

By Jonathon Van Maren

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This past week, the staff and interns of the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform set off on our second annual Reproductive Choice Campaign tour, this time through central Alberta. The locations for “Choice” Chain and routes for our truck (which features huge photos of aborted fetuses in the first trimester) included Airdrie, Red Deer, Camrose and Edmonton. All of us agreed that our experiences in Edmonton were by far the most moving and frustrating.

Accompanying us for the tour was a woman who runs the Chilliwack Crisis Pregnancy Center and is a member of Silent No More Awareness, a group of post-abortive men and women who share their regrets about past abortions. On Wednesday night, she shared her testimony with the team, telling us how her mother had pressured her into an abortion 28 years earlier, irrevocably changing the course of her life. It is something she must still deal with every day.

On Thursday, the CCBR staff and interns faced the “Woman’s Health Options” abortion clinic with our signs, directly across from the entrance but just outside the bubble zone. For hours, scared teenage girls, some visibly pregnant, got out of waiting vehicles and scurried to the door. Due to the legal restrictions placed on the clinic, we were banned by law from calling out to them, and had to try our best to intercept them before they crossed into the bubble zone. Most got dropped off at the door.

It was easily one of the most frustrating experiences of my life, and many of the team members concurred. Young, scared girls, often clearly under the influences of their boyfriends (who continued to support their right to have casual, irresponsible sex with them) walked into the clinic time and time again, to have their innocent offspring decapitated, dismembered and disembowelled. In light of the testimony we had heard the previous evening, I couldn’t help thinking: *You’re too young to wreck your life. You’re too young to commit this action that could destroy you, and **will** destroy your child.*

The Woman’s Health Options abortion mill kills five thousand unborn children a year, also ruining countless lives. One thing struck many of us when we were standing outside the clinic: Where was the Edmonton religious communities? Where were the Edmonton pro-lifers? Why weren’t they trying to do something, anything, to save some of these babies?

This situation, unfortunately, is one that is microcosmic of what is happening across our country. It reminds me of a quote I read recently from Douglas Scott Jr.: “the pro-life movement will succeed only to the extent that pro-life people are willing to be inconvenienced.”

What has actually happened is that we have succumbed to the same mindset that we accuse our opponents of. We (rightfully) point out that abortion is age discrimination—that because unborn children are smaller and unseen in the womb that society has allowed them to be murdered based on these differences. But think about it. If there was a clinic where parents were walking toddlers through the front door at the rate

of five thousand a year, would we react differently? Would we be able react so casually to these numbers? I think it is safe to say we would. But we don't. Because the unborn are smaller, and handily, we can't see them, so their victimization doesn't pique our conscience.

The Christian community bears the greatest responsibility for the deaths of these children. The churches are supposed to act as the conscience of nations. However, today's churches are prone to being relentlessly non-confrontational. Instead of warning people that destroying their children is a horrific evil, many of today's churches are more likely to hand you a tract explaining how you can be forgiven for committing that crime. Today's religious communities often seem to be under the fatal misapprehension that society can spiral downwards while committing a horrific genocide, yet the church can somehow insulate and escape the consequences. The city is ablaze, but the church building somehow won't catch fire. Or, to take the metaphor a step further, the church is fiddling while Rome burns.

Silence is complicity. And children are paying for our silence with their lives.