

Relevant international issues: Global abortion trends

- 1. Number of abortions is declining.** The number of induced abortions declined worldwide between 1995 and 2003, from nearly 46 million to approximately 42 million. About one in five pregnancies worldwide end in abortion. Most abortions occur in developing countries—35 million annually, compared with seven million in developed countries—a disparity that largely reflects the relative population distribution. **Prayer:** *Give thanks to the Lord for the decrease in the number of abortions taking place worldwide. Pray specifically for difficult circumstances women face in developing countries e.g. rape, incest, beliefs etc. that contribute to large numbers of abortions being performed, that these things might be turned around in practical ways.*
- 2. Asia performs most abortions.** Because the world's population is concentrated in Asia, most abortions occur there (26 million yearly); nine million of these take place in China. **Prayer:** *Lift up in prayer women in this global region as they face pretty tough situations both personally and because of legislation, especially in China where couples are limited to have only one child per family. Pray for God's mercy on the unborn, for miracles in impossible situations and mothers to be able to take care of their unborn babies once they are born. Also pray for responsible fathers to care and meet their responsibilities and not leave women to face these challenges on their own.*
- 3. Laws do not stop abortions.** Legal restrictions on abortion do not affect its incidence. The abortion rate is higher e.g. in Africa, where it is mostly illegal. The lowest abortion rates in the world are in Western and Northern Europe, where abortion is accessible with few restrictions. Poverty and fear of a pregnancy being found out are some of the main reasons for abortions. **Prayer:** *Pray that God will intervene in the hearts and minds of people, so that they might understand the gift of life given to them. Pray especially for those who got pregnant through unfortunate circumstances over which they had no control. Pray for them to find Christ, and healing from the shame and trauma of such an experience.*
- 4. Abortion takes lives.** Worldwide, 48% of all induced abortions are unsafe and an estimated five million women are hospitalised each year for treatment of abortion-related complications. Approximately 220,000 children worldwide lose their mothers every year to abortion-related deaths. **Prayer:** *Lift up in prayer all children orphaned as a result of their mothers having an abortion. Pray for God to comfort and reveal Jesus to them as their Friend in trouble. Ask that orphaned children will be put in proper care and not be violated themselves by family members or other adults.*
- 5. Number of pregnancies terminated.** More than one-third of the approximately 205 million pregnancies that occur worldwide annually are unintended and about 22% of all pregnancies end in induced abortion. **Prayer:** *Pray for mothers who want to have children and have had to face the loss of a baby by natural abortion. Ask that especially in countries where it is expected of women to have children and specifically a son, to have favour with their husbands so that they do not reject them and marry another wife.*
- 6. Developed countries guilty percentage-wise.** Of the 23 million pregnancies that occur in developed countries, more than 40% are unintended, and 28% end in induced abortion. **Prayer:** *Lift up in prayer young and old having sex for fun as a lifestyle and then getting rid of unwanted pregnancies through abortion. Ask that mothers-to-be will hear God's voice speaking to them, put their trust in Him and find ways to preserve lives. Pray that if there are pre-marital pregnancies, that there will be opportunities of having a newborn baby adopted if they cannot take care of the baby themselves. Pray for more worldwide initiatives like Window of Life that take care of unwanted new born babies.*
- 7. Different faces of abortion.** *Intentional abortion* occurs when the new human being is intentionally killed, for therapeutic or elective reasons, through chemical or surgical means. *Unintentional abortion* occurs when the new human being is unintentionally aborted, or miscarried. The mother may or may not be aware that this occurs, because the aborted baby may pass out of her with her menses. *Miscarriage* is accidental foetal loss through natural means; referred to in the medical literature as a "spontaneous abortion". *Abortifacient* is a drug that kills a newly formed human being, whether by directly killing the baby or by preventing implantation, and so causing an abortion, either intentionally or unintentionally. **Prayer:** *Lift up in prayer mothers everywhere*

coming up against these different 'faces of abortion'. Pray for God to comfort those losing a baby unintentionally or through miscarriage. Ask for the others to realise the dangers of their intentional decision, also to their health and for an instinct to treasure the life of their unborn child.

8. **Lack of contraception reason for high number of pregnancies.** More than 100 million married women in developing countries have an unmet need for contraception, meaning they are sexually active; are able to become pregnant; do not want to have a child soon or at all; and are not using any method of contraception, either modern or traditional. Contraception can be divided into different categories, but mainly those prohibiting/preventing pregnancy and those 'bringing down a fertilized egg'. **Prayer:** *Pray about this situation, especially in developing countries. Ask for women to have access to contraception prohibiting pregnancy one way or another so they will not even have to consider an abortion. Pray for the necessary funding to make this possible for women worldwide.*
9. **16 Countries slacken abortion laws in 10 years.** In the 10 years since the last global review of abortion policies (1998-2007), 16 countries have increased the number of grounds on which abortions may be legally performed, while two have eliminated all such grounds. Those broadening their views were: Benin, Bhutan, Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guinea, Iran, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Portugal, Saint Lucia, Swaziland, Switzerland, Thailand and Togo. Two territories and one state in Australia and six states in Mexico also liberalised their laws. In contrast, El Salvador and Nicaragua changed their already restrictive laws to prohibit abortion entirely. **Prayer:** *Pray for each of these countries by name, asking the Lord to touch the hearts and minds of those in government about their decisions to promote abortion. Give thanks for those countries which are tightening their views on abortion.*
10. **Abortion is becoming more acceptable worldwide.** Worldwide, medication for abortion has gained broad acceptance. At least 39 countries have registered abortion medication, 35 in the last 10 years. **Prayer:** *Despite the overwhelming statistics, let us stand on the firm foundation of God's throne of righteousness and justice to be established concerning the issue of abortion in each and every country in the world. Declare the Name of the Lord over legislation legalising abortion, calling out for righteousness and justice. Also ask God to raise up humble but strong men and women to be a voice in every nation of the world on the issue of abortion.*

(The prayer guidelines suggested here are those of the writer of this article in *Jericho Walls*. Facts were taken from these and other resources. Resources: http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/fb_IAW.html and <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue3695.html> and http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/fb_IAW.html).