

not confrontation. Gently offer suggestions for strategies the pastor can use to break the barrier of silence.

- Birds of a feather . . . Plan a clergy breakfast at no cost to them. Enlist sponsors who will underwrite the cost. Invite every clergy member (and spouses) in the community and have a speaker—a professional in the community. Provide practical, positive resources for them . . . or
- Hold a breakfast for pastors in the home of a sympathetic parishioner where a small group agrees to provide the food. Invite clergy and spouses in groups of eight. Plan an informal presentation and discussion that offers them resources for breaking the silence barrier.
- Enlist a member of your congregation who is a physician, lawyer, or post-abortive woman in joining you and your pastor for a breakfast or lunch. Schedule the meeting at a neutral place, a restaurant preferably, making sure it lends itself to quiet discussion.

### Personal Strategy

- Have a heart-to-heart talk with your pastor, emphasizing your concerns for the church's ministry in the area of life issues . . . or
- Ask a pastor or church leader to listen to or watch a carefully selected CD or DVD as a way of understanding your concerns. They often will listen in private when they wouldn't attend a public event. Set a time to meet with him/her to discuss the message.

- Pull together the statistics and information that you believe to be the most important in helping your pastor see the need for ministry and proclamation of truth on abortion and other life issues. Give prayerful consideration for the right timing to present the information to him. It may not be appropriate to introduce your concerns with a barrage of data; it may be much more effective to begin with a heart-to-heart talk, introducing the data as you sense the pastor's readiness.

Here are a few additional strategies that your federation, chapter, or organization might consider:

- Plan a regional pastors' conference.
- Offer a continuing education seminar at a local seminary that will address preparation for ministry in response to abortion and other life issues.
- Publish materials that include instruction on how to preach and teach on these subjects.
- Develop models for ministry that are uniquely suited to the church's life.
- Create a newsletter for seminarians.
- Encourage on-going, regular prayer by and for pastors and church leaders.

These strategies are not intended to be exhaustive. They are intended to help you get started in thinking of ways to end the silence of the shepherds and then carrying out the ideas.

This brochure is based on an original article prepared for the National Right To Life Committee Convention, Chicago, Illinois, 1997, by the National Pro-Life Religious Council. It was revised and edited in May 1999 and in October 2007 by Lutherans For Life for LFL federations, chapters, Life Ministry Coordinators, and local congregations.

For more information about the National Pro-Life Religious Council contact them at: PO Box 61838, Staten Island, NY 10306; 718-980-4400 ext. 222; Mail@nprcouncil.org; www.nprcouncil.org.

### Also available from Lutherans For Life:



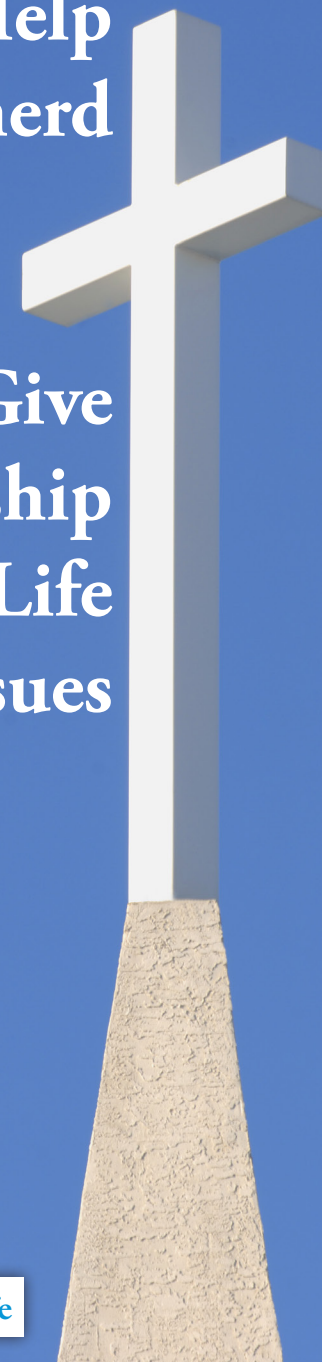
In **Abortion and the Message of the Church: Sin or Salvation?**, Rev. Dr. James Lamb shows that throughout history the Church has called abortion sin. Only recently have some started calling abortion salvation—a way out of a difficult situation (but it is not a way out). It only creates guilt and despair to which the Church must apply its most powerful message, the Gospel of Jesus.  
*Item LFL205T. \$0.50 ea.*



### Lutherans For Life

[lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)  
[info@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:info@lutheransforlife.org)  
888.364.LIFE (5433)  
Item LFL1624

# How to Help a Shepherd Give Leadership on Life Issues



Lutherans For Life

In the “For Life” movement the question is often asked, “How do we reach pastors?”

This brochure lists practical suggestions from members of the National Pro-Life Religious Council (revised by Lutherans For Life).

Church Leaders:

- Don't like to attend extra meetings.
- Don't like to admit they don't know something.
- Don't like to create controversy.
- Don't like to admit they may have been wrong.

However, after many years of legalized abortion-on-demand, many clergy have begun to grow uncomfortable with their previous acceptance of abortion choice. Some have witnessed the negative results in women in their own congregations and have seen the unconscionable defense of the partial-birth abortion. Many pastors testify to being brought out of their silence through the sincere efforts of individuals in their churches. We need to find ways to reach pastors that are sensitive to their personal struggles.

There are a number of strategies that can be carried out by individuals. Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, executive director of Lutherans For Life, has outlined these strategies into the following categories:

- **Doctrinal Strategy**
- **Ministry Strategy**
- **General Strategy**
- **Educational Strategy**
- **Social Strategy**
- **Personal Strategy**

## Doctrinal Strategy

- Abortion has become a highly charged political issue. Pastors themselves need encouragement to view abortion as the theological and spiritual issue that it is, both in the life of the Church and in the lives of those affected by abortion decisions. Church leaders may be especially guarded if they think they are being pressured to become politically active. They need to know that your primary concern is for the integrity of the Church's message and ministry.
- Life issues—abortion, embryonic stem cell research, cloning, assisted suicide, for example—are not mere “social issues.” The thinking that undergirds them in every case is an affront to the doctrines of Christian faith. Shepherds who are concerned about the preservation of truth and of the purity of Christian doctrine may be persuaded to speak out on these issues if they are approached from this angle rather than the “political” or “social” angle.
- Pastors often protest that they will not preach on abortion because they do not want to offend the women who have had them. Luke 7:36-50 is a response by analogy. Jesus is the guest at the home of a Pharisee. There a woman, “who had lived a sinful life,” expressed her sorrow and faith weeping at the feet of Jesus. Who offends this woman? Is it the Pharisee who says nothing to her? Or is it Jesus, who forgives her sins? The shepherd offends his sheep when he does not apply the healing oil of forgiveness to the wound of abortion.

## Ministry Strategy

- There is a different success rate between an educational approach and a ministry approach. And there is a very big difference in response rate between efforts to persuade clergy to become politically involved and efforts to involve them in ministry. Clergy respond more positively when approached with a ministry model or message such as one that relates to Caring Pregnancy Centers, Post-Abortion Syndrome, or adoption.
- Develop a caring group (4-10 members) in your congregation who will help girls, women, or families with a crisis pregnancy. Inform your pastor that your group exists and wants to help him offer women an alternative to abortion. Work with the pastor on the development of such a ministry in your church.
- Ask your pastor, “How can I help you minister in For Life/pro-life/pro-family areas? How can I assume some of your burden in this needed ministry?” An offer to help, instead of the presentation of an “agenda,” may be welcomed and encouraged by your church leader.

## General Strategy

- Develop a constructive, consistent program of prayer on behalf of your pastor and church leaders, praying for their enlightenment and boldness.
- In your efforts to inform or appeal to your church leaders in writing, keep your messages short, concise and attractive.

Include recommendations for how the material or information could be used. Express a willingness to discuss your concerns.

- Be patient with your pastor. Acknowledge the struggles and obstacles he faces. Encourage him in his witness for life.

## Educational Strategy

- If your pastor will not speak about abortion from the pulpit, encourage him to include in a sermon or Bible class on the subject of forgiveness the message that abortion is also forgivable.
- Educate congregational leaders on the effects of abortion on those who have them.

## Social Strategy

- Ask another member of the clergy who is pro-life to take the non-involved pastor out for breakfast or lunch. If the pastor is married, include spouses. Ask the pro-life pastor to share why he is concerned about the issue.
- Purchase a ticket for your pastor (and a guest) to a banquet for a caring pregnancy center, for an adoption event, or for a program that is related to abortion but not an overtly right-to-life political event.
- Invite a church leader to a small group meeting in order to share with you why he has not or will not speak openly about life issues. Acknowledge the difficulty for pastors. Make it a time of mutual sharing,