

Delivered at the New Jersey Statehouse, Trenton , NJ January 22, 2004

Good morning. I'm Dean Gavaris and I help direct the ministry of Gateway Pregnancy Centers in Elizabeth and Irvington.



Who are we today? Standing here this morning, we are a mixed group of caring professionals, social activists, frustrated citizens, compassionate family members, religious leaders - wounded victims.

Where are we today? We have a country that after 31 years of legalized abortion has destroyed 45 million innocent children .We have nearly 40% of our adult population personally impacted by the evil of abortion. We have laws that often reflect the most barbaric elements of the human heart. We have religious leaders in our country, many of whom prefer to build up their church numbers rather than to fearlessly and uncompromisingly proclaim the truths found in the Bible. We have legislators who are willing to codify evil.

We have media willing to cover it all up. We have the greatest nation of the face of the earth, willing to sink to the lowest depths of human depravity. Some here have tried to change our society by protesting this evil, and this is commendable. Some (like the pregnancy centers represented here) try to help those enticed, coerced or victimized by abortion and they're doing a sacrificial job.

Some (like NJ Right to Life) work to change the laws, challenge the voters, inform and implore – and they're doing a courageous job. And yet ultimately, society will not change until the human heart is changed. Abortion is more an attitude of the heart than an action of the will. Abortion providers will not be changed by threats – none of us believe that. They will be won by love.

All of us need to know that. But we can't know this personally unless our hearts have been changed first. You might be pro-life, but the issue today is – do you have eternal life? Do you know personally the God who made the very lives we are so relentlessly defending here today?

What do we have today? We have the truth of God's Word, which tells us that we are made in God's Image. We have the Scriptures that tell us that all human life is sacred and worthy of protection. We have the Holy Spirit of God that is able to change the minds of the men and women we serve and the hearts of the abortion providers. We have the

example of Jesus, who endured personal attacks and hate against Him because of His great love for men and women.

So, what do we need today? If you're in the media, may I challenge you to fearlessly report the truth. If you're in government, either making or carrying out the law, may I challenge you to remember the great lawgiver as you carry out your task. If you're a pastor or priest, may I challenge you to get to know the Jesus you preach about. He, and only He can change the hearts of man. You as a minister have the privilege and the responsibility of leading them into the truth. What's important to you will be important to them.

If you are like me, one who has experienced the grace of God, stand up and tell others. If you are what Ron Hutchcraft has described in these words: a "spiritual snowman slowly going soft, melted by the heat of a culture that applies heavy pressure to compromise - increasingly practicing your culture rather than practicing your faith- repent of it, and stand for truth.

If you are here today and you are not absolutely sure where you will stand with God one second after you take your last breath, you can make sure, and invite Him into your heart. Jesus can and does change hearts.

Has your heart been changed? In the final analysis, after all your words, and all your works and all the rallies, this is all that matters. **Do you know Jesus personally?** -- Call or write us at Gateway Pregnancy Centers: (973) 399-8378 - www.gateway.org / email: dean@gateway.org © 2004