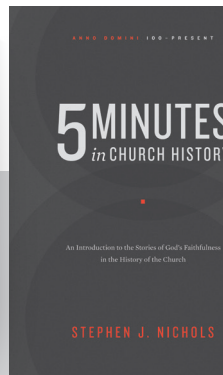
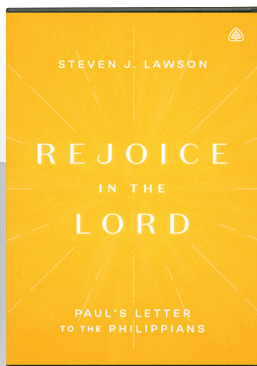
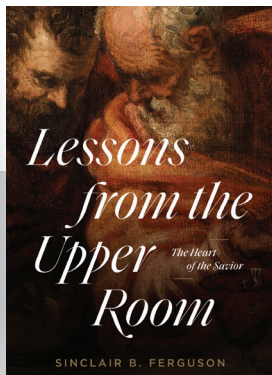
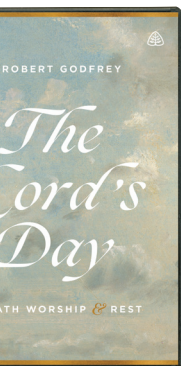
It is probably not surprising that pro-life stalwarts of nineteenth-century America did not simply say “no” to abortion; they said “yes” to women in crisis. They said “yes” to the poor and desperate. They said “yes” to the confused and afflicted. In short, they fulfilled their servanthood mandate simultaneously with their prophetic mandate.

Lives were saved, families restored, and the men and women who dedicated themselves to the cause of the sanctity of human life laid a remarkable foundation of liberty for future generations. America at last seemed poised to fulfill her promise—as the land of the free and the home of the brave.

May it be so yet again. And may God be pleased to use this book as a means to bring to pass this, the church’s great work of standing for truth, justice, and mercy in the midst of a poor, fallen world.

—*George Grant*
Franklin, Tennessee
January 2010

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