

# Abortion and the Election

by Coty Pinckney 10/10/08

(To follow the links, visit the online version of this article at [www.desiringgodchurch.org/web/2008/10/10/abortion-and-the-election/](http://www.desiringgodchurch.org/web/2008/10/10/abortion-and-the-election/))

On November 4, we will decide who will serve as the next President of the United States. Two weeks ago, I wrote about [our biblical role as citizens of the kingdom of heaven temporarily exiled in this country](#). Over the next couple of weeks, I will write about some important issues in this election. Today: Abortion.

Abortion is one of the clearest issues separating Obama and McCain. What does the Bible say about abortion? Where do the candidates stand? How much importance should we assign to this particular issue?

Today, I want to briefly outline answers to these issues for readers who believe the Bible is the Word of God, and thus has supreme authority. For those of you who would like to see this issue addressed without appeal to the Bible, I recommend Randy Alcorn's book, [Why Pro-Life?](#) (available for free as a pdf file) and the [Abort73.com](http://Abort73.com) website.

Consider these seven points:

## 1. Abortion is an assault on a person

John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb (Luke 1:15). He leaps in the womb when the pregnant Mary comes to visit (Luke 1:41). In that latter verse, Luke uses the same Greek word to refer to the unborn John as he later uses to refer to the newborn Jesus (Luke 2:12). Furthermore, David writes that we are sinful from the moment of conception (Psalm 51:5). A piece of tissue cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit. A piece of tissue cannot be sinful. Only a person can be sinful.

## 2. Abortion is an affront to God

This point is more fundamental than the true statement that if the unborn child is a person, abortion is killing a person, and God commands us not to do that. Think of it this way: God's first and greatest commandment is to love Him, to delight in Him, to trust Him. When we abort our children, we are saying, "I don't believe you, God! You are *not* sufficient for me! Unless I get rid of this pregnancy, my life will be a mess! I do not trust you to exercise your sovereign control and work this out for my good!" See [my sermon](#) and [John Piper's sermon](#) on James 3 and 4.

## 3. Abortion is a central public policy issue facing our country today

There are about 1.2 million abortions annually in this country. To get an idea of the magnitude of that number, consider: How many murders were committed in the US last year? Answer: About 16,000. That is, there are *75 times as many abortions as there are murders* every year. Nationwide, about one out of every four pregnancies ends in abortion; in some locations,

the ratio is three out of every four. Meanwhile, couples have to wait endlessly for infants to adopt. Since the 1973 Roe v Wade Supreme Court decision, almost 50 million babies have been aborted in this country. That decision, based on the justices discovering a previously unheard of "right to privacy" in the constitution, has effectively barred states or Congress from passing almost any legislation that limits and regulates abortion. A number of legal scholars on both sides of the abortion issue believe that that decision [was improperly decided](#). Four Supreme Court justices appear to be ready to overturn the decision.

## 4. The next president can have a major impact on the number of abortions performed in this country for decades into the future

With one justice who supports Roe v Wade now 88 years old, the next president almost certainly will have the opportunity to affect the majority opinion of the court. A vote to overturn Roe v Wade would not end abortion in the US, but would return control of the issue to state legislatures. Many would pass laws restricting abortion; some might ban it. The number of abortions nationwide would certainly decrease significantly – indeed, it would decrease by many multiples of the number of murders annually in this country.

## 5. John McCain has been consistent in his opposition to abortion

See [this link](#). No one disputes this fact.

## 6. On this issue, Barack Obama is the most extreme major party candidate for president ever.

His campaign website downplays this issue, saying only that Obama "has been a consistent champion of reproductive choice and will make preserving women's rights under Roe v. Wade a priority as President. He opposes any constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in that case." But follow [this link](#) to listen to Obama himself speak on abortion before the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, July 17, 2007. Among other statements, in that speech he strongly asserts his opposition to the ban on [partial birth abortions](#). Furthermore, consider the Born Alive Infants Protection Act, which passed the US Senate 98-0. This legislation mandates that infants born alive during a botched abortion must receive medical care and be treated as any other infant. John Kerry and Hillary Clinton, among others, voted for this bill. While Obama now claims that, had he been in the US Senate at the time, he would have voted in its favor, in his role as chair of the Illinois Senate Health and Human Services Committee in 2003, Obama effectively killed the identical bill (see [this record](#) from the Illinois state senate and [this summary](#) for more on the complicated history of the bill).

7. *Is the abortion issue alone important enough to determine your vote?*

Clearly, a president's responsibilities are far broader than the abortion issue. One might well disagree with a candidate on abortion, and yet agree with the same candidate on a host of other important issues. Obama has tried, with some success, to reach out to abortion opponents on that basis. Surely, some argue, a presidential candidate's positions on the economy, on health care, and on foreign policy should have greater weight than abortion.

But think of it this way. A candidate's position on any single issue should not determine your vote *in his favor*. But a candidate's position on a single issue may well [\*disqualify him\*](#) from office, and thus determine that you cannot vote *for* him.

This is the way marriage works. A young Christian man considering potential spouses will likely consider a broad array of characteristics in the women he knows. But any woman who is not a Christian should be disqualified immediately, no matter how strong and attractive her other qualities.

Or imagine yourself in Germany in 1937. Hitler has been in power four years. You speak to a friend who supports the fuehrer. He says, "Look at all Hitler has done! In 1932, our economy was a mess, with high inflation and high unemployment. Now inflation is under control and the economy is booming! Almost every German is better off! Furthermore, no one in the world looked up to us back then, and we Germans had no pride. Now, all that is changed! We're proud of our country, proud to be Germans. Of course, Hitler is wrong on the Jews. That's regrettable. But Jews constitute less than one percent of our population – surely the benefits to the rest of us outweigh the costs to them!"

That friend would be wrong. Hitler's words and actions against the Jews disqualified him from office – no matter how great the positive impact of his other policies in those first four years.

So the question for each of us is this: Do you believe that abortion is an assault on a person and an affront to God? Do you believe that it is a central public policy issue that the next president will quite likely affect? Do you believe that this issue is important enough to disqualify a candidate from office?

I will be praying for you as you answer these questions for the glory of God. May we indeed all work together for the welfare of the country where we live as exiles, as ambassadors of the kingdom.