

In Defense of Others

○○○



**A Biblical Analysis and Apologetic on the
Use of Force to Save Human Life**

**by
Cathy Ramey**

LOGO

**Advocates For Life Publications
Portland, Oregon**

Copyright 1995
by Cathy Ramey

All rights reserved
Published January 1995
First edition

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles.

Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

New International Version, Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Advocates For Life Publications
P.O. Box 13656 • Portland, Oregon 97213

Printed in the United States of America

Preface

Atheist, agnostic, pagan, or priest, everyone has a God; everyone has an ultimate authority upon which they base their decisions and filter their view of the world.

For some, their ultimate authority is "the court" or "the law of the land." From these people, it is understandable that we often hear a strong condemnation against those who have acted outside the law, even for a perceived good. Allegiance to their god demands that they acknowledge whatever limits the law places upon the individual, even in an evil age.

In recent history they are represented best by those "good Germans" who might have, but would not assist in saving Jews during the holocaust of the 1930s and 1940s, and further, felt an obligation to condemn those who acted to spare Jewish lives. The *law of the land* bound them and demanded that they turn a blind eye to their neighbors being rounded up and murdered in the prison camps of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Dachau and other perfectly "legal" facilities established by the governing authorities.

Though often considering themselves to be "Christian," they are of the sort whose position in the future might allow them to justify receiving "the mark of the beast" (Rev 13:2,17) because that too will be ordered by law. The God of the Bible, in the last analysis, is not their ultimate authority.

But for the mature Christian, while obligated to recognize and honor legitimate authority, there is One who is our **Ultimate Authority**. When difficult issues arise, even issues which conflict with civil and criminal law, maturity in Christ compels us to seek answers as to right and wrong, and make moral pronouncement based upon *God's Law* and His direction as seen through the pages of Scripture.

So, while the world may embrace an action (divorce, drunkenness, etc.) the Christian is compelled to avoid and reject such

things. While the world may define an act as legitimate (homosexuality, fornication, abortion, etc.) the Christian cannot.

In examining the issue of abortion and the conduct of those who have acted to save children outside the constraints of law, it is necessary first to define our *Ultimate Authority* and then to clearly research what we can of His divine disposition on the matter.

Though we may recognize the cultural “legality” of abortion and the presumed *illegality* of the use of force to stop them from being committed, God's law requires that we acknowledge and address the issue of morality and His Law. We do this in light of the fact that our natural worldview is very different than His own (Isa 55:9). Our view of law must be scrutinized within the order of Scripture and under that constraint, our conclusions about what is *right* and what is *wrong* may, in the end, be very different from the conclusions reached by those who serve another god.

In Defense of Others

There is an inconsistency reflected in the Christian and prolife community's response every time any type of forceful defense has been made to save those babies threatened by abortion. Personal experiences in the prolife realm have informed me that there are private perspectives in which individuals admit honestly to themselves and close others that they have no strong feelings of revulsion over the idea of an abortion establishment engulfed in flames. Yet, publicly there are thunderous proclamations, made by these same individuals, to condemn the actions of one who would light a match in defense of innocent human life.

To the interested onlooker, there arises an important question. "If the Unborn¹ are really being 'murdered' by these perpetrators of abortion, and if the Unborn are 'fully human' — as those in the Christian camp claim — then why is there this great confusion over the rightness or wrongness of using force in their defense?"

Certainly we allow great latitude in the use of violence or force for self-defense and the defense of other innocent *Born* persons at risk from an unjust aggressor, so why not for the Unborn?²

Perhaps it is Pensacola Florida's destiny to be the locus of this debate. Unquestionably, she has a history of unique and

¹ Unborn is capitalized in the same way that Black, Jewish, Hispanic, and Christian are capitalized, since it represents an identifiable class of people. The adjective of Born may also at times be capitalized when intended to represent the broad class of people who have survived the zygotic through gestational periods of growth.

² "Unjust Aggressor" refers to any action taken to harm another in violation of God's Divine order.

inflamed opposition to abortion that has been without parallel in any other single American city.

Pensacola, it has been said, may one day be the Selma, Alabama of the Abortion Abolitionist Movement.

On June 24, 1984, she had her first taste of truly active intervention and protest against abortion. A bomb exploded at the *Ladies Center*, one of the city's three abortion facilities.

On Christmas day, 1984 two of the city's abortion facilities burst into flames leaving one facility with several thousand dollars in damage and the other burned nearly to the ground. "*Happy Birthday, Jesus!*" the bombers proclaimed. Years of debate over abortion, with right-to-lifers claiming that abortion is the murder of an Unborn child, had built up to that moment.

The subsequent trials of four young Christians made national news and is still a subject of conversation decades later. While visiting Florida I learned that under the murmur of condemnation there is a sense of grudging respect for those young bombers. Pastors and prolife leaders told me of the events, often smiling at the remembrance of a disabled abortion facility.

At the same time several of them stated that I should not make public their *personal* views in which they could not condemn the bombers. The young abortion industry Abolitionists might be said to have done something that others applaud as just, *but only in secret*. Such double-mindedness is not in keeping with truth.

Pensacola has also been witness to less "volatile" or "violent" uses of force. In March of 1986, a small woman by the name of Joan Andrews participated in an effort to blockade the smooth functioning of the *Ladies Center* abortion facility. Andrews joined five others in a "treatment room"³ sit-in that brought police rushing to the rescue — to save a facility whose primary purpose was to take the lives of innocent Unborn infants.

³ Just as Germany sought euphemisms to cover the killing of innocent people, so too do those participating in medical-killing today. The "treatment" results in death for the Unborn child in these death camps.

Police arrested the would-be rescuers and charged Andrews in particular with trespassing with the intent to damage property. She stubbornly held on to the cord of a suction aspiration machine used to kill Unborn babies in the first trimester. According to testimony, she sought to disable the machine for the day by freeing the cord from its attachment at the base. Her effort was unsuccessful. She was also charged with assault for allegedly bumping against a facility staffer on her way into the "treatment room" as the sit-in began.

After being found "guilty as charged" on all counts, Joan Andrews was sentenced to five long years in a state institution for her crimes against the laws of men. She served approximately two and a half years, most of that in solitary confinement before being released. But prior to her release, her imprisonment focused the attention of much of the prolife movement upon the quiet military retirement town of Pensacola.

"Shots Fired!"

On March 10, 1993, Pensacola and her battle with abortion hit the news again; this time internationally as headlines blared that an abortionist was dead; shot three times by a man associated with the "right-to-life" movement.

Only the day before firing bullets into his back, Michael Griffin had stood among the Pentecostal congregation of his local church to pray for the soul of abortionist David Gunn.

A day later Griffin, a 31-year-old chemical plant worker, was observed at the scene of the shooting even as onlookers wondered whether they had just heard the unlikely sound of a gun going off or perhaps, instead, a car simply backfiring several times.

Pickers watched as Michael Griffin purposefully walked from the rear of the abortion facility to the front. Not pausing to acknowledge those on the sidewalk, eyewitnesses testified at his trial that he approached a police officer that had been called to monitor the group that was demonstrating. Tapping on the officer's shoulder, Griffin requested an ambulance for the abortionist who he claimed he had just shot at the back of the building.

An Escambia County Jail officer reported that in an interview with his wife less than 48 hours after his arrest, she overheard Michael Griffin say, "I killed him because of my beliefs and convictions, and if I spend the rest of my life in jail it will be worth it to save one baby." A letter to a friend, handwritten and signed by Griffin from the jail, seems to be an open acknowledgment of the act. Again, there is the statement that the consequences would be bearable if only one baby survives being killed by an abortionist.

A Movement Divided

The recoil of Griffin's gun was felt far and wide. With the force of a bullet the prolife movement was suddenly pulled apart in a debate over the morality of doing harm to an abortionist in order to save the life of an innocent child. Newspapers carried heated commentaries from people who saw lethal force as the natural conclusion to "anti-abortion rhetoric" in which doctors were frequently called "murderers" and photos of small dismembered bodies were paraded around on picket signs outside of abortion facilities.

Added to the entire secular debate there were indignant proclamations supplied by anti-abortion luminaries who espoused a Seamless Garment philosophy. In their opinion, all life — *even guilty life* — was to be an object of protection by the prolife movement establishment. Surprising to me, some of those who spoke loudest to condemn Michael Griffin were leaders who had joked privately about the possibility of a violent demise of an abortionist or the destruction of an abortion facility. Prior to the act, one might have assumed they would welcome such exceptional forms of rescue for the Unborn.

To the horror of some in the Abortion Abolitionists movement—not overly appalled at the action taken by Michael Griffin—there were even those who suggested that a committed prolifer would serve the movement best by placing his own body in the path of a bullet intended for an abortionist. In a display of what Bonhoeffer might refer to as *contemptible*

pietism,⁴ these individuals appeared to have concluded that it was better for innocent Unborn babies to continue dying, than that the anti-abortion movement should bear the stigma of having a body count of its own.

To many pro-abortionists, the condemnation of Griffin by proliferators of stature was a victory on the part of the abortion lobby. It was the pinch of incense necessary to truly validate the legitimacy of abortion. By saying that Michael Griffin had "sinned," Christians were implying that the abortionist (even as a murderer of Unborn children) had a higher degree of value to his *born* life than did a developing *in utero* child.

But others objected to the strong condemnation of Griffin and his act to save "even one baby." Many Abortion Abolitionists eventually signed on to a statement in his defense. The *Declaration*, drawn up by a Pensacola Presbyterian minister, would hammer home the message of the prolife movement, ***that children in the womb are fully human and deserving of the same right to life —and protection —that is afforded the born.*** Ultimately, the statement asked for the acquittal of Michael Griffin.⁵

Less than six months later the furor over *force* to stop abortionists had reached a standstill. Anti-abortion movement leaders had come to a polite and quiet compromise. There were those who argued that the shooting was morally justifiable and those who publicly condemned it, but any real commitment to a position was postponed. After all, it was the only *abortionist* casualty in over twenty years of legal abortion. Even those who

⁴ Bonhoeffer rejected the personal pietism of Barth; a pietism which displayed greater interest in polishing one's soul for the appearance of holiness, over acting as a real person of faith who is willing to risk himself for God and his neighbor. "*It is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith... One must abandon any attempt to make something of oneself.... In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God.*" [Bonhoeffer, E Metaxas, a letter to Eberhard Bethge]

⁵ "We the undersigned, declare the justice of taking all godly action necessary to defend innocent human life, including the use of force. We proclaim that whatever force is legitimate to defend the life of a born child is legitimate to defend the life of an Unborn child.

"We assert that if Michael Griffin did in fact kill David Gunn, his use of lethal force was justifiable provided it was carried out for the purpose of defending the lives of Unborn children. Therefore, he ought to be acquitted of the charges against him."

commended him for forcefully protecting Unborn children saw Michael Griffin as an aberration in the right-to-life movement.

On August 19, 1993, just when it appeared that the anti-abortion movement might resume picketing and protesting as usual, a Southern Oregon woman traveled all the way to Wichita, Kansas to shoot notorious third-trimester abortionist George Tiller. Rachele ("Shelley") Shannon fired five shots through the window of a sport-utility vehicle to wound Tiller in both arms. After the shooting she ran from the scene but was arrested while dutifully returning her rental car. Meanwhile, Tiller returned to killing babies the very next day.

On July 29, 1994, just under a year after Shelley Shannon wounded George Tiller, ordained Presbyterian minister Paul Hill — author of the Declaration endorsing Griffin's acquittal and a similar statement on Shelley Shannon's behalf — let buckshot fly, *again in Pensacola*, into the bodies of John Britton and James Barrett. Britton was an abortionist about to "go to work," and Barrett was his gun-toting bodyguard.

Barrett's wife, June, was wounded in one of her arms by the first round of shotgun fire. Mrs. Barrett, now bleeding, crouched down to the floor of the pick-up truck in which they were riding. At the same time she heard abortionist Britton asking for the whereabouts of a gun. Only seconds later he too was slain in a second round of shotgun fire.

In the wake of these three events,⁶ Christians are called to critically examine the use of force—potentially lethal force—to

⁶ Another incident outside the confines of the United States occurred on Tuesday, November 8, 1994 when Canadian abortionist Garson Romalis was shot by an unknown assailant. It was assumed to be an anti-abortionist who wounded him in an effort to keep the killer of *in utero* children away from his "work."

December 30, 1994, John Salvi shot a abortion facility worker, Shannon Lowney in the neck, killing her and wounding three others in a waiting area. Salvi was convicted of murder and allegedly hanged himself while in jail under suicide watch.

Between 1996 and 2003 another Abolitionist, Eric Rudolph, carried out bombings which he justified by reference to the U.S. government's culpability in the murder of Unborn children by abortionists.

October 23, 1998 saw the death of Barnett Slepian, a New York abortionist who had just returned from synagogue services with his wife and three sons. Abortion Abolitionist James Kopp used his military sniper-skills to end Slepian's career and his life. He was later arrested and tried in 2003, having alluded law enforcement for nearly five years.

stop acts of abortion. In light of Scriptural injunctives such as "*Thou shalt not kill*," (Exod. 20:13) how is it that any Christian could accord these acts of violence merit as "righteous," and "Godly?" By saying that Michael Griffin, Shelley Shannon, and Paul Hill were justified in their actions, are we in reality at risk of condoning murder?

An Aside on Violence

That question will be answered but first there is need to establish a fundamental biblical perspective on the terms used to describe the shootings, particularly the word "violence."

Words are morally neutral, i.e., they do not intrinsically describe a moral good or a moral evil. The word *violence* describes a radical change in order, one state of being disrupted and/or replaced suddenly with another.

The explosion of a volcano is a form of violence since the order of plant and animal life and mountain boundaries are radically changed. But while violent, the volcanic eruption itself is not a willful evil (Exo 19:18).

When police shoot and kill a fleeing suspect, that too is violence, yet God and society allow and even require that some forms of violence are to be tolerated and not defined as morally wrong (Gen 9:6; Exo 21:16). When a dam is built it corrupts the flow of water to allow that lands are not flooded every year during the rainy season. Such an obstruction does violence to the rivers' natural flow, but in most cases the dam is intended to bring about a good for the people and animals in the given area.

Since Scripture first establishes a thorough foundation for God's order and then demonstrates man's violation of that order, "violence" is largely connected in Scripture with the idea of a moral wrong. But a more thorough examination makes it certain that the word alone does not define a moral wrong in every case.

Then May 31, 2009, Abolitionist Scott Roeder shot and killed abortionist George Tiller at his church in Wichita Kansas.

In addition to those actions, there are fires, bombings and other forceful efforts aimed at ultimately protecting the Unborn.

Lamentations 2:6 speaks of the Lord himself as one who has *done violence to His temple* (see Jer 7:4, 14-15). And when biblical naysayers reject God or the Old Testament, they often protest that He was or is “so violent.” They are right in that He continually insists upon preserving something of His own order, disrupting the manmade order. Man’s rebellion will always mean the unequal exercise of power on God’s part. Light and dark cannot peacefully coexist. The end of earth’s history is all about God’s decision to act *violently* to restore an ideal order of His own choosing.

Before arriving at a decision of moral *rightness* or *wrongness*, it is essential to check our response to emotionally charged words. In the case of “violence,” the question that must be raised is not “How does this make me feel,” but “*What order is being upheld or destroyed?*” Are abortionists morally innocent or guilty under God’s order? Does His order make an exception for the sort of killing they are engaged in?

Self-defense/defense of others

Returning now to the sixth commandment injunction against killing, it is imperative to understand the defensive nature of the actions taken by Griffin, Shannon and Hill. A ***defensive action*** is one aimed at *preventing* a wrong which is going to be committed rather than punishing for a wrong already done.

There are no biblical exceptions to justify murder of the Unborn. All three abortionists (David Gunn, George Tiller, and John Britton) are known murderers in the biblical sense, and all three were scheduled to kill again and again. They had advertised heavily, committed finances to enable their killing through use of facilities and staff, and they were known for killing habitually. The actions of the shooters, I argue, amounted to nothing more than providing a defense for innocent peoples — the Unborn — who were going to be killed by an unjust aggressor.

The temptation is to see this as a more complex issue; an act of hatred, revolution, vengeance, judicial punishment (which the mother would rightfully be accorded also), etc., when, in fact, it is incredibly simple. *There were children who were*

going to be killed, and someone came to their defense to try and prevent their deaths.

Immediately after the shooting of David Gunn in March of 1993, pastors and prolife leaders were asked to pronounce a verdict upon the shooter. While all of the courts were restrained in convicting Griffin until after a trial of sorts was held, the weight of an *immediate decision* as to the rightness or wrongness of the deed was foisted upon the Church.

It can be argued that the media and abortion industry, in demanding immediate accountability from the Church, knew their foe. The Church, after failing for two decades and more to mount a significant defense for the lives of Unborn children, was largely unprepared. She who had not seen the need for great arousal on behalf of the completely innocent *Unborn* was even more reluctant to rise up on behalf of anyone who had the "death by gunshot wound" of a *Born* person accounted to him.

Put on the spot, without sincere biblical review, the Church, by and large, pronounced Michael Griffin was "Guilty."

Guilty of what? Guilty of murder.

Universally, news stories carried a condemnation of the man that included the faint seasoning of Scripture. "The Bible says, 'Thou shalt not kill,'" Christians were quoted as saying. "Murdering an abortionist is wrong," we were told, "because we're to love our enemies" and "turn the other cheek."

"Thou shalt not kill"

The word "kill" (*ratsach*) in the Sixth Commandment is one of seven Hebrew words in the Old Testament (OT) used to describe the taking of life in one way or another. It is important to define the specific meaning of *this* word to determine if *this* Law was actually violated by Griffin, Shannon and Hill.

Ratsach appears 47 times in the OT. It is never used in the context of legitimate war, or in the case of self-defense (Exod. 22:2), accidental killing (Deut. 19:5), or in the execution of a person who has forfeited his life by "shedding man's blood" (Gen. 9:6). It is also not used in the text describing how Moses slew the Egyptian taskmaster (Exod. 2:12). All of these Scriptures use a different word not found in the Sixth

Commandment. And clearly Scripture supports certain kinds of killing as viscerally regrettable but right nevertheless. In fact, there are times in Scripture when God commanded the killing of individuals even outside the context of war (Exod. 21:12-17,29; Lev. 20:1-5; Deut. 17:2-7; 2 Kings 9:6-10).

The word *ratsach* does refer to killing for revenge (Num. 35:27, 30) though there was given a specific criminal dispensation for the *next of kin* who was officially recognized as an "*avenger of blood*." In general though, it was not the right of just anyone to exact *punishment* upon another individual.⁷

Ratsach also refers to the premeditated killing of an innocent person (II Kings 6:32), and it should be noted that even those who are endowed with the authority to govern are not allowed to violate the prohibition against taking the life of an *innocent* person. When the king's own messenger would have taken the life of Elisha the prophet, this man of God exhorted his companions to bar the door against his would-be killer (cite above).

In fact, though the actual deed was to be done by the messenger, it was King Joram who Elisha designated to be *ratsach* when he said, "Don't you see how this murderer [King Joram] is sending someone to cut off my head?" Elisha's obligation to submit to the king in this event was negated when the king changed hats from a righteous ruler to a murderous and immoral fool.

⁷ By way of distinction we will use another example of "violence" out of the annals of contemporary reactions to abortion. Abortion has spawned a *use of force* on the international front as well.

China, with its one-child policy, mandated that the wife of a young army officer undergo an abortion when found to be pregnant with the couple's second child. She surrendered to the government-enforced law to undergo the unnatural birth of her baby by dismemberment; she died as well. On September 20, 1994, Chinese army Lieutenant Tian Mingjian reacted to his wife's forced abortion by going on a rampage that left 14 dead and 80 injured.

By biblical standards, the actions of Tian Mingjian may constitute murder (*ratsach*). There is no indication that he was motivated by anything more than vengeance for a wrong done in the past. His wife and child were beyond his ability to intervene, and there is no indication that those who were shot or injured had any direct connection to the murder of his wife and child.

In the case of abortion, it might well be argued that it is the mother seeking to abort her child who qualifies as “murderer,” with the abortionist equally guilty by committing the act.

Therefore, when the Word says, "It is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19), there is a direct connection and precaution aimed at both individuals *and governors* against usurping the role of God that relates directly to this Sixth Commandment.

Only two verses later there is a designation as to whom God has delegated authority to in order to avenge wrongs done in the past (Rom. 13:1). The government then, and not the individual, has the right to *punish* for past offenses. But even here, *government, to maintain its legitimacy* (Prov. 16:12), *is entrusted to act justly by punishing those who are wicked and rewarding the righteous*. The specific standards to determine who is wicked and who is righteous is clearly articulated throughout Scripture.

Likewise, there is a similar pattern in Scripture that condemns those, *like abortionists*, who "lie in wait for someone's blood" (Prov. 1:11), and it is specified that "The Lord hates...hands that shed *innocent* blood" (Prov. 6:17).⁸ They are, in fact, the very ones that a righteous and legitimate ruler would seek to punish.

Justifiable force?

To determine that Michael Griffin, Shelley Shannon, and Paul Hill have violated or sought to violate the Sixth Commandment, we must examine two issues; 1) Did they usurp the government's authority by attempting to *punish* for killings (*ratsach*) done by these abortionists in the past, or were they engaged in *preventing* the deaths of children yet to be killed? And 2) do abortionists Gunn, Tiller, and Britton qualify as "innocent blood" in the biblical sense within the context of these shootings?

Punishment or prevention?

⁸ The “hands” are used idiomatically, called a *Synecdoche*, in ancient Hebrew to represent *the entire person*.

The answer to the first question lies ultimately with Griffin, Shannon, Hill, and God, but we are able to make some determinations based on the facts surrounding the events.



Michael Griffin shot an abortionist who was going in to begin the day's schedule of killings. There were already twelve children (*in utero*) inside who were to be killed. David Gunn had rejected all of the usual appeals on the sidewalk, and was only feet away from entering a locked facility. It can be argued that no further effective appeal was possible on behalf of *those* dozen children scheduled to die by his hand on March 10.

As we have indicated already, Griffin clearly implied that his intention was to save children who were at risk of being killed by the abortionist. Lucid and convincing evidence of this motive is seen in the letter to his friend John Burt and in the court testimony surrounding the conversation he had with his wife soon after his arrest.

Anger and thoughts of revenge for children that had been killed the day before or the week before did not drive him to destroy David Gunn. It was simply a desire to see at least one innocent child survive an intended act of murder. The act is cleverly called "abortion" to provide a sense of justification as an act of *medical-killing*, as if medical murder is ever justified in Scripture, which it clearly is not.

While there are those who would argue that Griffin's gun would have been more righteously aimed at the mother seeking services intended to kill her child, we disagree. The actions taken against the abortionist was intended to stop the one who held the power of life and death in the immediate sense. To attempt to save an *in utero* baby's life by shooting the child's mother is well outside of a legal or moral "justifiable homicide" argument. Under righteous rule the mother would indeed be charged and tried for any crime attempted or committed against the child, but that is a judicial process, which takes place not primarily for the purpose of preventing harm, but for punishing a wrong already committed.⁹

⁹ This raises a justification for those like a man, Don Benny Anderson, sentenced for kidnapping an abortionist and his wife to prevent abortions. If he had kidnapped a



Shelley Shannon, the shooter of one of America's high-profile late-term abortionists, George Tiller, immediately made a statement to police in which she said, "If ever there was a justifiable homicide, this would have been it." In March 1994 court testimony in her trial against the charge of "attempted murder," Shannon clearly expressed that her motive was to *prevent* more murders of innocent Unborn babies.

From a biblical perspective, rename the process any way you wish, "medical killing," "terminations" or "abortion," Tiller was habitually engaging in the murder of innocent Unborn persons.



Paul Hill's motives are best known. In countless interviews in 1993 and 1994 he vigorously defended Griffin and Shannon before him, not for punishing abortionists for past deeds, but because of the *imminent threat to innocent life* that they were posing. He wrote and routinely distributed a pamphlet attesting to his biblically founded belief that Unborn children were deserving of the same protections afforded the Born. His action too was aimed at prevention, not punishment for the aborter's past deeds of murdering the Unborn.



Justifiable Homicide, as a defense under current civil law, is applied when a death occurs in the act of defending one's own life or property, or the life of another innocent person. Biblically, the Unborn qualify as persons in the full sense of that word. So, while criminal and civil law is somewhat schizophrenic in its application of justice toward these *in utero* individuals, it would appear that ***Michael Griffin, Shelley Shannon, and Paul Hill intended to prevent more killings of the kind that are clearly forbidden in the Sixth Commandment***, not to punish for crimes already committed by these serial-abortionists.¹⁰

mother attempting to have her child killed, that too would be equally as justifiable under God's standard, since he was attempting in either case to prevent the unjust killing of innocent Unborn children.

¹⁰ We might also refer to abortionists simply as "serial-killers" since a serial-killer is one who targets innocent victims for some perceived gain to himself. He then

As an addendum to that argument we reflect back on the history of law in what is considered to be modern civilization. Modern law, for the purpose of this discussion, includes that era from the signing of the *Magna Carta* onward. It includes *English Common Law* birthed out of the *Magna Carta*, and it includes *Early American Jurisprudence*. William Blackstone in his extensive commentary on law provided a standard of reference for the accumulated laws and their underlying principles.

Blackstone stated in his commentary, "Homicide, as is committed for the prevention of any forcible and atrocious crime, is justifiable by the law of nature; and also by the law of England." He then goes on to cite Statute 24, a declaration by England's King Henry VIII affirming the law of nature (and therefore "nature's God" as referred to in the U.S. Constitution) in regard to lethal force used to protect innocent life.¹¹

In all of these sources, there is an earlier foundational source from which they derive their legitimacy. It is *The Bible*. Laws that allow one innocent man to defend himself against another, even with lethal force, spring from the one well of Truth, the *Word of God*.¹²

Innocent blood?

As to the second question, abortionist Gunn has been credited with killing somewhere between 40 and 50 thousand Unborn children. That he was committed to his profession as a cause is borne out by his refusal to reconsider his career choice over an extensive period of time. At every stop on his route (he killed at five different facilities in two different states) protesters begged him to stop killing innocent Unborn children. Little more than two months before his death David Gunn

murders again and again, based on meeting his own determination of "needs." Abortionists conspire with the courts and pregnant women to the same end; a perception of personal need and gain that is used to try and justify the killing of innocent persons.

¹¹ Wm. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, vol. 4, pg. 180.

¹² This is precisely why *Deconstructionists* (Atheists, Agnostics and social engineers) have worked for decades to undermine Christianity and *The Bible* in America. Their socio-political agenda cannot stand up to the high and majestic standard of God's Law.

welcomed in a new year by taunting protesters with a bull horn and singing "Happy Birthday" to *Roe v. Wade*, the January 22, 1973 Supreme Court decision that "legalized" killing Unborn children by abortion throughout all 50 states.



Abortionist Tiller was a nationally known killer who specialized in killing older babies.¹³ A former employee, Luhra Tivis, testified in an affidavit before the Wichita City Council that Tiller was killing approximately 20 to 40 babies every week. To salve the public conscience, Tiller claims that these children are "terribly deformed fetuses," but Tivis says "No."

Her job included typing up information for the records, something that gave her access to patient files including photos that Tiller routinely took of the aborted babies. Most of the babies were perfectly healthy, though **the state of their health before being aborted does not give moral license to those who murder them. It merely demonstrates the truth of God's Word, that His Law is written on the hearts of all men, so that intuitively those who murder the innocent, no matter their attempts to justify their actions, are "without excuse" before God** (Rom 1:19-20). Falsifying or lying based upon the alleged "health" of the baby before being made a corpse serves to suggest Tiller was always fully aware he was engaged in violating God's moral Law.

Tiller's in-house crematorium for burning aborted bodies, and a hotel wing permanently reserved to service his clients stand as further testimony to the fact that he was a seriously committed killer. His own figures as to how many children were killed in his facility are more conservative but, whatever the number; all of the children he kills are innocent of any crime. Their ashes linger over Wichita as testimony to the fact that he, like David Gunn, does not qualify as "innocent blood" within the context of these shootings (Gen. 9:6).

(The fact that the city of Wichita knew of his trade and understood the ashes from his crematorium were those of

¹³ At the time of this reprint, George Tiller is deceased. He was shot by Scott Roeder on May 31, 2009. Roeder too testified he was engaged in an attempt to protect future victims of this serial ("abortionist") killer.

morally innocent persons brings the entire city under God's scrutiny and judgment for murder as well. But that is another conversation.)



John Britton, who was shot by Rev. Paul Hill, was featured in a February, 1994 *GQ* article as the hardball, twenty-year abortion-providing veteran who replaced David Gunn. In fact, he had failed in all of his efforts to practice legitimate medicine, having been caught abusing prescription drugs and doing abortions even before they were "legalized" in 1973.

Arguably, righteous government, completely unencumbered (pre-'73) by high court decisions, could have moved against him on charges of murder. Instead, he was left to be part of the circuit-riding off-scouring of the medical profession, known as an *abortionist*, and remembered now for the thousands of innocent children he murdered in his own aborted life time.

All of the evidence leads to the following important conclusions. Michael Griffin, Shelley Shannon, nor Paul Hill shot abortionists for past killings which they had done. They did not usurp governmental authority (which itself comes under scrutiny and can be rebelled against when evil is what is being promoted. But that too is another discussion). They acted in defense of innocent Unborn lives undergoing a real and dramatic threat.

"For they sow the wind, And they reap the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7 NAS). The persons shot (abortionists"), because they were engaged in the ongoing process of shedding innocent blood (*murder*), were not violated or "murdered" in the Biblical sense. One might merely argue they reaped the violence they were so vigorously sowing .

Preferring the life of the innocent

Next, we address the issue of *Defensive Action*. Where does Scripture say we can use physical force, even to the point of taking a life, in order to defend another or ourselves?

The concept of defensive action is seen in Scripture in a number of areas; Abram used force to rescue his relatives (Gen. 14:14-16) and Moses actually used lethal force against an

Egyptian who was in the process of abusing a Hebrew slave (Exod. 2:11-12). Centuries later God divinely inspired an unknown writer to mention the period in Moses' life surrounding this event. He is listed in the "Hebrews hall of fame" without a word of reproach for this deed (Heb. 11:24-27). And Stephen, before being stoned, also testified positively to the nature of Moses' actions in defense of the slave (Acts 7:23-25).

There are clear consequences to actual murder in other passages of Scripture, and the moral censure is also clear. If condemnation for this act by Moses were warranted, it would seem likely that evidence would abound.¹⁴

And there are examples that date themselves after the giving of the Law to Moses. Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, drove a stake through the temple of Sisera's head (Judges 4:17-21). Only one chapter later, Deborah, who is Judge over Israel, sings "Most blessed of women be Jael...Her hand reached for the tent peg...She struck Sisera, she crushed his head...At her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell — dead."¹⁵

Those who would argue that this was an act of warfare neglect to consider two important facts. Women, in general, were not allowed to go to war (Deborah was an exception, not the rule), and the law of hospitality as practiced in the time of the Israelite Judges made it unthinkable for Sisera to consider himself to be in danger from his friend's wife. Greeting him outside of her tent, she was the epitome of hospitality. And nowhere in Scripture do we find moral disapprobation for Jael's act (committed despite the fact that she had no civil authority) to bring a wicked man down in the protection of a community.

On a larger scale, Elijah the prophet of God slew 450 prophets of Baal in defense of a nation (I Kings 18:40). He was certainly not acting under the authority of God's divinely

¹⁴ As a contrast, it might be appropriate to read through the story of David the king who orchestrated the death of a faithful soldier, Uriah the Hittite. God's Word makes clear pronouncement against his act of deception and murder (2 Sam. 11-12).

¹⁵ Judges 5:24-31 describes in song the sequence of events surrounding the death of Sisera, and ends with an imprecatory plea that all of the Lord's enemies should thus perish. Such jubilation seems out of place in our modern age, yet there is something in each of us that appreciates a justice done.

appointed king and queen, Ahab and Jezebel. In fact, there is no indication of a special Divine revelation. Rather, it appears that his action was prompted by the singular and divine authority of God's Law (Exod. 22:20).

It is also important to pick up the theme of self-defense that is so easily overlooked in a later chapter of the Exodus account. In the OT, Capital Punishment is not prescribed for property crimes. Yet the thief opens himself up to the risk of death if he is caught breaking into a home in the middle of the night (Exod. 22:2). It is because of the *potential risk to innocent life*, implied by breaking in under cover of darkness, that the homeowner is free of "blood guilt" should he kill the thief in the ensuing effort to protect himself or his family.

William Blackstone states, the Law "which punished no theft with death, makes homicide only justifiable, in cases of nocturnal house breaking . . . or even by day, if he armed himself with any dangerous weapon."¹⁶

Out of context

In condemning Christians who have used force to protect Unborn lives, those who consider themselves to be authorities on the subject may sometimes bring shame upon their office of pastor or prolife leader. It is not uncommon to see Scriptures pulled out of context in order to make a point that was never intended in the Word. When investigating the claims of any position on the debate over the use of force, it is important that we examine both specific commands and any underlying principles.

We address with concern the manner in which an investigation is made of the issue because too often it is the case that we first deduce a position, then make every effort to justify that view. It is the worldly "scientific method" of stating a theory and then attempting to force all of the information to conform to our idea of reality. But when looking into Scripture, there are rules that must apply.

¹⁶ Wm. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, vol. 4, pg. 180-181.

The specific Scripture which tells of the thief who breaks into a home in the middle of the night gives us opportunity to stop for one moment and examine how a simple distortion can both wrongly convince others of our position, and erode the integrity with which we handle the Word of God.

A pastor, anxious to establish that the use of force is morally wrong when applied to the rescue of the Unborn, cited Exod. 22:2 as a proof text that the shooters of abortionists were in error. It was his estimation that the text allowed for the death of the thief without bloodguilt to the homeowner because the crime was occurring on private property. When it was pointed out that the issue wasn't "private property," since the theft of almost any property would fall under that heading and that simple property crimes did not warrant a death penalty in Scripture, he stopped arguing that text.

Months later, he issued a position outline for why he believes the use of force to save the Unborn is illicit and immoral. His reason then, in citing Exodus 22:2, was to say that the killing of the thief was allowed only because it occurred during the nighttime. (The implication being, that if those who shot abortionists had waited until dusk they would have been on morally solid ground?)

We assert that he is *straining at gnats and swallowing camels*.

At no time does Scripture refer to the culprit as a man bent on murder. He is a common thief who under normal circumstances can be stopped without the loss of his life. Later, if he engages in physical combat to threaten the life of a homeowner, even in midday, he then becomes something quite different. However, in Exodus 22:2 he is nothing more or less than a thief.

The lesson here is that we ought not to read into Scripture something that is not there, especially when dealing with a specific command. There are other commands that deal with the issue of physical assault. View Exodus 22:2 as an instruction in how to deal with the unusual thief — the one whose motive is obscure and who may pose a threat to physical safety. Understand the principle being conveyed, that *an unclear threat to the lives of innocent people creates a more serious situation*.

It is not the hue of the sky that is paramount. *It is the threat to innocent life, and the principle that innocent life is to be protected, even if it issues in great harm to the one who violates a lesser law.* God simply prefers the life of the innocent over the life of the guilty. It is His right to establish such a hierarchy.

A consistent standard of justice

It is also His right to establish a standard of justice for all men. And while that standard is only fully realized by an examination of all of Scripture, there are patterns that we may observe which give us an indication of His divine disposition regarding justice for the Unborn, as well as the born. There are three simple passages of Scripture, which articulate this point well. They are the famous "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" Laws. But before looking at them, it is important to realize that there is an underlying principle, which is our focus. As Jesus instructed in His Sermon on the Mount, we must avoid an opportunistic interpretation that opens the door to individual retaliation.

On the first occasion when the Law prescribes the "eye for eye" rule of thumb, it is in the case where a woman with child is struck and caused to go into premature labor. The NIV translates it "gives birth prematurely," but more precisely, the Hebrew states "brings forth her child" and "prematurely" is implied. The nearest antecedent is the child. Therefore, if any injury to the *child* results, the man who struck the woman and brought about the early delivery of the child is to be wounded so that his injuries are consistent with the injury he has caused to the child (Exod. 21:22-25). There are other Laws that address the issue of any injury that might come to the woman herself.

In the second instance the principle of consistent punishment for wrongful injury is more broadly stated. It is said that the "eye for eye" rule of thumb applies in the case where "any human being" is callously injured by another. "As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured," reads the Law (Lev. 24:20). The punishment is meant to fit the crime; not too much, and not too little.

And finally, even the intent and willful act to harm another through perjuring one's testimony is cause for this punishment.

The "malicious witness" is to be punished with the consequences that would have applied to the victim of his lies (Deut. 19:21).¹⁷

In examining these Scriptures we find that they point us toward a single and consistent standard of justice. There is not one standard for Black people and another for White people; One for Jews and another for non-Jews; One for Unborn and another — broader, more protective — standard for those who are Born. And it is a principle that we see carried over into the New Testament (NT) when Jesus tells us that we are to render the care and concern for others that we would wish for ourselves (Luke 6:31).

It is argued that if we wish the right to protect ourselves and other innocent *Born* people from the Ted Bundys and Jeffrey Dahmers of this world, we ought not to think that we can deprive the *Unborn* of that same standard of protection. To allow injustice toward the Unborn is to sow the seeds of evil violence for one's self.

Reaping the whirlwind

We hold forth with our own theory here, but the proving of it is not based on reference to the world and her scientific method. It is based on a pattern that we see in Scripture; one of reaping something of what we have sown.

As the Church has hardened her heart against the innocent by refusing to protect them, she has run the risk of removing herself from God's hand of protection and placing herself in an unscriptural position with the world. In fact, with a dramatic increase in litigation against churches; the ever-increasing number of arrests of Christians who are merely making a public

¹⁷ It is interesting to reflect on the frequent criticism leveled at the "eye for eye" Scriptures. While vulnerable to abuse, they are none-the-less part of God's Law. In fact, in the current debate over abortion and the use of force, they are critical in understanding that God has an equal affection for justice toward the Unborn. No wonder that they are so severely analyzed and found to be at fault. If they can be invalidated, the argument for a consistent standard of protection for both born and Unborn is weakened.

protest on the sidewalk;¹⁸ the removal of religion from the public domain;¹⁹ and the recognition of more ungodly behaviors as merely "alternative lifestyles," the Church is even now caught up in an intensifying storm of persecution.²⁰

There was a time, even from the founding of our nation, when Christian values were the stock and trade of America. Under God's standard of justice there was protection for the innocent and punishment for the wicked. Those who had committed no crime were to enjoy life, health, liberty, and freedom from fear. Those who violated laws and strong moral standards stood in fear. They could lose their liberty, their livelihood, and even their lives. Rough though it was, our system of law was a conscious effort to model ourselves after God's own measure. Consider:

On January 22, 1973 our highest court embraced a new standard, one that was *completely antithetical to God's standard*.

While God said that the innocent were to be protected, our Supreme Court said that the *most*

¹⁸ The First Amendment to the Constitution establishes the right to hold and express contrary views as a fundamental right accorded all citizens in the United States of America. Such an inclusion in the Constitution was never meant to protect popular speech, it was to safeguard the rights of those — like Christians today — who hold unpopular views.

¹⁹ Consider that it is deemed to be illegal now in many cities and states to display a manger scene or a cross on public property during the Christmas season. Public schools make much over the ghosts and goblins of Halloween, but are threatened with lawsuits for any religious portrayal during holidays such as Christmas and Easter.

²⁰ At the time of this reprint, we are less than two months away from a shooting incident in Newtown, Connecticut in which a crazed shooter, Adam Lanza, took the lives of 20 children and six adults at a grade school. A nation that rejects God and His Law and will not protect innocent children of the *Unborn* class has, sorrowfully, placed themselves and their own children outside of God's protection. We all fall prey to the gods the masses choose to worship. When Israelites chose to worship false gods like Asherah, Moloch or Chemosh, it eventually cost them dearly. At first they only participated tangentially by "baking bread" for the worship of these idols (Jer 7:18), but eventually they too were required by the cultists to sacrifice their own children by throwing them into the fiery, white-hot lap of the idols (Psa 106:37). The aggressive drinking and sex associated with these "festivities" were necessary to dull the senses of those parents offering their own children as a burnt offering to the false god.

innocent of any crime could be summarily executed upon the whim of a woman and the availability of an abortion-minded doctor.

While God said the wicked were to be punished and prevented from posing a further threat to the innocent, the United States Supreme Court said that *those who kill children could walk free*; they could go to their social clubs; sleep in the comfort of their own homes, and avail themselves of the opportunity to kill again and again.

And while the United States Supreme Court tore up and threw in the trash our two-hundred-year-old imitation of God's Law, **the Church**, in confusion over issues like contraception and abortion, **stood silently by.**

In God's economy, *we will reap what we have sown*. God, who despises dishonest scales (Deut. 25:14) and orders that only one measure be used, will eventually allow even those He loves to suffer under the weight of their *neglect of justice*. The American Civil War stands as testimony to the truth of that principle. Even now, it is argued, the Church is being turned over to the standard of justice she thought fit for the Unborn, which is no justice at all. The same can be said for this nation.

On premeditation

Now, we return back to the particular arguments against the *use of force* in defense of Unborn children. Opponents will say, "Oh, but there was a 'premeditated' aspect to the shooting of the abortionists!" In fact, all "violence" in the form of bombings and arson have an aspect of pre-planning. "Weren't premeditated acts denounced when Scripture says, 'But if a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from My altar and put him to death' (Exod. 21:14)?"

The King James Version (KJV) gives it a more precise rendering — closer to the original Hebrew — and reads, "But if a man comes presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from Mine altar, that he may die."

Again, this text does not support an argument against forceful intervention to save an innocent person. The key word

rendered "presumptuously" in the KJV and "deliberately" in the New International Version (NIV) is from the Hebrew word *zid*. It is a word that literally means *to act proudly, presumptuously, rebelliously*. It combines three aspects of pride: 1) Presumption that assumes too much of a sense of authority, 2) Rebellion or disobedience by asserting the individual will over that of legitimate authority, and 3) A willful decision to act outside the realm of authority given the individual by God.²¹

The verse speaks to *attitude* and *authority*. And ultimately we are led directly back to the question of *individual authority to mount a forceful defense*. Does God allow the individual the right to use force to defend his own innocent life or the life of another innocent person against an unjust aggressor? Scripture affirms this right.

Certainly acts that are done outside the realm of authorities which God has given to the individual and which are done willfully, rebelliously, out of an attitude of pride are condemned by this Scripture. But if God has indeed given the *right of defense to the individual* even though it may result in bloodshed (Exod. 22:2), then Griffin, Shannon and Hill did not violate this Law. Again, they sought to prevent future murders on the part of the serial-abortionists they shot.

A clear and present danger

The argument over "premeditation" often moves another step after it is made clear that simply planning to use force to save the life of an Unborn child is not outside the scope of biblical morality. When the first argument has fallen, those who would condemn Christians who have used force will often cite an objection based on the imminence of harm.

"If Shelley Shannon's use of force against George Tiller wasn't wrong because it was planned in advance, it is wrong because it was premature." The implication is that any use of

²¹ See Bruce Waltke, et al, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, pg. 239.

morally defensible force must be done at a point when the abortionist is actually starting the procedure to kill the child, perhaps even as he lifts the curette or suction tubing and advances toward the woman on the table.

Shelley Shannon shot abortionist George Tiller as he was driving away from the facility where he routinely killed. Would she have been on a more consistent biblical footing if she had waited at least until he was returning the next day?

To discuss the issue of "imminent harm" it is helpful to more clearly define how Christians throughout the ages have viewed the concept of immanency. To do that, we will use as comparison a fundamental Christian doctrine, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

When Christians discuss the return of the Savior they often refer to the "imminent return." What do they mean by that? A survey of Christians will reveal that for some there is a strong hope that His return will be in the next moment, only days or perhaps months away. Others understand that it may be years, perhaps even long after they have fallen asleep in death. Yet all of these Christians claim that Christ's return is "imminent."

Imminent then appears to mean something other than immediate with reference to a timetable. Instead, it clearly refers to a *certainty*. It is *certain* that Christ will return and the Christian is to be diligent in responding to that fact. With regard to abortion then, it appears that the issue is not the nearness in time but the *certainty* that the abortionist does intend to kill again.

Shannon cannot be condemned based upon the proximity in time to which she shot the abortionist. What was *certain*, based upon his strong commitment, past behavior, public pronouncements, and significant financial investment, was that George Tiller did intend to kill again. Shelley Shannon was *certain* of that fact; *certain* that there were no other significant remedies available to save lives, and we argue that she cannot be condemned as having acted outside of a threat of imminent harm.

Consigned to hell?

Christians concerned over the use of force which has proven to be lethal often have a sincere concern for the eternal well-being of the abortionist. As the Scriptures say, *God takes no delight in the death of the wicked* (Ezek. 18:23) and neither should we.

By ending the life of an unjust aggressor or murderer in order to save an innocent victim, is it legitimate to say that Griffin and Hill consigned David Gunn, John Britton, and James Barrett to hell?

Those who condemn the use of force to save the Unborn child often argue somewhat schizophrenically on this issue. Using force to assist an elderly who is being mugged is never condemned as an action robbing the mugger of his eternal salvation. Yet our compassion is often misguided away from the victim and toward the victimizer when dealing with those who kill children for a living (perhaps because we cannot see the Unborn).

Our attitude of "kindness, justice and righteousness" (Jer. 9:24) — in imitation of God's character — is misplaced so that we fail to correctly identify with the *oppressed* and instead wrongly attach our sentiments of concern to the oppressor. Yet it is to those unseen *oppressed* who are denied kindness and justice that God extends Himself toward (Psa 136). So should we.

In addition to recognizing that the Unborn victim's well-being ought to be a primary concern, we need to recognize that God does not give the Christian occultic powers. We do not have the ability to know when and if an abortionist intends to quit or repent. We are not called to follow in the footsteps of psychics and spiritists. Instead, the Christian is simply enjoined to *do justice and to love mercy* (Micah 6:6-8).

When God extends mercy, it is most often to those denied it by their oppressors or others who could come to their aid but do not. Amazingly, we also see a biblical case for arguing that He has graciously extended mercy toward those who have murdered Unborn children for decades in much the same way He withheld judgment from the Amorites of Abraham's day (Gen. 15:16). And it now appears that their iniquity is complete,

or nearly so, since He has allowed justice for the innocent Unborn to prevail in a handful of cases.

Gentle Lamb or Roaring Lion?

Some Christians will point out that as far as the right to use force is concerned, our pattern is predominantly *Old Testament* — therefore Old Covenant. And so we are challenged to examine *New Testament* Scripture to better understand whether-or-not an individual is entitled to use force to protect either himself or another innocent person against an unjust aggressor.

The New Testament does not add new revelation or changes to the moral standard. This is because God does not change. There is no definitive Scripture that can be cited to overrule the OT principles regarding a use of force for defensive purposes. There is no indication that God's personality progressed, or that He experienced a conversion process Himself as Jesus went to the cross (from an angry and punishing God to an accommodating Fellow). Rather, His propensity for justice is constant and enduring.

With regard to NT examples of force, we find that on two occasions Jesus Christ drove moneychangers, buyers and sellers, from the Temple. "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers," He proclaims while overturning tables and causing property damage (Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:15-17; Lk. 19:45-46).

Jesus' forceful behavior might be dismissed as simply fulfillment of prophecy except that the incident does occur twice. There is an occasion recorded only by John, early in Jesus' ministry where we are given more detail and therefore more insight into the event.

Upon finding a bazaar atmosphere in the Temple, Jesus stops to fashion a whip. Then this gentle Lamb of God uses the weapon in hand to clear the crowd. The magnitude of authority and physical presence that He brought to the event can only be guessed at, but it might be said to be significant. All His detractors could do, despite the availability of men to arrest and restrain an ordinary man, was to ask for a sign to authenticate Jesus' authority "to do all this" (John 2:14-16).

"I and the Father are One"

In dismissing force as a tool which is morally (though not legally) available to the individual by holding to rhetoric like "Jesus wouldn't do that," we forget that Jesus is "the exact representation of His [God the Father's] being" as is written in the book of Hebrews (1:3). The larger question when talking about forceful, even painful or lethal intervention to save the life of an innocent person is "Does God — Old Testament to New — allow for it?" Instead, we stumble over the restrained witness of the personality of the Lamb who has come, not to judge the world and her inhabitants, but to lay down His life (John 3:17).

Throughout Scripture we see God's character manifested in first one attribute and then another. In the beginning we see His organization. He brings creation out of chaos (Gen 1-2). We see that He desires, for reasons we don't fully understand, to have fellowship with man even after he has sinned. We see God's wrath and judgment when Egypt is stricken with plagues even to the point where all of her firstborn are slain (Exod. 12:29). We see something of the magnitude of His power and authority over nature when twice He rolls back the waters and crosses His people over on dry land (Exod. 14:21-22; Josh 3:17). His character is vast and wonderful, too awesome to be manifested completely at once to simple man; to see Him with the eye is to die (Exo 33:20)! So we see only reflections.

And in Jesus Christ, His uniquely begotten Son, we see God's character trait of compassion put on display like no other time in recorded history. It is not only exposed on the cross, it is manifested daily as Jesus proclaims through His life that no sin is too immense for God to forgive. Every interaction indulges the notion that eternal life is available to all that receive Him.

The point in all of this is simply to say that Jesus was atoning for the sins of mankind and giving witness of a spiritual salvation that transcends the limits of civil law and even Mosaic Law.

Yet even in this, Jesus was more than a *Ghandiesc character preaching peace and love*. He was an absolute lightning rod in

His demand for justice to be practiced among men. Imagine living in a culture that saw certain classes of people to be less entitled to justice than other classes; children kept at a distance, women walking on eggshells to avoid offending husbands and other men with their opinions, questions and own longing for justice. Slaves living in fear of being sold away from families, even killed...

Mishnaic tradition asserts that punishment for adultery was largely a burden carried by women; a man could be released from prison and accuse his wife of unfaithfulness while he was gone. Without any other witness, his word alone satisfied the priests that she should be exposed to public shaming; tied to a pole near the city gate, garments rent to expose her breasts and subject to hours of mocking, lewd comments, being spit upon, all before having to drink water mixed with dirt as a means to gain a second witness against her.

But this Jesus is so concerned for justice that he preaches to thousands, a thoroughly mixed audience, on a mountainside;

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. ... "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. (Matt. 5:27-28; 6:1-2 NAS)

Jesus quickly cuts through thousands of years of oppression to hold to account the oppressor.

He is so precise in judgment against the powerful that the question must be raised, "Jesus, Are You trying to get yourself crucified?"

Indeed, He and the Father are One; He is just as exacting in justice so that we cannot say "Jesus would never do that!" It is mercy that He restrains His hand at all, so it is not foreign when justice is accomplished to protect the innocent. Acts of "violent" or forceful justice are merely a reflection to warn the

world that injustice will be practiced at a high cost to those bent on its promotion.

"Sell your cloak . . ."

The NT Scriptures actually leave us with a fairly clear statement on the use of defensive force. Jesus is teaching His disciples as He has done on other occasions. He is getting close to the completion of His ministry, and He is preparing to go to the cross. By reading Luke 22:35-38 we note the following:

Jesus is reminding the disciples that He has miraculously protected them and provided for their needs during the earlier missionary journey He sent them on. They can trust Him.

With His imminent crucifixion He warns them that there are some changes they should anticipate. The world that hated Him is going to hate them too. Going to the cross is not the final chapter. They need to plan on and prepare for adversity.

Among the provisions they need to acquire is a sword. It is not to be used in a military sense where everyone would be required to have one. Instead, when the disciples point out "Here are two swords," He says, "That is enough." Two swords among twelve men is not an aggressive call to arms. It is a defensive preparation.

Now, if we can defend our own lives, and we are instructed to *love our neighbor as ourselves*, we can also defend our helpless neighbor. For an answer to "Who is my neighbor?" read the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). It is reasonable to conclude that Unborn infants qualify.²²

Those who oppose a moral justification for force will proceed to argue that Jesus ordered His disciples to "put away" their swords after Peter had impetuously sheared away the ear of a soldier/servant (John 18:11), but by citing this as a proof

²² One might argue that an abortionist is also a neighbor. But, by way of example, if a neighbor-rapist is attacking a neighbor-woman, you have an obligation to choose which of those neighbors to throw your lot in with. Which neighbor are we to love when one is being an unjust aggressor, and the other is a helpless victim? Biblical sense weighs out in favor of the victim.

text they pull Scripture out of context. When Jesus rebuked Peter it was because he was interfering with a foreordained plan. Jesus was going to the cross. Peter had been rebuked before for suggesting that "This [the cross] shall never happen to you" (Mt. 16:22-23). And he had not fully grasped the lesson.

This Scripture, to put away the sword, in no way abandons the concept of either being allowed to defend yourself or another innocent person from unjust aggression. Recall that it was only hours before this event took place that Jesus instructed the disciples to go out and buy a sword. Is the Son of God so vulnerable to confusion that within hours of directing the disciples to prepare for their future defense in one way, He then rebukes them in a manner meant to convey an opposite instruction? We think not!

Others have argued against using this Scripture by stating that the sword being spoken of by Jesus in Luke 22:26 is a "spiritual sword." But, again, this can only be deduced by taking the Scripture out of context. Is Jesus talking about a spiritual "purse, bag or sandals" in verse 35? Of course not! So why should we expect that He will switch from the physical to the spiritual when He tells them to sell their cloak if that is what they must do in order to acquire a sword. Can a spiritual sword be purchased for the price of a cloak?

"Ah," proclaims the opponent of force, "He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword," referring to Matthew 26:52. If defense to save a helpless victim is not intrinsically wrong, it is wrong because it will eventually accrue harm to the forceful defender, is their argument.

We dispute both the claim that this Scripture speaks to defense of self or another innocent person and the conclusion. If anyone can be said to be "living by the sword," we argue that it is the abortionist who is paid by the head for each baby that he kills. To that end, Scripture appears to articulate a truth as far as abortionists David Gunn, John Britton, and James Barrett are concerned. Certainly they have lived by violent means. Their end appears to be the logical fruit of their labor.

"The weapons of our warfare . . ."

And while we are looking again at the subject of Scripture pulled out of context and presented to say what it does not, it is appropriate to stop here and examine Ephesians 6:10-18. It too talks about a sword.

Several of those who say that the use of force to save a womb-inhabiting child is immoral have postured that these verses describe the limits of our ability to intervene for the soon-to-be-aborted. "We war not against flesh and blood" is said to command our attention beyond the physical presence of an unjust aggressor, so that we understand that he is merely a hapless pawn in the hand of Satan. This bit of illogic is allowed for the Unborn, *but try convincing any man to stand by while his Born children are savaged by someone with an abortionist's propensity for murder.*

In context we see that the famous warfare verses of Ephesians 6 speak to something quite different than the debate that we are in. The entire book of Ephesians is written to believers and speaks to the unity — built on a foundation of biblical truth — which God the Father is working out through time and history, so that one day, in Christ, we will see a oneness among those of the faith that is often lacking from one denomination to the next and even within individual churches.

Ephesians 6 does not speak to our relationship as believers toward unbelievers. It does not say that our ability to advocate for an innocent person is to be limited to prayer and meditation upon the Scriptures, immensely valuable as those interventions are.²³ It is a Scripture that holds no prescription for us against the use of force to stop one man from murdering another, one abortionist from murdering a child.

The larger argument to support the use of defensive action to protect the innocent is the silence of Scripture. The NT does not contradict, eradicate or throw out the OT mandate to rescue the

²³ The caution is that we are not to make a false god of our piety, pretending service to God and neighbor without the necessary actions and deeds that affirm genuine faith (Jam 2:18). Pietistic promises to "pray for the Unborn" are often a mere deflection of one's duty to act on their behalf. "Daring to do what is right... Freedom [in Christ] comes only through deeds, not through thoughts taking wing. Faint not nor fear, but go out to the storm and the action, trusting in God whose commandment you faithfully follow." [Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer*, poem "Stations on the Road to Freedom"]

innocent (Prov. 24:11-12). The child *in utero* is considered to be equal to the value of any Born person (Exod. 21:22-25). We see no retraction of the right of individuals to defend against an unjust aggressor (Exod. 22:2). And Old Testament to New, we find that concern for the well being of another ought to be actively manifest in our lives (Exod. 22:21, 22-24, 26-27; Lev. 19:33-34; Luk. 6:31).

Finally, it is relevant to remember that all Scripture is "God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). Those words were written at a time when the word "Scripture" primarily referred to the wealth of OT records accepted by the Church. The NT did not exist in the bound and authorized versions we have today. It cannot be reliably argued that a moral Law must be specifically restated in the New Testament in order for it to have relevance today.

And if it is right . . .

Often in arguing about the biblical principles surrounding the use of force to save innocent Unborn lives there is another concern that brews just below the surface. On occasion there is the honest man or woman who will admit that they have a fear that if the use of force is right, that God stands ready to call them into action to do it and ready to condemn all who don't. In addition to fear of the obvious consequences in a world that is willfully rejecting God, they experience fear of the act, because indeed the injuring of another person is never an occasion for pleasure, and they experience conflict over who they want to be versus who they are.

The serious Christian wants to see himself as someone willing to do whatever is right. He prefers to see himself as one waiting for direction and willing to lay down his security, popularity, physical safety, even his life to do what God requires of him. But in reality, in an era of general peace and security (at least for the safely Born), there is little that severely tries and tests him. Suddenly, in discovering that there are other biblical options to save those threatened by abortion he is challenged beyond his own willingness or perceived ability to

obey. Indeed, there is a high price to pay for any who would dare rescue a child bound for death in this day of legal abortion.

Many Christians, though not all, may come down on the side of pacifism in the argument over saving Unborn babies simply because they are afraid. Others will find that they are not nearly as "in love" with obedience to the full measure of God's Word as they are with the facade of security around them. And still others will look honestly inside of themselves and understand that there is still much work to be done before they are truly conformed to the selfless image of God's one unique Son, Jesus Christ. They have not yet learned to place the welfare of others even above their own.

This last may take the form of denying that God would ever require a man to risk his own life and freedom. But that is precisely what God required of Queen Esther when an unjust law threatened the lives of her people. Failure to act in their defense would have resulted in judgment against Esther and her family, even though there was a very real threat to Esther's life in approaching the king without being summoned (Est 4:11). When God calls, a man must listen and obey. That appears to be true of Griffin, Shannon and Hill.

"Rarely will anyone die . . ."

In Scripture, we see again and again the astuteness of God in discerning the human heart. We also see His great patience and mercy. In the debate over saving children by the use of force there are those who claim that if we say that it is morally (though not legally) justifiable, then we are declaring "open season" on abortionists and their accomplices in murder. "Everyone will be doing it," I was told by a radio talk show host. Indeed, when the suggestion is made that there will be much of this forceful intervention to save Unborn lives, we strongly disagree. Scripture indicates otherwise.

With the precision of a surgical instrument Paul, writer of the book of Romans (5:7-8) lays bare the nature of man. His point, in context, is to show how God demonstrated an unparalleled love for us in that "While we were still sinners, Christ died for

us." To make his point, Paul the apostle is inspired by God to use as an example the unique man.

"Rarely," we are told, "will anyone die for a righteous man," though he goes on to tell us that "for a good man someone might possibly dare to die." In other words, it is the unique individual who will risk his life. Most human beings, including most Christians have not attained to that "greater love" that compels one man to lay down his life for another. And in stating the truism that it is the rare man who will lay down his life, we find no condemnation in this Scripture passage. It is the wonder of God that knowing our frailty and our failures He sent His Son to redeem us.

No, it is unlikely that we will see more than the occasional man or woman as brave as Michael Griffin, Shelley Shannon and Paul Hill who will, at great cost to themselves, act to save the life of an innocent *in utero* child. In fact, assuming the morality of defending Unborn infants with force, God is under no obligation to raise up other defenders before dealing harshly with any of us, including couch-potato pietists or detractors, for our neglect of justice on behalf of those who are of the class of persons we refer to as "Unborn."

Anarchy and slippery slopes

Those Christians who are not in touch with reality — who do not fully comprehend that over 4,000 children are being brutally murdered every day in the name of "choice" — have reared away from discussion on the morality of the use of force because, they contend, "It is anarchistic." We can tolerate the sterile and systematic putting to death of the out-of-sight Unborn, but your occasional dead abortionist is indication that the very fabric of society is being rent.

We assert that they are wrong, that in fact anarchy has been upon us in every sense of the word since our highest court abandoned justice in favor of industry — bent on murder.

There are too, those who comfort themselves that the evil represented by abortion is only a modicum of the base moral behavior that man is capable of exhibiting; that we are moving down a slippery slope which will eventually push us further into

the realm of moral wrong. In their view, there is opportunity at some point to hope for a hand or foothold that will keep us from tumbling further down.

To slide further down implies that there are worse degrees of killing; that things are bad, but they will eventually get *real bad* when it is the Born who are at peril. To speak of a "slippery slope" is really to denigrate the seriousness of the holocaust against Unborn children.

In reality, we are at the absolute bottom of the canyon. There is nowhere further we can go. We, as a nation, have accepted the unwarranted execution of those who are completely innocent; we have embraced that model of *injustice* that is the undeniable opposite of God's standard of justice. How can things get worse?

Our experience of comfort and security is nothing more than illusion. In fact, there are no guarantees for anyone of any degree of innocence when we live outside God's rule and authority as a nation. And it is arguable that every outlandish injustice that we see is merely a point of reflection where the reality of the standard we have embraced as a nation has somehow broken through.

We counter the argument that those who have used force are bringing about anarchy. Instead, we see them as individuals who have forcefully wrenched short-term stability upon us. They have — by an act of courage and justice — made their stand against the *Roe v. Wade* pattern of justice and for God's own. They have stood in the gap for us all.

Of sheep and goats

For all of us, no matter what it is that occupies us — including obedience to other responsibilities that God has given to us — there is a precaution which ought to be observed in responding to those who have used force to save the life of a child. All of those who we have examined for their use of force (Griffin, Shannon, and Hill) are believers in God.²⁴

²⁴ As of this reprint, the same seems true of Scott Roeder and James Kopp. We lack sufficient testimony from Rudolph, Salvi who also took aim at abortionists.

They hold to the essentials of the faith; that God the Father set forth to redeem mankind through His one and only begotten Son; that Jesus Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit; born of a virgin; that He lived a sinless life and died an atoning death by allowing Himself to be crucified for our sins. He was raised from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven after having been seen by many family members, apostles, and disciples. And He will return one day to make final judgment upon the living and the dead. His eternal kingdom will have no end, and those who have attained salvation by faith will be with Him forever.

Michael Griffin, Shelley Shannon, and Paul Hill, by virtue of their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, are adopted by the Father and brethren to the Lord. And as such, being members of one eternal family, one Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, we ought always to consider carefully how we treat the members of our body. Christians should avoid hasty judgments and condemnation of those who are related to the Lord. Instead, we ought to heed the warning that Jesus Himself laid out for us when He spoke of the judgment of the sheep and goats (Mt. 25:31-46).

Those confirmed into the family were generous and kind, even to the imprisoned. (And it is likely that those who were so confined stirred up every bit as much controversy as have those in our own days that have used force.) The goats on the other hand failed to render godly kindness and concern in their actions.

But Jesus does more than suggest that Christians are to be active in displaying works of comfort and kindness. He tells us (verse 40) that there is a particular group of people that we are not to neglect. They are those who are *brothers to the Lord*. The goats are those who betrayed their lack of love for the Lord in their lack of love for His brethren.

Finally then, let us not neglect the opportunity we have for open discussion upon this issue of force. It is an occasion for all of us to delve more deeply into the character of God. Is He just? How does His character trait of justice reveal itself, and how are we to be imitators of it? And while we search the Scriptures, let us not make hasty judgments against those who may one day be

honored by the Lord for loving the lives of yet-to-be-birthe
children more than their own.