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by NCR Staff

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In a recent commentary for NCR, anti-abortion and disability advocate Madison Chastain says that criminalizing abortions will not stop them, because having access to abortions isn't what causes them. "We can recognize that abortion being legal represents a certain form of public complicity in permitting a grievous sin to happen," she writes. "But are we actually permitting it any less without changing the causes of abortion?" Following are reader responses to this commentary that have been edited for length and clarity.

This article brought tears to my eyes. At last, an intelligent solution to the problem of abortion. An unwanted pregnancy is the cause of most abortions. Planned Parenthood has given women safe, efficient and affordable means to prevent unwanted pregnancies and so prevented millions of abortions.

We also need to provide prenatal and postnatal care for both mothers and children. This is one of the most cost-effective medical practices.

This is a win-win solution. Thank you. You are a true Christian.

GRACIA MARKS

Camarillo, California



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My thanks for this excellent analysis on the reality of this tragedy by Madison Chastain. Legal restrictions have never done anything in a concrete and positive way to reduce, let alone eradicate this human tragedy which affects both fetus and pregnant woman equally. It may give some the impression that they have "won" a battle against sin or whatever, but the only thing they have achieved is to deceive themselves, and closed their eyes on the real suffering which led to such a desperate decision.

In a way, it's like sentencing someone who attempted suicide to the death penalty. The real answer of any caring human to this tragedy lies, as Chastain pointed out, in

eliminating the various root causes. And as someone who really tries to be Christian, there is no point in voting an ineffective law, when one is not ready to bear the cost of making these injustices disappear.

In the Gospel according to John, Jesus doesn't waste time on useless discussion on who sinned and was responsible for the situation, when confronted with the suffering of the one born blind. He declares: "We must work the works of him (God) who sent me." If Christians, more particularly their pastors (bishops and priests) did this more often, abortion would certainly decrease, with or without prohibitive law. If they don't, abortion will always increase.

(Fr.) GEORGES CHEUNG, SJ

Rose Hill, Mauritius

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There is somehow a false proposal in the public domain that this is about women's rights. It's a balance between women's rights and (fetal) children's rights.

Deciding to have an abortion is a dreadful decision because we all know deeply this is about killing a person *in statu nascendi*.

On one hand, it is very difficult to appreciate the pressures if you haven't been there' imagine holding a ticking time bomb in your hand. But there is no constitutional right to abortion.

On the other hand, there's the completely blameless person growing in what should be the safest place on earth. There is a constitutional right to life and the pursuit of happiness.

That is where the Supreme Court will focus. And they are right.

But the true responsibility lies with society as a whole. We let it happen but lay both blame and consequences with the most innocent: the baby and its mother.

And the only option we offer is the quick fix of abortion, a permanent solution to a temporary problem. If we forbid abortion, we must then also protect the unexpectedly expectant mother.

Morally, as in casting no stones, emotionally, in sharing the stress, practically, in finding help and solutions plural, economically, in financial support, politically, in structures and subsidies.

ERLAND TEGELBERG

Bosch en Duin, the Netherlands

Advertisement

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It's a curious that thing that this article is both surprisingly nuanced and also surprisingly lacking in nuance. I am an anti-abortion, pro-choice moderate who wants to see abortion partially criminalized. Madison Chastain does not seem to recognize that people like me exist, although the majority of people in this country are pro-choice moderates.

The decades long failure of the Democrats and pro-choice organizations and activists to embrace a moderate pro-choice position is the basic most cause of the gains made by the anti-abortion movement. Most Americans would agree with federal, nationwide protection of the democratic right to pre-cortex abortions and with the criminalization of other elective abortions. That position would alienate extremists on both sides, but pro-choice and anti-abortion extremists should be alienated and marginalized by all sane, moral people.

Yet, for some reason, Chastain does not recognize any middle ground beyond her own anti-abortion, anti-criminalization perspective. Ultimately, I don't see how her position differs from the "personally opposed to abortion" Catholic politicians whose pro-choice extremism has accomplished nothing.

JEFFREY JONES

Hamburg, New York

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This piece is a fervent appeal for sanity in an otherwise insane world. The author states the obvious that life isn't fair. Those who make the rules win the game. Might (money) makes right. And those in power rewrite history to their favor.

That abortion is soon to lose its legal status will turn the struggle for advances by women on its head and set it back 50-plus years. There are already calls to make those who have an abortion criminals, charging them with murder.

There is a pattern of limiting human rights in some states. About the time *Roe* v. *Wade* was made the law of the land, the Equal Rights Amendment was passed in Congress and sent to the states for ratification. We look at both events as a moment in time however, decades of struggle preceded them and, we now see, the struggle continues. The Equal Rights Amendment was never completed because 15 states did not ratify it.

America claims to be a Christian nation. Parts of the country have taken great pride in labeling themselves "the Bible Belt." There is one Bible though countless ways of interpreting — usually through the lens of a male-defined religio-political goal. There's often no room for equal rights in their agendas.

These same people reject the Equal Right Amendment because, they fear, it will infringe upon their rights. Maintaining what power you have means depriving others from gaining any even if the rights being sought are biblically based basic human rights.

MICHAEL J. MCDERMOTT

Tyler, Texas

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