A Letter to Church Leaders

On the Sanctity of Life, Abortifacient Contraception, and the Faithful Care of Christ's Flock

Dear Brothers in Christ, Pastors, Elders, and Fellow Labourers in the Gospel,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We write to you as fellow servants, thanking God for your work as under-shepherds of the flock that He bought with His own blood (Acts 20:28). We believe that He is at work in you, and that He will finish what He began (Philippians 1:6). We write in hope, not as accusers, but as those who desire unity, clarity, and truth on the issues titled above.

We are writing to you on a subject that we ourselves did not properly understand until recently. Most Evangelical Christians believe that human life begins at conception. We put this belief in our statements of faith. We defend this idea from the pulpit. Some even defend it in the street, or in the houses of Parliament, and we applaud them when they do.

But have we really thought about how this truth applies to the area of contraception? When this issue was first presented to us, we never understood the connection between these things. We never knew what the makers of these contraceptives had to say about them. And so we write as men who once shared the same ignorance that most Christians have on this issue.

After our research, we now believe that in many of our churches there are couples using contraception that is, untold to them, abortifacient and thereby unknowingly causing the deaths of countless children. We believe that someone ought to tell them in order to save and protect those babies and to draw our fellow brothers and sisters to repentance and restoration.

Over two hundred years ago, John Wesley wrote a short book against slavery. The practice was legal then. It was normal. It was profitable. Many respected people took part in it and called it a sad necessity. Wesley, however, saw the truth and he did not soften it. He laid out plain facts. Then he answered the excuses one by one. We have tried to write in this same way. We ask of you only what he asked of his readers: "read to the end before you decide."

Some of this will sound, at first, like a Roman Catholic idea, or the concern of a small fringe group. We thought so too. We think that by the last page you will see something else. The view in this letter is the one the church held for almost two thousand years. The view most of us now hold is the new one.

Part One: First, a Word to Anyone This Already Touches

Before we begin our argument, we must speak to one kind of reader. For this person, the letter is not an argument. This letter will come as a wound.

Some who read this will realise that they have done in ignorance a thing they would have died to prevent. Some of you will sit, within a week of teaching this, with a woman in your study who bears the guilt and shame of using contraception that has caused the death of one of her children. We have not written one line of this without her in mind. We will not let the weight of it fall on anyone before the grace of Christ is set down first, in plain sight.

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). The Apostle Paul had approved the killing of the innocent and called himself the worst of sinners. Yet, he was shown mercy because he had acted in ignorance and unbelief (1 Timothy 1:13 to 16). When Jesus met the woman caught in adultery, He gave grace before He gave a command: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:11).

Guilt is easy to find in this world. We are not trying to create more of it. In fact, guilt already exists when someone sins against God. Pointing out their sin is not a creation of guilt, though it may be the cause of its first rumblings in their soul. But we write because children are dying quietly and no one has told the church. If any part of this letter lands on your conscience, hold this next truth: God is ready to forgive you fully, and He is not slow to do it. Confess your sins, believe on Christ, He is faithful and just to forgive. We stand on that ground now and we will stand on it again at the end.

Part Two: The Child Conceived Is a Human Being

Everything rests on this main question and we will not rush past it.

William Wilberforce, leading abolitionist of the slave trade, saw a problem that we should see in ourselves. He wrote about respectable Christians who agree with every part of the faith, and yet, when listening to what are their hopes and fears, you soon discover that their faith "scarcely finds herself a place" among those things.[1] We do the same. We say, "life begins at conception", then we live as if we did not believe it. For all of our cries about "the unborn," our images of them rarely depict anyone under 8 weeks old. We feel the weight of late-term abortion and we should. But we feel almost nothing about an early abortion. If we are honest, part of us suspects that the newly conceived embryo is not yet really someone. At least not someone worthy of the same rights and protections that those later babies deserve.

That suspicion is not harmless. It is the belief we are trying to topple and the belief on which everything else hinges. It is the belief the world has spent sixty years teaching us. So we ask you to put it to the test.

We do not argue that the conceived child is a person. We argue that he is a human.

We must be careful here. The word that we usually fight over, "person" or "personhood", is a word that was chosen by the other side, and chosen badly. "Person" is not a biological term. It is a word from philosophy and law. People in power have defined it and redefined it to suit themselves. They have made it rest on reason, self-awareness, being independent, being wanted. Every one of these leaves somebody out. That is not an accident.

And this is an old trick. Great crimes have been done by men who admitted their victims were human and then took away their protection anyway. It was not always done in the same way. Sometimes people were

denied the standing of a citizen. Sometimes they were kept unequal before the law. Sometimes they were treated as less than fully human. And in some cases they were denied the status of a person altogether and counted as property. The Nuremberg Laws did not say that Jews were not human beings. They stripped away their standing and their rights under the law. The men who defended the slave trade did not usually deny that Africans were human. They treated them as property and refused them the protection a person is owed. In the Dred Scott case, Chief Justice Taney did not rule that the man before him was not a man. He ruled that he was not a citizen under the Constitution, of a class with no rights the law was bound to respect. We do not say these crimes are all the same. Each has its own weight. We point them out because the tactical move underneath is the same. First, we admit the victim is human. Then, we say that being human is not enough; that protection depends on some other quality, i.e. personhood.

We ought then, to let that word go. We stand on a fact that cannot be redefined by subjective terms.

At conception, a new and separate human being begins. He or she has his or her own full set of DNA. He or she has his or her own sex. He or she is on his or her own path of growth, directed from within the womb of his or her mother. He or she is not part of his or her mother's body. No part of a body has its own DNA and its own sex. He or she is not a potential life. He or she is an actual life. He or she is not a potential human. He or she is an actual human. What he or she lacks is not humanity. What he or she lacks is maturity. And every one of us once lacked it, and gained it, by the same unbroken growth.

You do not have to take this from a preacher. In one survey, 5,577 biologists from more than a thousand universities were asked when a human life begins. 96% said it begins at fertilisation. And most of them were not on our side of the wider debate. 85% called themselves pro-choice, 89% liberal, and 63% non-religious.[2] They were not making a moral claim. They were answering a question of scientific fact. It is the answer their own science requires of them.

We, however, ought to make moral claims and we do so on the basis of the Eternal God and His Divine Claim upon humanity. This is exactly where God places His protection:

> *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.*
>
> GENESIS 9:6

The Hebrew word is ha'adam. It means the man, the human being. God does not say the strong, or the conscious, or the wanted, or the person. He says the man. And He gives one reason: man is made in His image. The protection reaches exactly as far as our humanity reaches and no less. Man alone bears God's image (Genesis 1:27). This is the ground of all human worth. It is not earned by strength, or use, or by being wanted. It is given by God directly to every human being.

Notice what the image is tied to; our very nature. It never says the image is a level of intelligence, or feeling, or growth. It never says, "the man who can reason" or "the man who can feel." It just says the man. Those abilities may come from the image. They are not the image. And what was never based on an ability can never be lost with or without one. The image passes to the child at the moment he is made. As God made Adam in His likeness, so "Adam fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image" (Genesis 5:1, 3). It is passed down, not earned. Neither did the Fall remove it. After sin had spoiled every part of man, God

still based his law on the reality and continued existence of that same imago dei. James' argument against cursing is the same, they "are made in the likeness of God" (James 3:9). What sin could not remove, no disability and no weakness can remove.

Two passages are often used against the idea of unborn humans having equal rights under the law as born humans. Neither passage, however, says what people often claim.

Exodus 21:22 to 25 is about a pregnant woman hurt when men fight. People often use it to say the death of an unborn child cost only a fine. However, when we examine the Hebrew this does not bear the weight of scrutiny. The verb is yatsa, meaning "to come out." It is the normal word for a live birth. Hebrew has clear words for a miscarriage, shakol and nephel, and uses them in other places (Exodus 23:26; Job 3:16; Ecclesiastes 6:3). Moses did not use them here. The text describes an early birth. Then it asks if harm followed. It does not say "harm to the mother." It says, with no limit, "if there is harm." So the law means this: if the child is born early and both live, a fine; if either one dies, life for life. This is the one place in the law where the unborn are named on their own and the penalty of their murder is a life for a life. John Calvin read it the same way. He wrote that "the foetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, and it is almost a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy."[3]

Numbers 5:11 to 31 is now used the other way, as if God commanded an abortion. He did not. The Hebrew says the woman's belly will swell and her thigh will fall away. In the whole passage there is no word for child, none for foetus, none for pregnancy, and none for miscarriage. Every one of those has to be added by the translator. The passage says the opposite. If the woman is innocent, "she shall be free and shall conceive seed" (Numbers 5:28). The blessing set against the curse is the power to conceive. So the curse is not the loss of a child, but the inability to have one. The pro-abortion interpretation is a very recent one. It rests on words the translators have added, not on the original Hebrew.

The foundation of our argument is that the child is a human being and that God prohibits the murder of human beings because they bear His image. In a syllogism:

1. All human beings bear God's image.
2. God prohibits the murder of human beings because they bear His image.
3. All unborn babies are human beings.
4. Therefore, no unborn baby should be murdered.

Scripture never treats the child in the womb as a thing that will one day become someone worthy of protection, or worthy of humanity. Unborn babies are people throughout all stages of their development.

God knew us before He formed us: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5). David traces himself back to the womb: "in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5), and "your eyes saw my unformed substance" (Psalm 139:16). Job reaches back to "the night that said, 'A man is conceived'" (Job 3:3). Not a thing that would become human, but actually was already from the point of conception. John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). When Mary greeted Elizabeth, "the baby leaped" in the womb for joy (Luke 1:41, 44). Luke, a doctor, uses the same word, brephos, for the unborn John, for the newborn Jesus (Luke 2:12), and for the little children brought to Jesus to be blessed (Luke 18:15).

Scripture draws no line between the humanity and worth of a baby before birth to those post-birth.

Finally, we know that God Himself came to save us through conception. He did not begin as a clump of cells that would later turn into Christ. Christ took up humanity at conception, and Scripture calls that embryo the Lord.

> *...He was conceived...*
>
> LUKE 2:21

Mark the word Luke uses. Not "it." Not "the pregnancy." He. It was He, the Lord Himself, who was conceived. And He who was conceived is the Word who became flesh: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Even days after conception, He was called Lord. When Mary came to Elizabeth, only days after that conception, the baby in Elizabeth's womb jumped, and Elizabeth, filled with the Spirit, cried out, "why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43). The conceived child was days old. Elizabeth called Him her Lord. The Lord was in the womb, and He was there as an embryo.

God was once an embryo. To deny the humanity of the unborn is not first an error about man. It is an error about the incarnation of Christ.

The Lord "had to be made like his brothers in every respect" (Hebrews 2:17). He was one of us from His conception. So we too are human from ours. If there were a stage when the embryo was not yet human, then there was a stage when the Son of God, having taken our nature, was in Mary's womb as something less than one of us. The whole meaning of the Incarnation forbids that thought. To deny the humanity of the unborn is, in the end, to adopt a heterodox view of the humanity of Christ.

And see what abortion does to the gospel then. At the cross, the strong One gave His life for the weak who could give Him nothing in return (John 15:13; Philippians 2:6 to 8). Abortion is the strong taking the life of the weak for their own comfort. One is the pattern of Christ's love and the other is its reverse.

Part Three: This Is Not a New Teaching

In some sense, the burden of proof is not on us.

The church has taught with one voice on this issue for almost two thousand years. Both in the East and in the West. For example, the Didache, a Christian document from the late first or early second century, says the following: "You shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is born" (2:2). This teaching is a plain command, it is not argued for because there was no "Christian" at the time arguing against it. There is no "nuance" given because there were no Evangelicals demanding it.

The early church leaders spoke the same way. Around AD 177, Athenagoras answered the pagan rumour that Christians killed children. He replied that Christians count "those women who use drugs to bring on abortion" as those who "commit murder, and will have to give an account to God for the abortion."

Around AD 197, Tertullian wrote: "In our case, murder being once for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the foetus in the womb... To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing; nor does it matter whether

you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. That is a man which is going to be one; you have the fruit already in the seed" (Apology 9).

In AD 374, Basil the Great answered the argument about stages of growth and threw it out in one line: "The woman who purposely destroys her unborn child is guilty of murder. With us there is no nice enquiry as to its being formed or unformed." He added that women "who administer drugs to cause abortion, as well as those who take poisons to destroy unborn children, are murderesses" (Letter 188).

Jerome, around AD 384, wrote of those who "take potions, that they may insure barrenness, and thus murder human beings almost before their conception" (Letter 22).

Chrysostom, preaching in Antioch, called it "murder before the birth" (Homily 24 on Romans).[4]

This was not one branch of the church only. When the gospel came back into light at the Reformation, the Reformers held the same line. John Calvin, wrote that "the foetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, and it is almost a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy."[3]

The Westminster Larger Catechism (1647) says that the sixth commandment requires "all careful studies, and lawful endeavours, to preserve the life of ourselves and others." It forbids "whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any" (Q. 135 and 136).[5] Not the life of the born. Not the strong. Not the wanted. The life of any.

And in our own age, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, called the destruction of the child in the womb "nothing but murder," and said that to ask whether we are yet dealing with a human being "is merely to confuse the issue."[6]

These men disagreed on many things. They split over baptism, church government, and the Lord's Supper. Yet, across eighteen centuries, from Syria to Geneva to Berlin, they agreed on this.

The change in our understanding is very recent. It has a date.

In 1920, the bishops of the Anglican Communion met at the Lambeth Conference. They gave "an emphatic warning against the use of unnatural means for the avoidance of conception" (Resolution 68). Ten years before the change of direction, the same body of people condemned contraception.

In 1930, however, the same conference passed Resolution 15 which allowed other methods of contraception where there was "a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence." The vote was 193 to 67.[7] With that vote, the Church of England became the first major Christian body to allow contraception in any case. Sixty-seven bishops voted no. The resolution had limits on it that no one keeps now.

A study in the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (2023) does show that one Methodist body in New York had allowed birth control before the Lambeth Conference. It was the only church body in Europe or North America to do so first.[8] But the Lambeth decision was the moment the wall came fully down. No Christian body of any meaningful size allowed this behaviour before 1930. The Church of England's change opened the door for the rest.

We are the odd ones out in church history. Most of us hold the view that was formalised in 1930, not the view that was authoritatively, boldly, and plainly stated across church denominations and traditions for nearly two millennia.

Part Four: Why You Have Never Heard This

"Contraception" means stopping conception. Until the 1960s, "conception" and "fertilisation" meant the same thing. Then, in America, a change was made on purpose. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists put out a new definition. Its 1965 terminology bulletin said, "Conception is the implantation of a fertilized ovum." Its 1972 update said, "Conception is the implantation of the blastocyst. It is not synonymous with fertilization."

So "conception" and "pregnancy" were now said to begin at implantation, about six to twelve days after fertilisation. No new science was given for the change in language. A later survey in a mainstream obstetrics journal admitted that the profession itself is still divided and that only a minority of doctors actually believe pregnancy begins at implantation.[9]

A comment on the record explains to us why this decision was made. In 1959, at a meeting held by the Planned Parenthood Federation and the Population Council, Dr Bent Boving said the social advantage of a method being seen to prevent conception, rather than to destroy an established pregnancy, "could depend upon something so simple as a prudent habit of speech."[10] A habit of speech then would become the ammunition used to fight the war in favour of contraception.

Now here is the part that matters for us in the UK and it is the heart of why you have never heard this. The same move was made here, not by Parliament, but by the courts. No British law ever defined "pregnancy" or "conception" at all. In the year 2000, the Government was asked in Parliament whether the morning-after pill was an abortifacient. The Health Minister, Yvette Cooper, answered: "Emergency contraception pills work before implantation and so before a pregnancy has been established."[11] In 2002, the High Court settled the matter for the law. Mr Justice Munby ruled that "miscarriage today means the termination of an established pregnancy and there is no established pregnancy prior to implantation. There is no miscarriage if a fertilised egg is lost prior to implantation."[12] The House of Commons Library sums it up plainly: abortion means "the termination of an established pregnancy," where "established" means "the embryo has implanted in the uterus."[13]

Read that again. In UK law, there is no pregnancy until the child implants. So a child who is lost before implantation is not, in law, a lost pregnancy at all. And if there is no pregnancy, there is no abortion, and there is nothing the law counts as a loss. That is why no one warns you about the dangers of abortifacient birth control. The makers write the mechanism in their own paperwork. The law does not class this as the loss of anything, so no one is required to tell the truth about what is happening. The child dies at the door of the room prepared for him and the word for what happened to him has been taken away. "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20).

Even the wording on the packets has been changed to keep it out of sight. The makers of the morning-after pill, Plan B, asked the American regulator, twice, in 2005 and 2010, to remove the line saying the drug could stop a fertilised egg implanting. Twice they were refused. Then in December 2022, a few months after the

Roe v Wade ruling was overturned in America, they asked again, and this time the regulator agreed and took the line out.[14] The wording changes. The child does not.

Here Wilberforce can help us again. He wrote about voluntary ignorance, the ignorance that we choose to keep. He said that when God gives us the means to know something that we ought to know and we don't, "how great must be the guilt, and how awful the punishment of voluntary ignorance."[1] There was a time when none of us could have known. God does not charge a man with what he could not see. But now the facts are known and we bring them to you in order to eliminate all excuses.

Who then is telling us that the practice of abortifacient birth control is safe? We should respect real experts, but we ought to also examine them closely. The body that made the change to the definition, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, also states, as policy, that abortion is essential health care, and it works against limits on abortion.[15] The World Health Organization promotes abortion around the world through its own Abortion Care Guideline.[16] Planned Parenthood both performs abortions and supplies these devices. It stands on both sides of the sale. Even their own leaders have admitted what is at stake.

In 1981, the President of that same College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists told a US Senate hearing that if life were defined in law as beginning at fertilisation, the IUD and low-dose pill "could be considered as abortifacients and therefore declared illegal."[13] He said it while arguing against that definition. Their facts about how these drugs affect sperm may be correct. Their choice about what to call the third effect, however, does not come from a neutral place. The American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynaecologists is made up of licensed doctors who will not prescribe these methods, for exactly these reasons.[17] This is not ordinary people against experts. This is experts against experts. The question worth asking is which of them has something to gain from the answer.

Part Five: What These Methods Can Do

Now to the methods themselves. In the section that follows we will examine different methods of birth control in relation to their stated and actual effects.

Most hormonal contraceptives are designed to accomplish one of three effects. Health bodies and makers describe them openly. The first effect stops the ovary from releasing an egg. The second effect thickens the mucus in the cervix, so sperm cannot reach an egg. The third effect changes the lining of the womb, so that a child who has already been made cannot attach to it and therefore dies. The first two try to stop a life from starting. The third ends a life that has already started. A drug or device that can end a life this way is called an abortifacient.

This is not our personal description. The NHS says the intrauterine device, the IUD or coil, works by "stopping a fertilised egg from implanting."[18] And it is not only the coil. The official product summaries for many hormonal methods, written by the makers and regulators, have listed as one of their effects, for years, changes to the lining of the womb making it less ready for the implantation of a fertilised egg. You can read this in the product information for combined pills and for the hormonal coil.[19] Cleveland Clinic's patient guidance says the same, that these devices thin the lining of the womb to prevent implantation.[20] The third effect is written in the makers' own words, across more than one method of birth control.

Now set aside, for one moment, how often the third effect happens and look at one method where it cannot be argued away.

The copper coil is licensed as emergency contraception for up to five days after sex.

Fertilisation happens within about twenty-four hours of the egg being released. So a coil fitted five days after sex cannot, in that use, be preventing fertilisation. Fertilisation may already have happened.[21] Whatever the coil is doing in that case, it is not stopping sperm from reaching an egg. Only one effect is left to it. In that use, stopping implantation is not a rare side effect. This is the whole basis of how the product works.

And this is not only a pro-life reading. A medical review of how the copper coil works says it "may also be effective after fertilization occurs," and that "although the mechanism is not completely understood, these post-fertilization effects usually take place before the embryo even enters the uterus."[22] The maker's own patent is even plainer. It lists among the coil's effects "damage to or destruction of the early embryo before it reaches the uterus, and prevention of implantation." Then it adds that this "is perceived as an early abortion by some."[23] These are the words of the medical literature and of the makers' own patent.

We must be fair about one method. For the levonorgestrel morning-after pill, the makers removed the implantation wording from the label in 2022, and the current regulators, including the American FDA and the international body FIGO, now say it works mainly by delaying the release of the egg.[24] So we do not rest our case on the morning-after pill. We rest it on the copper coil, whose effect after fertilisation is admitted and unchanged, and on the plain fact that other methods' own product information still lists an effect on the lining of the womb.

Even so, the wider studies are honestly divided. A 2016 review in *The Linacre Quarterly* looked at levonorgestrel, the drug in Plan B and in hormonal coils. It found that the drug cannot change how sperm work at the doses used in the body, and that it has only a limited power to stop ovulation, enough to explain less than 15% of the pregnancies it prevents. So the authors concluded that a purely pre-fertilisation effect is much less likely than people had assumed.[25] We should say plainly that the authors are pro-life doctors, and that other researchers read the same kind of data and reach the opposite view. We cite it because the ovulation numbers it uses come from mainstream studies, not because the matter is closed. But if stopping ovulation cannot explain most of what the drug does, then something else is doing the work.

You will be told there is no evidence that these drugs stop implantation. Understand what that sentence really means. No study can follow a tiny embryo through to implantation, or to its loss, inside a living woman and prove the cause. The event cannot be seen. A child who never implants leaves no sign. There is no symptom, no test result, no missed period, nothing to find. So "no evidence of an effect after fertilisation" does not mean "we looked and found none." It means "we have no tool that can see it either way." To treat something we cannot measure as something we have disproved is not science. And it is being handed to your church members as comfort.

Notice, too, what this does to the reassuring numbers. The very low failure rate of these methods only counts pregnancies that are seen. If the third effect works as designed, it would produce exactly that: a failure rate near zero, with the losses happening silently and uncounted. The low number fits the thing we fear just as well as it fits safety.

Now the last excuse, the one that always comes. It was the same one that Wesley met when he objected to slavery. His opponents said the trade might not be quite right, but it was necessary, and there was no other way. Wesley refused it. He wrote: "I deny that villany is ever necessary. It is impossible that it should ever be necessary, for any reasonable creature to violate all the laws of justice, mercy and truth."[26] We do not call anyone here a villain. Almost everyone who uses these methods does so in complete ignorance. We borrow only Wesley's logic. The argument does not need the third effect to happen often, or even in a given case. It only needs the effect to be possible. The licence itself grants that it is. Where a life may be at stake, and there is no way even to know, doubt should make us stop, not carry on. A man who fires a gun into a bush, not knowing if a person is in it, is not excused by saying he did not know.

Part Six: Our Nation and the Silence of the Church

We want you to know that this is not a faraway matter. Our nation is steeped in the blood of the innocent, but this bloodshed is also present in the church. And the church has mostly stayed quiet while it happened.

The Department of Health and Social Care records that in 2022 there were 251,377 abortions for women living in England and Wales. That was the highest number since the Abortion Act began. The next year it broke the record again: 277,970 abortions in 2023, a rise of 11% in a single year. More than seven in ten were done at home, with pills sent out by post.[27] The numbers rise year after year.

Since the Abortion Act came into force, the best estimate is that more than 11 million lives have been ended by abortion in Great Britain. By the Act's anniversary in April 2026, the figure was put at about 11,105,671. That last count is an estimate, not an official total, because it takes the 2023 rate and carries it forward to fill in the most recent months.[28] Eleven million is more people than live in London. And since the new law of April 2026, at more than 20,000 a month, tens of thousands more have been added that no yearly report has yet counted.

Beneath these numbers lies a loss that no register records and no one can count. If the third effect of these contraceptives ends lives, as the makers' own words confirm, then those lives are lost silently, before any test could see them. About one in three women of childbearing age in the UK use a hormonal method or a coil.[29] Across millions of women, over many years, even a small chance would mean a great many children. We cannot count them. We will never have their number. But God has it.

This is the thing we must not lose. These are not just numbers. Each one was a whole human being. Each one bore the image of God. Each one was known and loved by God before he was formed. "Your eyes saw my unformed substance" (Psalm 139:16). "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5).

Every figure in this section is a person the Lord knew by name.

Someone will say: but it is legal now. Wesley met that wall too and did not slow down at it.

> *Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still.*
>
> JOHN WESLEY, THOUGHTS UPON SLAVERY (1774)[26]

Can a law, he asked, a human law, change what a thing really is? Can it turn darkness into light, or evil into good? It cannot.

In June 2025, the House of Commons voted 379 to 137 to remove abortion by a woman for her own pregnancy from the criminal law, and that change became law in the Crime and Policing Act 2026.[30] A vote in Parliament can move the line of what is punished. It cannot move the line of what is true. As a nation, we have "called evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20).

We were promised that easier access to contraception would bring abortion down. It did not. In England and Wales, contraception is free. Abortion numbers have gone up, not down. Research from the Guttmacher Institute, a group started by a former president of Planned Parenthood, found that about half of the women seeking an abortion had been using a contraceptive method in the month they conceived.[31] Contraception did not solve the crisis. It helped build a culture where sex is cut off from any care for the children who may come.

Now hear how God speaks to a people like this. Hear that He speaks first to the worshippers, not to the pagans outside.

> *When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.*
>
> ISAIAH 1:15

That is not aimed at a foreign army. It is aimed at the temple crowd. It is aimed at people keeping the feasts and lifting up their hands to pray. This is the part that should search us most. A church with innocent blood on its own hands, or on the hands of its members, cannot be the clean instrument God uses to bring revival and to call a nation back. Judgment and revival both begin at the house of God (1 Peter 4:17).

The pattern in Scripture is clear. When Hezekiah became king, his first act was not to reform the nation. It was to cleanse the temple. He opened its doors and cleaned it out before any national change began (2 Chronicles 29). Only then did he go and tear down the idols across the land. Josiah did the same. He found the Book of the Law, renewed the covenant, and cleaned the temple, before he took that cleansing out to the rest of Judah (2 Kings 22 to 23). Both kings show the same order. The nation was reformed after God's house was reformed. If we want God to heal our land, we must first let Him cleanse His church (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Part Seven: The Church Must Act, Not Only Agree

Now we come to you who lead God's flock. We come with deep respect for the weight you carry. We could appeal to you on the basis of what is required. We would rather appeal on the basis of what is fitting for a man who watches over souls.

At the end of his work, Paul could say, "I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26 to 27). He could say that only because he had held nothing back. God calls the prophet a watchman. The watchman is not answerable for the result. He is answerable to sound the alarm. "If you warn the wicked... you will have delivered your soul" (Ezekiel 3:18 to 19). If the

watchmen stay silent while this goes on, that silence is not neutral before God. But if they give a faithful warning, they have done their duty, whether people listen or not. This weight falls hardest on those who teach because teachers "will incur a stricter judgment" (James 3:1). We do not say this to load you with fear. We say it to honour the weight of your calling, and to promise you that God holds up the shepherd who walks faithfully through hard things.

We will not pretend the cost is nothing. This is where every reformer's courage is tested. Wilberforce fought for about twenty years before the slave trade was banned and for forty-six before slavery itself was abolished, only days before he died. Wesley wrote against a legal and profitable trade and was hated for it. And in the worst years of the last century, a few young German Christians, the students of the White Rose, watched their nation carried into mass killing. They refused the one thing their neighbours were all doing, which was to stay quiet. They wrote, "We will not be silent. We are your bad conscience."[32] They were put to death for those words. We do not compare our safe churches to their danger. We do not compare one evil to another. We borrow only their refusal to stay silent. A people is judged not only for what it does, but for what it agrees to allow in silence. So we must ask ourselves their question. We have seen. Will we look away, or will we speak?

Let us make this plain with a picture. Suppose a school on our own street came under attack and children inside were being killed. We would not treat it as a sad item on the news. We would not mention it once from the pulpit and move on. We would not pray about it quietly in our home groups and leave it there. We would run to the school. We would put ourselves between the attacker and the children. Many of us would lay down our own lives to save them, and we would be right to. The children in this letter are under attack on our street too. They are smaller and harder to see, but they are just as real, and the call to protect them is at least as strong.

The Lord Jesus will not take warm words in the place of help. He told of a man left half dead by the road. A priest saw him and passed by on the other side. A Levite saw him and passed by. Only the Samaritan stopped, bound his wounds, carried him, and paid for his care (Luke 10:30 to 35). Jesus said, "You go, and do likewise." He warned that on the last day He will say to some, "I was hungry and you gave me no food... I was naked and you did not clothe me" (Matthew 25:42 to 43), and that whatever we did, or failed to do, for the least of these, we did, or failed to do, for Him. And James asks what good it is to say to a brother in need, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," and yet give him nothing his body needs (James 2:15 to 16). That kind of faith, he says, is dead. Prayer is not the whole of our duty here. It is the beginning of it. We must also act.

So we ask you for six things. We have put them in order on purpose.

First, prepare resources on this issue before you preach. Have gentle, private, gospel-centred help ready, women for women and men for men, before this is ever taught from the pulpit, and not after. We put this first because it answers the greatest fear. No shepherd should name this wound in public before he has made a place to bring it in private.

Second, say it plainly in writing. State in your statement of faith, or your membership materials, that human life begins at fertilisation. Say that this means you stand against abortion, against euthanasia, and against

abortifacient contraceptives. Ground it in the truth that every person bears God's image, whatever their age, ability, or situation.

Third, explain the methods of abortifacient drugs and their effects. Most of your members simply do not know. Teach them, in plain words and without shame, what these drugs are built to do.

Fourth, give a better vision. Offer couples real guidance on family planning that honours life. Help them receive children as a gift from God and not as a danger to be removed.

Fifth, pray. Make this part of your praying. Pray for broken hearts. Pray for courage in your leaders. Pray for repentance where there has been silence, or a share in this. Pray for a revival that would make abortion unthinkable among a people made new by the gospel.

Sixth, disciple the young. Teach the next generation God's plan for life and family, so that those growing up in your churches never have to be told this in their forties, the way we were.

One word about church discipline because careful men will be thinking of it. If a member is taught this clearly and patiently and still chooses to keep on, then in time this becomes a matter for normal church discipline, like any known and unrepented sin (Matthew 18:15 to 17; Galatians 6:1). When the slave trade was being ended, faithful churches did in time make it a matter of membership, but only after years of patient teaching, not before. We mention this only to be complete. And we say plainly: this is not where the church stands now. Almost everyone using these methods today is doing so in complete ignorance, and we were among them until lately. The first and greatest need is simply that they be told.

Part Eight: Is This a Gospel Issue?

Some brother will grant every fact, and still say: this is not a gospel issue and the pulpit is for the gospel.

You are right that the sanctity of life is not the gospel itself. The gospel is that Christ died for our sins and rose again, and that we are saved by grace through faith alone. We would never have you preach the sanctity of life in the place of Christ crucified. But think about what the gospel calls people to do. It calls them to repent and believe (Mark 1:15). To repent means to turn from sin. And to turn from sin, a person first has to know what sin is. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The Great Commission is to make disciples, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded" (Matthew 28:20). How can a person repent of a thing no one has told him is sin? How can the church be a place of healing if it will not name the wound?

Here Wilberforce named the trick we must guard against. He watched respectable Christians take the hard commands of Scripture and explain them away, until, in his words, "the pure but strong morality of the word of God is explained away, and its too rigid canons are softened down."[1] "This is not a gospel issue" can be that very move at work. It can be a way to hold a hard truth at arm's length, while sounding more gospel-minded than those who name it. But silence here does not protect our people from the gospel's demand. It keeps from them the very cleansing that Christ died to give. Silence is not being gospel-centred. It is failing to trust the gospel with a hard truth.

There is a simpler way to say it. The second great command is to love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:31). Who is a smaller neighbour, or a nearer one, than the child made inside a family in your own church? He cannot ask for the love he is owed. He cannot lift a hand, or raise his voice, or call for help. This is exactly the neighbour Scripture presses on us hardest: "Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter" (Proverbs 24:11). It presses him on us because he is exactly the neighbour a comfortable conscience forgets. To care for him is not a special ministry for people with a special burden. It is plain obedience to a plain command.

There is one more fear to name, because it is the truest one. What if I teach this and lose standing? What if I lose members, or my job? Wilberforce saw this fear too. He said the love of human praise is a thing that "winds its way in secret," and can even work its way into "his very religion." The only cure is to set against the fear of man "that honour which cometh from God," until the smaller voices fade. Jesus said it plainly: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39). We will each give an account to Christ. It is better to explain to Him a church we lovingly warned than a silence we kept for comfort.

Part Nine: A Call to Turn Back

Now we come to the most important part. It is not information. It is repentance, and the grace that makes repentance safe.

Hear the whole of the passage we began in Part Six. God does not leave His people with blood on their hands and no way home. After "your hands are full of blood," He does not say: so despair. He says this:

> *Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression.*
>
> ISAIAH 1:16 TO 17

That is the shape of it, and it is full of hope. Cease and learn. Turn from the wrong and take up the right. When we see what has happened, we should feel sorrow. That is right, not wrong. But there are two kinds of sorrow, and Paul sets them side by side: "godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death" (2 Corinthians 7:10). Worldly sorrow sinks into despair and does nothing. Godly sorrow drives us to God, and then out to act. So our sorrow must not fall into despair, because Christ is ready to forgive. And it must not sit still, because Christ calls us to change. Let it do its proper work. Let it turn us and move us. This is repentance, which God commands of His whole church, and which He meets with cleansing. For the church that will look at this honestly and turn, there is no condemnation waiting. There is only a Father who has been waiting to wash you clean.

So, we set the grace down once more, plainly, and we will not take it back. The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Paul had approved the killing of the innocent, and he was shown mercy as the worst of sinners, so that Christ could show His perfect patience as an example to all who would believe (1 Timothy 1:13 to 16). And to the woman everyone had condemned, including herself, the Lord said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:11). The church should be the one place on earth

where a person sees the full truth about sin and finds the full healing of Christ. Many who once grieved most over this have become, once they knew that healing, the strongest defenders of life.

Brothers, we know this is heavy. It touches tender and private ground. It will take courage, wisdom, and the help of the Holy Spirit. But we do not write to a beaten church. We write to men in whom the risen Christ lives, who have His Spirit, His Word, and His promises. The same God who knit each child together in the womb, who gave His own Son to die on a cross and raised Him again, is more than able to make His church holy, brave, and clean. Do not bow to the creed of this age, whose motto is "my body, my choice." Ours is "His temple, His choice," for we were bought with a price and are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:19 to 20).

We do not write as men who have arrived. We write as fellow travellers who want to be faithful, and who know our own need of grace and wisdom. We came to this late ourselves. We would gladly help in any way we can, by prayer, by resources, or by putting you in touch with people who can teach these things. We would welcome the chance to meet with you.

We ask you to do only this. Look honestly at what these pages say. Test it against Scripture, and against the makers' own words. Repent where you need to, trusting that the God who begins a good work will finish it (Philippians 1:6). Then lead your people into the light you have found. Wesley ended his own appeal not with a threat, but with a prayer, that God would set the captives free. In that spirit, and much more in the Spirit of Christ, may the Lord give us all wisdom, courage, and love. May the church of Christ in this land be found faithful, with clean hands and a pure heart, ready in God's hand for the revival we long to see.

Yours sincerely, in the service of Christ and for the glory of His name,

The undersigned, and those who share this letter with their churches

Read online, with sources linked: contraceptionletter.church

A note on sources. Every claim of fact in this letter is sourced to a public reference above. The figures that can change over time, the UK abortion numbers and the recent change in the law, were checked again against the most recent official releases before writing, and not taken from memory. Where a total is an estimate rather than an official count, we have said so plainly. The quotations from Wesley, Wilberforce, the White Rose, and the early church are given in their own words from public-domain texts. We use them to show a long line of costly Christian witness against evils that were legal and respectable in their day, not to say that the crimes of different ages are the same. We have also been careful to state where the evidence has moved against part of the popular case, as with the levonorgestrel morning-after pill, and to rest our argument on what is admitted and unchanged. We would rather make a smaller case that holds up than a larger one that does not, and we ask the same care of anyone who disputes what remains.

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