



George Tiller is Dead: For Whom Shall We Mourn?

by Douglas W. Phillips, Esq., June 1, 2009

Summary: For well over twenty years, the pro-life community has been exposing the evil deeds of Dr. George Tiller. Tiller was regularly picketed over the years. Thousands came in the Summer of 1991 and were arrested outside his clinic. In 2001, on the ten-year anniversary of "The Summer of Mercy", thousands again protested his abominable practice. His office was bombed once, and he was even shot in 1993 in both arms (his shooter remains in federal prison for attempted murder to this day). Tiller was also the defendant in a series of legal challenges intended to shut down his operations, including two grand juries that were convened after citizen-led petition drives. Through the course of all these means to shut down George Tiller (both lawful and those unlawful), he was never stopped. But yesterday, he was gunned down while serving as an usher in a Sunday-worship service at Reformation Lutheran Church.

"Tiller the Killer" is dead. Who will mourn for this man? Perhaps the bigger question is this: Who will mourn for the more than 60,000 babies that Dr. George Tiller brutally murdered in the most horrific manner imaginable over his lengthy career as America's most notorious provider of late-term abortions?

The names of these babies are unknown. On the other hand, we do know what happened to the bodies of these children made in the image of God: "Tiller the Killer" would vivisect these children up to nine months into their lives; next, this professing Christian would baptize the mangled remains of the children he murdered; then, he would place their bodies into his Auschwitz-like crematorium; and, finally, he would take the ashen remains of these children and place them in an urn.

Tiller's career was more horrifying than any horror movie ever produced,

because there was nothing pretend about his bizarre and diabolical practices. On Sundays, George Tiller worshipped in his Lutheran Church where he served as usher. But on Monday through Friday, he chopped up children — and he did so in the name of Jesus. He even boasted about it. Because of Tiller, Wichita, Kansas became the destination of choice for women all over America to come and have Dr. Tiller take care of their "problem." These are the facts.

And yet his death is tragic. It is not a tragedy that Tiller will never be a killer again. Will anyone argue that it is a tragedy that the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will never again be dishonored by this church-going Sweeney Todd of the medical profession?

The tragedy is two-fold: First, by breaking the law of God (murder) in order to advance the law of God (punishing a murderer), the shooter

demonstrated that he was a lawless individual and that, whatever his motivations, his cause was unholy. He cannot expect the blessing of God on his efforts, but rather the contrary. God was certainly capable of shutting down George Tiller without private individuals breaking His law by taking matters into their own hands. The ends do not justify the means. Pragmatic responses to evil produces short term victories and long-term heartaches.

Second, Tiller's executioner has played into the hands of the community of abortion apologists — those in the press and elsewhere who look for every opportunity to shift the debate away from the bloodshed of babies. These individuals are hell-bent to justify America's idolatrous practice of child sacrifice to the gods of feminist self-determination, and the wrongful killing of an abortionists only furthers their cause.

Back in 2003 when Paul Hill was executed for killing Dr. John Britton (a noted abortionist in Florida), I offered the following on why vigilante justice in the cause of the unborn is immoral:

The common law defense of justifiable homicide is derived from the case laws of Exodus which make clear that one may use lethal force if necessary in defense of self or others where imminent life-endangering harm is threatened and lethal force is necessary to prevent the crime. In addition, lethal force may be used in defense of country, or by the state against those criminals lawfully convicted of a capital offense.

So where did Paul Hill go wrong? Practically speaking, Mr. Hill acted as executioner, not rescuer. Having determined that the abortionist in question was guilty of past murders, and would probably commit future murders, Paul Hill stalked, hunted and executed the abortionist. The problem here is that the biblical jurisdiction to execute rests only with the

state. There is no provision in Scripture for vigilante justice.

And what of Hill's argument of justifiable homicide? Under biblical and common law, justifiable homicide in defense of others requires: (a) a clearly identifiable victim; (b) an aggressor who is presently engaged in a clear life-threatening act of violence against that specific victim; and (c) a reasonable determination that lethal force is necessary to prevent the specific life threatening act of the willful aggressor against the innocent party.

Paul Hill failed each of these tests: Who was the victim here? We don't know. In fact, we don't even know for sure what the abortionist was going to do that day. We may presume he will be about the business of killing babies, but that is not sufficient to make a claim to justifiable homicide. Nor was the abortionist being stopped from a crime in progress. He was simply gunned down in his parking lot. Nor was Paul Hill rescuing a victim from an observable and specific criminal act. Nor must we conclude that executing him was the only way to stop this man from future acts of murder.

Paul Hill lacked the jurisdiction to execute another. He never found himself in a circumstance which warranted justifiable homicide, as defined at biblical and common law. His was an act of premeditated murder, and for that God's Word required his execution by the state.

For the cause of the pro-life movement to succeed, we need the blessing and favor of the Lord. Only this will win the day. And we cannot presume to have God's blessing and favor unless we love the Lord with all of our hearts; unless we become men and women committed to his law-word revelation; and unless we recognize that judgment begins first in the house of the Lord.

This means that the millions of professing Christians who use abortifacient contraceptives need to humble themselves before the Lord and change their practices. It means that we must embrace a 100% pro-life apologetic, rejecting all forms of abortion and refusing to embrace "ends justifies the means" reasoning. It means that we need to be serious about not voting for individuals who sanction the murder of even one child. It means that we need to embrace a life-ethic which is different from the world — we must love life, love children, and embrace them as God's gift.

Moreover, we must view the cause of Christ as more important than the pro-life movement. This means that our duty to obey Christ and to honor His name is more important than defeating abortion in America, as badly as we may desire that outcome.

I conclude with this thought: George Tiller is dead. For whom shall we mourn?

First, we mourn for the many children he murdered whose names will never make headline news, but whose murder were painful, violent, and bloody at the hands of this man. Second, we mourn for the future children who may be killed as a result of the way the pro-abortion movement will capitalize on this unlawful killing. Third, we mourn for a nation that has broken covenant with God, and that is deserving of God's just wrath for its complicity in child sacrifice.

Finally, our mourning must lead us to prayer for the Church. God forbid that the blood of the innocent would be on our hands. If we would humble ourselves before the Lord and simply refuse to tolerate abortion in our own ranks, who knows what great things might be lawfully done, with God's blessing, to bring murderers like George Tiller to an appropriate and earthly justice?