

## God's Word on Abortion in Cases of Rape or Incest

By Rev. Bob Moeller

The South Dakota Legislature and the Governor have enacted the Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act (HB 1215), a bill that defends human life and protects citizens from the great suffering caused by abortion. Sadly, opponents have secured enough signatures to place HB 1215 on the ballot (as Referred Law 6) for a vote of the people on November 7, 2006. The nation and the world are watching closely to see how we respond to this opportunity to defend life. As Lutherans For Life, we must share the truth and dispel the lies about abortion.

One of the objections cited by opponents of this bill is that there are no exceptions for cases of rape and incest. They say: "No woman should have to endure the agony of having to carry her rapist's child." As Lutherans For Life, we agree that rape and incest are horribly violent acts. But abortion is also a horribly violent act. How will responding to the violence and abuse of rape or incest with a second violent and brutal act, help a woman who is looking for healing?

Fortunately, God's Word provides us clear guidance to this very difficult problem. Dr. Jean Garton addresses this very issue in her commentary on 2 Kings 14:6 in *God's Word for Life*, entitled: "Is Abortion Allowed in Cases of Rape or Incest?"

"Place two newborn babies side by side on a table. Call together medical specialists, scientific professionals, social engineers, and leading theologians. Have technicians measure the size of the babies, examine their bodies, observe their behavior, draw blood, and perform a variety of reaction tests. Then let the experts tell us which baby is the product of rape. They can't!

"The child of rape, as every child, is a work of art created by God. Isaiah 64:8 speaks of God as the potter who fashions clay into something beautiful. In Psalm 19 the comparison is even more exact that it is God Himself who weaves our bodies together in our mother's wombs.

"Rape, long considered a sexual act, is now recognized as an act of violence, control, and rage. Those emotions are all exhibited in the rape of Tamar by her half-brother, Amnon, and the ravished Tamar rightly calls the rape a 'godless act' (2 Samuel 13:12).

"The outrage of society today against such a 'godless act' is to demand vengeance. Ironically, it's often the innocent child who, through abortion, receives a sentence of death. Abortion may serve the emotional needs of a society repelled by rape, but it doesn't serve the needs of the two human beings most effected—the mother and her unborn child.

"Abortion, as a supposed 'solution,' is usually offered out of pity for the violated victim. Pity, of course, is a good thing in that it is the feeling through which a person shares in the suffering and wounded condition of another. Yet, love is greater than pity! Pity sees the raped woman in her desolation and shame. Love sees her desolation and shame but also sees the woman in relation to the God who redeemed her through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. Love sees the value God places on unborn life and knows that He has a plan for both mother and child.

"In 2 Kings 14:6 we are reminded of the Lord's command: 'Parents must never be put to death for the crimes of their children, and children must never be put to death for the crimes of their parents' (2 Kings 14:6). To impose capital punishment, in the form of abortion, on the innocent child is to do what God expressly forbids. It is to repeat the "godlessness" inherent in rape. Unlike the rape in which the woman is an innocent victim, in abortion she becomes complicit in an act that destroys an innocent, defenseless child.

"The fact that the mother was in no way responsible for the act that led to the child's conception does not remove the child's right to live. The truly compassionate, loving solution is one that is both non-violent and life-giving. Positive, sensitive, and caring counseling that encourages the nurture and protection of the other innocent victim of rape or incest—the unborn child—can be part of the healing process.

"Incest involves a complex family situation that will not be cured or stopped by abortion. Abortion promises silence and makes it possible for the incest to continue. The more effective response to pregnancies resulting from incest is to deal with the environment in which the girl is being victimized. Aborting the girl's baby and then returning her to the family situation that caused the problem in the first place is no solution.

"Years after incest has stopped, victimized women report lingering pain and scars, but many cling to the promise in Psalm 147:3 that God heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds. Victims of rape and incest often struggle for a long time with self-

esteem, but many claim that what has helped them with the sense of degradation is entering into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. ‘He loves me just the way I am,’ said one victim. ‘I don’t have to be perfect or have to earn His love!’ said another. ‘I am absolutely complete in Christ,’ wrote a third.

“If the value of human life is to have any meaning, then its value cannot depend on, or be diminished by, the circumstances that brought about that new human life. God maps out the tapestry of life for each child, whether a child is the product of love and marriage, or the product of rape and incest. It’s not a question of when life begins. It is a question of when love begins, and God’s love for each child begins in His mind and heart before they were even conceived” (*GWFL* p.412a & b).

The call for exceptions to restrictions on abortions in cases of rape and incest is a very highly charged emotional issue. I think it could be the one point upon which Referred Law 6 will stand or fall. I don’t think we should give one inch on this point.

Unfortunately, it seems that some on the pro-life side are willing to simply point to the provisions in the legislation for “contraception measures ... administered prior to the time when a pregnancy could be determined through conventional medical testing” or the statistics that show the infrequency of abortions (about 1%) due to such extreme cases, as the answer to concerns about cases of rape and incest.

I think this could be a dangerous trap. It diverts our attention from the real issue. It concedes, in effect, that 1% of those conceived are not human beings deserving our protection. We need to help define the “playing field” where this issue is going to be debated. We need to constantly keep reminding the public that the life conceived, even in cases of rape and incest, is still a human life! We need to re-direct the level of debate from the emotional back to the logical, moral issue that it really is.

To this end the training that Lutherans For Life of SD is providing across the state through the “Making Abortion Unthinkable” video series will be very helpful. But let us not forget, that most of these “fence-sitters” are professed Christians, so we need not shy away from directing them to Scripture. In fact, as Lutherans For Life, “Our mission is to witness to the sanctity of human life through education based on the Word of God.” This is our philosophy: “Lutherans For Life believes that the Church is compelled by God’s

Word to speak and act on behalf of those who are vulnerable and defenseless.”

This will take tireless dedication, vast resources of time, energy, and money. But remember, we are not in this battle alone. For the sake of His Son Jesus Christ, God has promised to be with us always and to hear all of our prayers. He is indeed a mighty fortress. His Word is still a trusty shield and weapon.