CHURCH RESEARCH

STUDY OF WOMEN WHO HAVE HAD AN ABORTION & THEIR VIEWS ON CHURCH
Care Net envisions a culture where women and men faced with pregnancy decisions are transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and empowered to choose life for their unborn children and abundant life for their families.

Acknowledging that every human life begins at conception and is worthy of protection, Care Net offers compassion, hope, and help to anyone considering abortion by presenting them with realistic alternatives and Christ-centered support through our life-affirming network of pregnancy centers, organizations, and individuals.
Study of Women Who Have Had an Abortion and Their Views on Church

Commissioned by: CARENET

Conducted by: LifeWay RESEARCH
Biblical Solutions for Life
Methodology

- A demographically balanced online panel was used for interviewing American women between May 6-13, 2015
- Quotas and slight weights were used to ensure the sample matched national totals for ethnicity, age, income, and region
- This nationally balanced sample was screened to only include those women who indicated that had ever had a pregnancy termination/abortion medical procedure
- The completed sample is 1,038 surveys
Survey Responses
More than 1 in 3 (36%) women were attending a Christian church once a month or more at the time of their first abortion among American women who have had an abortion.

Q: “At the time of your first pregnancy termination/abortion how often are you attending religious services at a Christian church? (Select One)”
As women considered their abortion decision, the most typical reactions/expectations were judgmental or condemning.

The reaction I received or expected was...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loving</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgmental</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condemning</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not receive any reaction nor had any expectations</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: “At that same time, which of the following describes the reaction you received or would have expected to receive from a local church as you considered this decision? (Select all that apply)”
At least once a month | On religious holidays, rarely, or never

Loving | 25% | 6%
Cold | 18% | 15%
Caring | 31% | 7%
Judgmental | 34% | 33%
Condemning | 27% | 25%

Q: “At that same time, which of the following describes the reaction you received or would have expected to receive from a local church as you considered this decision? (Select all that apply)”
Reactions and expectations from a local church by church attendance (cont.)

Q: “At that same time, which of the following describes the reaction you received or would have expected to receive from a local church as you considered this decision? (Select all that apply)”
Women are most likely to discuss their decision to terminate their pregnancy with the father of the baby or a medical professional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A medical professional</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The father of the baby</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend(s)</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mother</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My father</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family member</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone at a local church</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A counselor</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An abortion provider</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pregnancy care center worker</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family member</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not discuss it with anyone</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: “With whom did you discuss this pregnancy termination-abortion decision? (Select all that apply)”
Three in four (76%) women indicate local churches had no influence on their decision to terminate their pregnancy.

A local church...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid for the termination-abortion</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drove me to the pregnancy termination-abortion</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided information on alternatives to abortion</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred me to an abortion provider</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred me to a counselor</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred me to a pregnancy care center</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged me to have the procedure</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged me not to have the procedure</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local churches had no influence on my decision</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: “Did a local church influence your decision in any of the following ways? (Select all that apply)”
Local church influence by church attendance at that time

- **Paid for the termination/abortion**: 10% (1% on religious holidays, rarely, or never)
- **Drove me to the pregnancy termination/abortion**: 9% (1% on religious holidays, rarely, or never)
- **Provided information on alternatives to abortion**: 19% (2% on religious holidays, rarely, or never)
- **Referred me to an abortion provider**: 9% (1% on religious holidays, rarely, or never)
- **Referred me to a counselor**: 16% (2% on religious holidays, rarely, or never)

Q: “Did a local church influence your decision in any of the following ways? (Select all that apply)”
Local church influence by church attendance (cont.)

Q: “Did a local church influence your decision in any of the following ways? (Select all that apply)”

- Local churches had no influence on my decision: 89%
- Encouraged me to have the procedure: 6%
- Encouraged me not to have the procedure: 13%
- Referred me to a pregnancy care center: 10%
- Other: 5%

- At least once a month
- On religious holidays, rarely, or never
Nearly 4 in 10 (38%) women indicate the father of the baby was **most** influential on their abortion decision.

Q: “Which of these was **most** influential on your decision to terminate the pregnancy? (Select One)”
Three in ten (30%) women who have had an abortion indicate they have had more than one pregnancy termination or abortion.

Q: “In total, how many pregnancy terminations/abortions have you had? (Select One)”
More than 4 in 10 (43%) women who have had an abortion agree that it is safe to talk with a pastor about abortion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. It is safe to talk with a pastor about abortion.”
Half (49%) of women who have had an abortion agree that pastors’ teachings on forgiveness don’t seem to apply to terminated pregnancies.

Among American women who have had an abortion

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Pastors’ teachings on forgiveness don’t seem to apply to terminated pregnancies/abortion.”
Four in ten (39%) women agree that pastors are sensitive to the pressures a woman faces with an unplanned pregnancy.

Among American women who have had an abortion

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Pastors are sensitive to the pressures a woman faces with an unplanned pregnancy.”
More than 4 in 10 (42%) women agree that pastors teach that God is willing to forgive past abortion decisions.

Among American women who have had an abortion

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Pastors teach that God is willing to forgive past abortion decisions.”
Nearly 4 in 10 (38%) women who have had an abortion agree that churches are a safe place to talk about pregnancy options.

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Churches are a safe place to talk about pregnancy options including parenting, abortion, and adoption.”
Over half (54%) of women who have had an abortion agree that churches over-simplify decisions about pregnancy options.

Among American women who have had an abortion

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Churches over-simplify decisions about pregnancy options.”
Three in ten (30%) women who have had an abortion agree that churches give accurate advice about pregnancy options.

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Churches give accurate advice about pregnancy options including parenting, abortion, and adoption.”
More than half (51%) of women agree that churches are prepared to provide support to women who chose to keep a child from an unplanned pregnancy.

Among American women who have had an abortion

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Churches are prepared to provide material, emotional, and spiritual support to women who chose to keep a child resulting from an unplanned pregnancy.”
Four in ten (41%) women who have had an abortion agree that churches are prepared to help women with their decisions about unwanted pregnancies.

Among American women who have had an abortion:

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Churches are prepared to help women with their decisions about unwanted pregnancies.”
Two-thirds (65%) of women who have had an abortion agree that church members judge single women who are pregnant.

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Church members judge single women who are pregnant.”
Nearly two-thirds (64%) of women agree that church members are more likely to gossip about a woman considering abortion than help her understand options.

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Church members are more likely to gossip about a woman considering an abortion than help her understand her options.”
Half (51%) of women agree that churches do not have a ministry prepared to discuss options during an unplanned pregnancy.

Among American women who have had an abortion:

- Strongly Disagree: 8%
- Somewhat Disagree: 17%
- Somewhat Agree: 28%
- Strongly Agree: 23%
- Don't Know: 25%

Q: “For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement. Churches do not have a ministry prepared to discuss options during an unplanned pregnancy.”
Twice as many women would **not** recommend to someone close to them that they discuss their decision regarding an unplanned pregnancy with someone at a local church.

Among American women who have had an abortion

Q: “If you or someone close to you had an unplanned pregnancy, would you recommend they discuss the decision with someone at a local church?”
However, self-identifying Christians, particularly evangelical Christians, have the most favorable view of the church’s role/potential role

• It is safe to talk with a pastor about abortion.
  – 71% of self-identified evangelical Christians agree
  – 38% of those who are not agree

• Pastors teach that God is willing to forgive past abortion decisions.
  – 76% of self-identified evangelical Christians agree
  – 35% of those who are not agree
Self-identifying Christians, particularly evangelical Christians, have the most favorable view of the church’s role/potential role (cont)

- **Churches are a safe place to talk about pregnancy options including parenting, abortion, and adoption.**
  - 70% of self-identified evangelical Christians agree
  - 31% of those who are not agree

- **Churches give accurate advice about pregnancy options including parenting, abortion and adoption.**
  - 59% of self-identified evangelical Christians agree
  - 25% of those who are not agree.

- **Churches are prepared to provide material, emotional, and spiritual support to women who chose to keep a child resulting from an unplanned pregnancy.**
  - 73% of self-identified evangelical Christians agree
  - 47% of those who are not agree.
Self-identifying Christians, particularly evangelical Christians, have the most favorable view of the church’s role/potential role (cont)

• Churches are prepared to help women with their decisions about unwanted pregnancies.
  – 65% of self-identified evangelical Christians agree
  – 36% of those who are not agree.

• If you or someone close to you had an unplanned pregnancy, would you recommend they discuss the decision with someone at a local church?
  – 62% of self-identified evangelical Christians agree
  – 18% of those who are not agree.
Seven in 10 (70%) women who have had an abortion indicate their religious preference is Christian

Among American women who have had an abortion

- Christian – Catholic: 27%
- Christian – Orthodox (Russian, Armenian, Greek): 2%
- Christian – Protestant: 26%
- Christian – Non-denominational: 15%
- Jewish: 3%
- Mormon/Latter Day Saints: 1%
- Muslim: 2%
- Hindu: 1%
- Buddhist: 1%
- Christian Scientist: 0%
- Jehovah’s Witnesses: 1%
- Unity/Unitarian: 0%
- Atheist: 4%
- Agnostic: 8%
- No preference: 7%
- Other: 3%

Christian – Protestant was defined as “including Adventist, Baptist, Church of Christ, Church of God, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodists, Presbyterian, etc.”

Q: “What is your religious preference? (Select One)”
One-third (35%) of Christian women who have had an abortion indicate they currently attend church once a week or more.

Among American women who have had an abortion and whose religious preference is Christian:

- More than once a week: 8%
- About once a week: 27%
- Once or twice a month: 17%
- Only on religious holidays: 10%
- Rarely: 28%
- Never: 9%
- Don't Know: 0%

Q: “How often do you attend religious services at a Christian church? (Select One)” Asked of those with a Christian religious preference. n=721
More than half (52%) of churchgoers who have had an abortion report that no one at church knows they have had a pregnancy terminated.

Among American women who have had an abortion who currently attend a Christian church once a month or more:

Q: “Does anyone at your church know that you have had a pregnancy termination/abortion?” Asked of those who currently attend a Christian church once a month or more. n=381