

THE PEOPLE OF THE WOMB AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

*Calling the Church to Include the Preborn in the Church's
Great Commission Vision*

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Introduction

Jesus Christ has commissioned His Church to go into all the world, proclaim the good news, and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19). Yet in fulfilling this sacred calling, have we considered the smallest, most vulnerable image-bearers among us: the **People of the Womb**? These preborn children inhabit every nation, yet they are often absent from our discipleship strategies, theological conversations, and gospel outreach. At the heart of the Gospel is the glory of God in the redemption of sinners. In His love, He declares the worth of every human being, revealing their value through His purpose and redemptive plan. This divine declaration is inseparably tied to the sanctity of human life from its very beginning.

This paper offers a biblical and missional call to recognize the preborn as an overlooked group and respond with gospel-driven action. It is a clarion call for the global Church to include the **People of the Womb** in our vision of the Great Commission and to reflect the Father's heart in both word and action.

I. Who Are the People of the Womb?

Every human being, from the moment of fertilization, is uniquely made in the image of God and thus carries innate dignity. This foundational theological truth is revealed in Genesis 1:26–27 and is affirmed by science, which confirms that a new, genetically distinct human life begins at fertilization—complete with a unique DNA blueprint that identifies the individual as a member of the human species. (For those seeking a medically grounded, biblically faithful resource on this topic, we recommend *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* by Dr. Megan Best.¹)

We are called to see every conceived person as a divine image-bearer, worthy of love, protection, and purpose. This is not a potential life, but a living human being already in motion. Abortion, therefore, is not a neutral medical procedure—it is the intentional ending of a human life in the womb. Biologically, it terminates a human being; theologically, it denies the worth and image that God confers.

The preborn form a voiceless people group—tiny, uniquely defenseless, profoundly devalued, and tragically unseen across every nation. **The effects of sin have brought unprecedented cruelty to this people group, stripping them of love, dignity, visibility, and protection. Yet could it be that God intends to use this very group in His redemptive mission to reach every image-bearer with the gospel?** As Genesis 50:20 reminds us, what man intends for evil, God can use for good. According to global estimates, more than 73 million abortions occur every year worldwide, with disproportionately high rates in developing nations, reflecting a staggering and ongoing disregard for the value of preborn life (World Health Organization, 2021; Guttmacher Institute, 2022). Over just the past 50 years, this

conservatively translates to more than 1.5 billion lives lost globally, an unthinkable toll on image-bearers who were never given the chance to be seen, known, or welcomed.

Because of the extraordinary peril faced by the preborn, an extraordinary mandate now stands before the Church. In these overlooked lives, the global Church has one of the clearest calls to fulfill the Great Commission: to see, to speak, and to act on behalf of those fully human, fully known, and fully loved by God.

The theological foundation for the sanctity of human life is rooted in the truth that every person is made in the Imago Dei—the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27). This historic Christian conviction, held by the Church from its earliest days, must remain central to our theology and mission. From the beginning, human beings were uniquely set apart from all other creation—not merely as biological beings, but as image-bearers entrusted with divine purpose. Unlike animals and plants, only humanity is made in God’s image, granted dominion over creation, and personally formed by God’s hands and breath (Genesis 2:7). This image-bearing identity confers inherent worth to every human life, from the moment of fertilization onward.

This God-given dignity is not conditional upon size, level of development, environment, or degree of dependency.² The value of human life is not measured by function but by God’s creative design. We affirm that human dignity begins at fertilization and that every life is sacred because God is the author of life.

Throughout redemptive history, God’s care for the vulnerable is evident across Scripture. The Law protected the innocent and the powerless (Ex. 22:22–24), the Prophets condemned those who shed innocent blood (Jer. 19:4, 22:3, Isa. 1:17, Ezk. 16:20–21), and Jesus Himself welcomed children. He warned against causing them harm (Matt. 18:6). The Apostle Paul affirms that our identity and calling in Christ were set before we were born (Gal. 1:15, Eph. 2:10).

The early Church echoed these convictions. Documents such as the Didache (1st century) explicitly condemned abortion and infanticide as incompatible with the way of Christ. Church fathers like Tertullian and Basil of Caesarea spoke clearly against the destruction of life in the womb, recognizing it as an offense against both the child and the Creator. This consistent testimony reminds us that the sanctity of life is not a modern moral issue but a foundational biblical truth.

The Scriptures are rich with testimony about God’s intimate knowledge and sovereign care for life before birth (Gal. 1:15–16). In Psalm 139, we are told that God “knit us together” in the womb and that “all the days ordained” for us were written before one came to be. In Jeremiah 1:5, God declares, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.” These are not poetic flourishes—they are theological truths about God’s personal involvement with each human life from its earliest moments. And in Luke 1:41, John the Baptist, still in the womb, leaps in recognition of the presence of Jesus, also in the womb—affirming not only the full personhood of the preborn, but also the spiritual reality of their existence.

The preborn are uniquely voiceless, defenseless, and hidden. They are the least of these—those Christ calls us to protect (Psalm 94:16, 21). The sheer scale of abortion worldwide underscores the urgency of a gospel-rooted response—one that sees the preborn not as statistics, but as sacred image-bearers. **This global crisis unfolds quietly, legally, and often**

without acknowledgment, leaving millions of lives ended before they are ever seen or held. Proverbs 24:11 urges us to “rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.” As followers of Jesus, we must not turn away.

Neglecting the humanity of the preborn creates a theological inconsistency that weakens both our theology and our gospel-witness. We believe the message of life and the message of the Gospel are inseparable. If the Gospel is truly good news for all people, it must be good news for the People of the Womb as well.

The Father’s heart is not only revealed in His tender formation of every child in the womb (Psalm 139), but also in His righteous opposition to injustice. Proverbs 6:17 tells us that God hates the shedding of innocent blood —‘innocent’ not meaning morally perfect before God, but having committed no offense that warrants violence or death at the hands of others. In the context of human relationship, there is no more innocent or voiceless group than the preborn. Abortion, therefore, is the shedding of innocent blood—the deliberate ending of a life that has done no wrong. As His people, we are called to reflect His heart: to hate what He hates and delight in what delights Him (Ephesians 5:1).

Kurt Dillinger, Founder of LIFE International, recalls a moment when, after reading Genesis 1:26, a verse he had studied often, the Lord confronted him with a piercing truth: “You do not know My heart on this.” This wasn’t about unfamiliarity with Scripture—it was about not fully grasping how deeply abortion grieves the heart of God. The issue he realized was not primarily about the defense of human life itself — though that matters deeply — **abortion is, first and foremost, an attack on God’s image, a direct assault on the Creator Himself.**

When we recognize this, our response is no longer merely ethical or pastoral—it becomes worship. Defending life is an act of honoring the One whose image every person bears. Our mission, then, is not simply to protect life but to reflect the heart of the Life-Giver in both truth and love.

II. Including the People of the Womb in the Great Commission

Having established the theological and biological foundation for the God-given worth, dignity, and inviolability of human life from fertilization onward, we must now ask: How does this deepen our understanding of and obedience to the Great Commission? Jesus Christ calls His Church to “go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20). Christ’s commission is global, comprehensive, and deeply personal. The Greek meaning of “all nations” (*panta ta ethne*) means all ethnic groups, not just political states, and it speaks to the universal scope of the mission, extending beyond Israel to all people. And we believe “all people” includes People of the Womb. It encompasses every tribe, language, people, and nation (Revelation 5:9)—including those yet unseen by the world but fully known by God. Yet in carrying out this mission, the Church has too often overlooked some of the smallest, most hidden image-bearers: the People of the Womb.

To disciple nations is not merely to evangelize the lost; it is to form followers of Jesus who reflect the heart of God in all things—including His love for the voiceless, the vulnerable, and the powerless. Psalm 83:3–4 speaks of those “hidden from view,” and Proverbs 31:8–9 calls us to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.” These commands are not peripheral to Christian ethics—they reflect the very character of Christ and the nature of His kingdom. The Great Commission requires discipling the Church in the practice of the Great Commandment—total love for God and sacrificial love for neighbor. That neighbor includes every image-bearer, including the People of the Womb.

Discipleship is more than belief. James 1:22–23 reminds us that faith without obedience is empty—we are to be doers of the Word. And part of that doing includes action on behalf of the most vulnerable: “Rescue those being led away to death” (Proverbs 24:11). When we obey this calling, the Great Commission becomes more than a message we carry—it becomes a way of life we embody.

As the Gospel reaches the lost, it also transforms the found. Those who come to faith in Christ are equipped to carry out His mission of righteousness, including God’s call to defend innocent life. **A global Church that awakens to the value of the People of the Womb will not only protect life within the womb but will cultivate flourishing beyond it, nurturing families, transforming communities, and saturating the world with the hope of the Gospel.**

This mission is already bearing fruit. Across the globe, trained leaders are stepping into the darkest places with the light of Christ, bringing rescue, healing, and hope. One such moment unfolded in Zambia:

A young woman named Joyce stood on the banks of a crocodile-infested river, ready to end her life—and the life of her unborn child—after surviving unthinkable trauma. But God intervened. Iness, a woman who led a life-giving ministry birthed from a LIFE International training, found her, embraced her, and brought her to safety. She introduced Joyce to Jesus Christ, and Joyce gave her life to Him. That child, once marked for death, was born and named Abraham—a living testimony to God’s redemptive power. Joyce committed Abraham to the Lord, praying that he will rise up to lead his generation to the gospel.

This is the power of gospel-centered life ministry: not theoretical, but transformational. It doesn’t stop at saving a life—it restores hearts, redeems futures, and multiplies impact across generations. When the Gospel takes root, its ripple effects extend far beyond a single moment, person, or place. Life is rescued. Hope is restored. And the mission of God advances through those once forgotten but fully seen—and eternally known—by Him.

Even a child who may never live long enough to hear the name of Jesus still bears His image. Their worth is not found in future accomplishments or potential profession of faith, but in the sovereign design and image-bearing identity bestowed by their Creator. The People of the Womb are, therefore, not incidental to the Great Commission. They are part of the nations we are called to disciple, the vulnerable we are called to defend, and the image-bearers we are called to honor.

Let us, as the people of God, take our rightful place and stand in the gap for the voiceless, the forgotten, and the unseen image-bearers among us—those whose lives cry out for protection (Ezekiel 22:30; Romans 13:11–12). We are ambassadors for Christ, entrusted with the

ministry of reconciliation and the mission to protect life, proclaim truth, and reflect His glory. We do not wage war against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces that seek to destroy life and distort God's design (Ephesians 6:12).

Across every culture and generation, the curse of sin corrupts our view of human dignity, devalues children, and wages war against the family—God's intended foundation for life and flourishing. But the Gospel is not one option among many; it is the only truth strong enough to redeem, the only light bright enough to restore, and the only path that leads to life. As we proclaim Christ to the nations, let us also proclaim His redeeming love to mothers and fathers—not with condemnation, but with the healing, restoration, and hope found in Him alone. We are a city on a hill, set apart to shine His light into every dark corner. Though God, in His sovereign grace, redeems in every context and circumstance, He established the family as a foundational place for human flourishing and spiritual formation.

If the mission of the Church is to teach everything Christ has commanded, we cannot fulfill the Great Commission faithfully while omitting His heart for the smallest persons among us. To walk in the way of the Life-Giver is to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth, including those at the very beginning of life.

III. A Redemptive Response: Walking the Way of the Life-Giver

The connection between the Gospel and the sanctity of human life is not theoretical—it is transformational. When the truth of who God is meets the brokenness of our world, healing begins, and lives are restored.

One of LIFE International's ministry partners in Cambodia, Vuthy, once visited a remote village where 120 Buddhist women had gathered. Without walking through the full *Journey of a Life-Giver* training material—he adapted in the moment—speaking with grace and clarity, he spoke about the realities of abortion, not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually. Then he began by marveling at the beauty and miracle of fetal development—how God forms life in the womb with intention and care.

Then he asked, "Would you like to know the God who did this?"

With that invitation, a door opened. Vuthy shared about the God who designs life with love—the God who formed them, sees them, and offers forgiveness and freedom. He proclaimed the gospel, and every single one of the 120 women stepped forward to receive Jesus Christ.

As the team prayed, the women wept, grieving past abortions, rejoicing in the mercy they had found, and going on to establish a church. This is the power of gospel-driven advocacy. Not political. Not programmatic. Personal. Redemptive. Eternal.

Many pastors and ministry leaders feel hindered in addressing the complexity of abortion because of the political agenda that surrounds it. The loud cultural conflict has too often muted the Church's voice and blinded Christian leaders from discipling their people in how to love their neighbors, including the most hidden among them. But the sacrificial love of Christ has always entered places of pain to seek and save the lost. Ministering to those threatened, deceived, and wounded by abortion offers extraordinary examples of God's redeeming grace.

Because the Church's mission transcends politics we do not lead with campaigns—we lead with the Gospel. While some may be called to political engagement, our primary calling is to cultivate a redemptive response rooted in discipleship, compassion, and the heart of the Father. Lasting change begins not in legislation but in transformation—when the Church is equipped to see preborn children as image-bearers and respond with truth and grace.

To protect life in the womb, we must care for those outside the womb: mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings, and the Church itself. The family is not only the first place where life is nurtured—it is also a God-ordained structure through which gospel-witness is proclaimed and passed on. When families are strengthened and restored, communities are transformed. By God's design, the Church is essential in this process of healing. Many in our congregations carry wounds from abortion—some silent, some spoken. And Jesus—the Life-Giver—does not come with condemnation but with healing in His wings. So must we.

A strategic, gospel-centered response:

- **Pray for God's guidance and power to lead every effort.** True transformation begins with dependence on Him.
- **Lead with gospel-advocacy**, rather than political posturing. Our goal is not to win arguments, but to win hearts to the mercy and majesty of Christ.
- **Reach entire family systems** through evangelism and discipleship. Abortion impacts mothers, fathers, and families. The Gospel restores them all, valuing women, calling men to biblical responsibility, and inviting every heart to Christ.
- **Walk with the abortion-wounded** through grace-filled, restorative discipleship that leads to healing. The Church must be a place of wholeness and hope.
- **Mobilize the global Church** as a prophetic witness for life. When leaders are equipped with a theology of life, cultures begin to shift.

Through our curriculum and global training initiatives, LIFE International currently serves Christian leaders in 169 nations, equipping them to proclaim the Gospel, champion life, restore the brokenhearted, and raise a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves (LIFE International, 2025).

This is what it means to walk in the way of the Life-Giver: to lead with truth, to love with compassion, and to live as those who believe the Gospel really is good news for all people, including those not yet born.

IV. The Malta Commission: The Global Call for the Gospel + Life

In 2023, the Malta Commission, drafted by global leaders, issued a clarion call to the Church worldwide: **to fully embrace the People of the Womb as part of Christ's mission to the nations.** This is not merely a call to protect life—it is a call to proclaim the gospel more fully. It is a recognition that discipleship, when done in obedience to all that Christ has commanded, must include those who are most vulnerable and most often overlooked.

This is not driven by political strategy; it is led by Gospel conviction. A holy and hopeful vision rooted in the promise that “the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the

Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). To exclude the preborn from our mission strategies is to leave the most voiceless people group untouched by the compassion of Christ and unreached in our obedience.

Scripture affirms this vision. Psalm 22:31 declares, *“They will proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn.”* The People of the Womb are not beyond the reach of God’s purpose—they are included in His redemptive mission and worthy of our intentional advocacy. Their protection is not primarily a social cause or political platform, but rather it is part of our public witness to the Gospel’s message of dignity, compassion, and truth.

Across 169 nations and growing, LIFE International partners with pastors, leaders, and churches who are embracing this calling (LIFE International, 2025). When Christian leaders are equipped to articulate a theology of life, cultures begin to change, ministries emerge, and the Gospel takes root in hidden and hurting places.

The Malta Commission reflects what the Spirit is already stirring across the globe: **the People of the Womb are our neighbors**, and the Church must rise as a prophetic voice for their protection and dignity.

Conclusion: A Call to Action for the Global Church

The Church must fully embrace the People of the Womb as global neighbors—**fully human, deeply loved, and strategically vital** to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This is not a peripheral issue. It is central to the heart of the Father, and therefore central to the mission of His people.

To follow Jesus is to reflect His love for the least of these. And no one is smaller, more voiceless, or more vulnerable than a child in the womb.

When we affirm the sanctity of human life from fertilization, we do more than uphold biblical truth—we embody the heart of the Gospel in a world longing for clarity and compassion. This call is not bound by culture, continent, or ideology. It is rooted in the character of God Himself.

Let us respond—faithfully and boldly:

- **Pray** that the global Church would rise as a prophetic and compassionate witness in every nation.
- **Proclaim and disciple** others in the sanctity of human life as a truth that flows from and is inseparably connected to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **Equip leaders** to defend the preborn with theological clarity and cultural sensitivity.
- **Make the Church a refuge** for healing, restoration, and redemptive response.
- **Partner with ministries** bringing gospel-centered solutions to abortion’s devastation.

Let us go, therefore, into all the world—including the hidden places—and proclaim the Gospel and sanctity of life in His name.

Let us walk in the way of the Life-Giver until every image-bearer is honored as His creation, reached by the Gospel, embraced in His mission, and protected as a vital part of the Great Commission—for the glory of Christ and the advancement of His kingdom.

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For additional theological, statistical, or curriculum information, contact LIFE International at www.lifeinternational.com or email info@lifeinternational.com.
12. See the *Worldometer* for live abortion statistics for ongoing estimates: <https://www.worldometers.info/abortions/>.

Endnotes:

¹ Dr. Megan Best, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: Ethics and the Beginning of Human Life* (Kingsford, NSW: Matthias Media, 2012). Available at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000000000) and www.mathiasmedia.com.

² The SLED acronym—**S**ize, **L**evel of development, **E**nvironment, and **D**egree of dependency—was first introduced by Stephen Schwarz in *The Moral Question of Abortion* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990), and has since been widely used in pro-life apologetics by Scott Klusendorf and others.