

THE FINAL CHAPTER



The ongoing struggle for **civil rights** in our country has seen remarkable results. That so many have had to sacrifice so much and suffer so greatly to achieve equality under the law, though, is both a testament to perseverance and a stain on our national conscience.

When we view how far we've come in how we treat each other, the temptation is to feel pride in our society's advancement. Pride, however, is what caused the problem of unequal treatment in the first place. And pride is what perpetuates unequal treatment today.

For **the final chapter of the civil rights movement** to be completed, what we must pursue is humility – the magnitude of our wrongs is so enormous and the weight of guilt so heavy, there is no other way. Only humility will let us see what we've done. Only humility will cause us to seek forgiveness and healing. And only humility will keep us from committing those wrongs again.

The final chapter of the civil rights movement is about persons – not one “race” of people, but humanity itself. It proceeds from the fundamental question, is your right to live inherent because you are a human being or does it depend on whether someone wants you?

All other rights – voting, housing, education – mean nothing if someone else has a “right” to take your life. That's why the final civil rights chapter must be **personhood**. Without legal recognition that the protection of your continued existence should be based on something more than personal popularity, there really is nothing left to protect.

Our Founding Fathers valued humanity, so much so that the Declaration of Independence could be called the first chapter of the American civil rights movement. They wrote: “that all men are created equal ... endowed by their Creator with certain **unalienable Rights**, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” They held that all of us are created equal and that the first Right is Life.

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Over more than 237 years, Americans have argued, fought, and ultimately died over our equality and our rights. Most famously, we have struggled over discrimination based on skin color and ethnicity.

I, like so many others, have lived this struggle. I know what discrimination did to the victims. Some of us suffered humiliation, scorn, and burned homes. Others suffered beatings, arrests, and bombed churches. Still others suffered death. Not because of what we did, but because of who we were.

Many whites were too prideful to regard us as equally human.

Pride convinces us to believe a lie if the lie is flattering. It's a truth as old as Adam and Eve.

Many white people believed – or wanted to believe – that African Americans were inferior. It puffed them up. In today's language, it enhanced their self-esteem, made them “feel good about themselves.” It made looking for a job or getting an education more convenient if “other people” were out of the way.

Blacks were the unwanted.

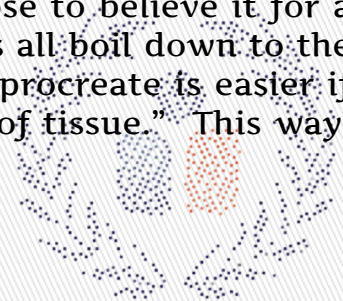
The problem with racial discrimination's prideful boast of superiority is that it wasn't true. It forced those who discriminated to go to great lengths to keep the lie alive. It made them create new lies to justify the old. It seared consciences. In some cases, it hardened hearts to the point of physical violence.

So it is with the lie that persons in the womb are not really persons.

We know this is not true, yet many of us choose to believe it for a whole host of reasons. Basically, those reasons all boil down to the fact that life for those who are old enough to procreate is easier if we all call babies “clumps of cells” and “blobs of tissue.” This way, we can do what we want to these babies.

The unwanted aren't really like “us.”

If we regard ourselves as better, “more human” than humans in the womb, we don't have to face the horror of what abortion does to the unwanted. And abortion is an awful thing to face.



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Everyone instinctively recoils at the sight of aborted babies' photos – tiny arms, legs, and faces torn from bodies, rearranged, and covered in blood. What is telling is when supporters of abortion complain about such photos – it's not that they object to the act that utterly destroyed that life, they object to having to acknowledge that, yes, that "clump of cells" sure looks like a baby.

Of course, no one wants to look at photos of such devastation. But if we can look at them and our only reaction is to avert our eyes or demand that they not be shown, we are enabling the horror to continue.

Many whites did not begin to oppose racial discrimination until they saw the violence committed against African Americans who wanted only to eat at a lunch counter, ride a bus, or stay at a hotel. Images of Freedom Riders beaten until their faces were unrecognizable were wake-up calls to complacent Americans. Racist authorities knew they would be – that's why photographers of that mob brutality had their cameras smashed.

Abortionists know the same thing about ultrasound images. Are we really expected to believe that abortion advocates oppose pre-abortion ultrasound laws because such acts place a burden on them and on women? Ultrasounds are already routinely performed for abortions. The only change such laws cause is that abortionists may now have to tilt the screen and share the information they already see with the mother who's about to abort. The real concern of the abortion lobby is that if a mother actually sees her baby, she's less likely to pay the abortionist hundreds or thousands of dollars to take her child's life.

That ultrasound image of a baby about to be aborted serves the same purpose as the photo of a battered Freedom Rider – it awakens us. Either we react to it in a healthy way and want to stop the violence or we concern ourselves with ourselves and look away, hardening our own hearts.

I have been on both sides of discrimination. As a victim of racial discrimination, I have lost schoolmates, my father, and my uncle to its violence. As a perpetrator of **personhood** discrimination, I have lost two of my children.

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I know the prideful lie that undergirds “legal” abortion. I believed it when I voluntarily aborted one of my babies. I also know how the evil of this lie can infect society. Another of my children was taken by a doctor who thought he knew what was “good” for me.

What really was good for me was and is the love of Jesus. He healed me of my post-abortion pain and now He inspires me to fight for the least of these, my brothers and sisters. One does not need to see the light, however, to see the humanity of the unborn.

Abortion advocates complain about pro-lifers “imposing religious beliefs.” Whether a baby exists, though, is not a religious belief, it’s a physical reality readily proved by science, not to mention common sense. Just as one does not need faith to be a person, one does not need faith to recognize another person.

What we do need in order to honor the humanity of the unborn is humility. Every one of us has been a one-celled zygote, incredibly small and completely helpless. Origins don’t get any more humble than that. A pro-abortion professor once pointed out that a newly formed human embryo is no bigger than a dot on a piece of paper. Our moral conscience does not have to be the same size.

Let us remember who we are and from where we came – our mothers’ wombs. We were as human then as we are now. No “magic **personhood** dust” was sprinkled on us when we went through the birth canal. It actually takes some kind of weird, illogical belief system to think that a 24-week-old baby inside her mother’s womb is not a person, but if that baby’s born prematurely at 24 weeks, she is.

Once we remember who we are – grown-up unborn babies – let us humbly and with love work to change our society.

The final chapter of the civil rights movement is being written today. It is already filled with 55 million children who never got the chance to breathe the air or see the sun, tens of millions of mothers and/or fathers who believed the lie or were pressured into accepting the lie that they would be better off if their babies were dead, and untold numbers of family, friends, and complete strangers whose lives would have been touched by those 55 million.

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That means that **the final chapter** must also include not just a change in our attitude toward abortion, but adopting, if we haven't already, a heart for the mothers and fathers of aborted children. What has transpired in the last half-century is a tragedy of unimaginable proportions. It will not be overcome if we don't humble ourselves and love those who, regretfully or not, were part of it.

Can we make abortion unthinkable? Racism was common when I was a girl. Today it's unacceptable.

Can we change abortion laws after they've been in effect for so long? Yes. We ended "legal" segregation statutes that had been around longer than *Roe v. Wade*.

Will we ever be free of all abortion? Yes, but that involves a different Final Chapter, when love will be the law.

In the meantime, let us strive for justice and seek mercy. Let us resolve in our hearts to speak for the unborn and comfort those pregnant women afraid of the future. Sometimes one person is all it takes to save a life. Ask those who pray in front of abortion mills or work in pregnancy resource centers – it happens every day.

The cause of **personhood** is, indeed, **the final chapter of the civil rights movement**. And each person who's spared because of it will receive a priceless gift – the chance to write the chapters of his or her own life story.

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