

Roland Warren ([00:10](#)):

Hello, I'm Roland Warren, President and CEO of Care Net, and I'm here with Andrew Wood, who's our Senior Executive Director of Church Outreach and Engagement. And, we just wanted to send a message out to pastors. We know it's Pastor's Appreciation Month, and we wanted to say thank you for just the amazing work that you do in your congregation week in and week out to really care for folks. And at Care Net, our issue really is protecting those who can't protect themselves, the vulnerable women and men facing pregnancy decisions. And so, we wanted to have a little conversation about that to kind of give you an insight, into some things that are happening at Care Net, but also just to kind of, again, encourage you around what you're doing. So Andrew, thanks for joining me for this little conversation with the pastors who are out there doing just yeoman's work in terms of supporting their congregations.

Andrew Wood ([01:00](#)):

Well, I'm just glad we take a moment every year. It's just like everything we do, we are like here. This month is for celebrating this, but obviously, we need to take more time throughout the year to pray for our pastors and salute them. But I've sat in those meetings with pastors. I was a bi-vocational kids pastor for a few years, and just having the conversations and the weight that comes with leading a congregation, shepherding a congregation, we understand that that's a heavy weight to carry and a heavy burden. And so, we're here for you, and we're praying for you. And we're just grateful that the work that we're doing at Care Net is right in line with the work that's happening day in and day out at the local church. And I've always said that the local church is really one of the shining points of any community. Any community that I go into, any place I've ever lived, the man that I am today, the husband that I am today was crafted because of a local church in the community. And so it's always been a huge part of my life, and I'm just honored to salute and celebrate pastors this month.

Roland Warren ([02:07](#)):

Yeah, I ditto that in terms of the impact there, even from the time I was a small boy growing up and seeing Pastor Kipp, who was my pastor at the time, and the model that he had as a husband of the father and leader of our congregation was so incredibly important. And it's kind of interesting because the work that we do at Care Net focused on equipping folks who are facing pregnancy decisions, and the vision that we have around that perspective is so much connected to what pastors are really called to do. And I think one of the things that we've tried to really do in our work is to help people kind of see the issue through the lens of discipleship. One of the questions I often kind of pose when I'm talking to pastors is, how many of you became pastors because you wanted to overturn Roe Wade?

([02:58](#)):

And I never get a hand raised on that. Then I'll say, well, how many of you became pastors because you wanted to end abortion in your lifetime? No hands there. But then I say, how many of you became pastors because you felt called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to make disciples for Jesus Christ? Every hand shoots up. That's really the call of pastors. And I think that the key thing, that certainly in terms of the work that God has put on our heart here at Care Net, is that the life issue is primarily a discipleship issue. Yeah, there's a political component, there's a material support aspect to it, but it's primarily about making disciples. It's about someone who's facing a pregnancy decision and helping that person see the child growing inside of them through the lens of a discipleship framework, first being the great commandment to love the neighbor growing inside of them, and then second, also to make a disciple of that neighbor growing inside of them. So our work is really about helping a neighbor love a neighbor to fulfill the great commandment and helping a neighbor love a neighbor and help that neighbor growing inside of her and the guy who got connected to her. That's part of the

pregnancy, helping that neighbor become a disciple for Jesus Christ. I just see our work so very much connected by the church. So talk a little bit, Andrew, about what you're doing in terms of your work, in terms of equipping the church and your team and what you're engaged in.

Andrew Wood ([04:20](#)):

It's interesting. When we had these conversations about me joining the team at Care Net, I even went to my family, my little seven-year-old, and I told her, "Hey, I think Daddy's about to make a change professionally." And she was like, "Oh, no, you can't do that." And I said, "Well, here's the thing. My new role, I'm going to be working with pregnancy centers and the church." And my little girl said, "Oh, the two things that I love the most, babies and the church."

Andrew Wood ([04:49](#)):

Yeah, well we'll see next week if that changes. But it really is what we're trying to do is create an on-ramp, a bridge from the pregnancy center to the local church and from the pregnancy center standpoint, we are doing amazing work. There's lives being transformed. You always talk about transformational versus transactional, but the reality is the pregnancy center, we can't scale that model, and there's no need to scale the model of long-term discipleship because that's the vehicle God designed is the bride, the church to do that. And so what we get to do is say, okay, the pregnancy center is going to serve and love and take care of and do everything that we've been called to do, but then we need the church to step in. And really, when we even think about the Great Commission, you think about go and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, but we sometimes forget about verse 20, which is teaching them all that I've commanded you.

([05:45](#)):

That's the discipleship component. And Jesus felt it so important before I'm sent to sit at the right hand of my Father, I need y'all to know this. Go and make disciples. So you have the conversion, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, but also teaching them all that I've commanded. And you can connect that to Deuteronomy 6, where it says, keep it on the frontlets of your mind. Put it on the doorpost, put it on the mat. When you rise up, when you lay down, talk about it with your family, you can go to 1 Samuel, where we see the Ebenezer moment, where they're letting future generations know how good God is. That is the long-term discipleship that we get to be a part of once we bridge that gap between the pregnancy center and the local church. And that's why we want to take this moment this month to really set aside and just say Thank you! Because the discipleship process that is happening within the local church is going to change our communities. It's going to change our political system. It's going to change our pregnancy centers. It's going to change literally everything if we start with discipleship, and what a blessing it is to be a part of that.

Roland Warren ([06:49](#)):

And I think that that's so true. And one of the things I always emphasize is that pregnancy centers can't replace the church. It's like you go to a wedding and the groom's there, the groomsmen there, the bridesmaid's there, and everybody's out in the audience, the pastor's there and the sister's hitting the keyboard and she's playing that march for the bride to come out and the bride doesn't come out. And you never see a pastor turn to the maid of honor and say, why don't you step in so we can keep this thing moving? Right?

([07:19](#)):

There's no replacing the bride. We may be in the audience, we may be down there making chicken, but the reality is that the bride, the bride is the instrument that Christ left in order to transform culture. So we see our role as a parachurch ministry to come alongside the church. That's what the parachurch ministries do, not to replace the church, but to come alongside the church around this very specific area in the same way that a paralegal comes alongside a lawyer in a very specific area. And so our goal and our objective is really to help our network, our pregnancy centers move people from the pregnancy center to the church for ongoing support and discipleship. And that really is the role because the church is the seat of discipleship, and we always want to make sure that we respect that honor that which is why we're delighted to honor pastors on this day. So Andrew, why don't you talk a little bit about the Making Life Disciples ministry approach that we were able to develop in partnership with Dr. Tony Evans, a pastor that we love very much. So talk a little bit about that and what that is on this Pastor's Appreciation Day, how that can be helpful to the pastors that are listening here.

Andrew Wood ([08:29](#)):

So, as we think about that on-ramp from the pregnancy center to the church, what that means is we need folks within the church to be equipped and trained and kind of in the know when it comes to serving and loving and discipling folks within the pregnancy center. So for decades at the pregnancy center level, we've had folks mentoring patients or clients and loving on them and serving them, but oftentimes have people reach out and go, how can I help? Even we saw this after Roe was overturned. In the Dobbs case, a number of folks reached out, what can I do? How can I help? We want to be involved. And frankly for me, as I was Executive Director for almost a decade, and I had a blind spot, I would often sit down with pastors and when they would say, how can I help? I would never speak about discipleship.

([09:19](#)):

And that was a blind spot that I had. And oftentimes the pastor is saying, how can I help? And then when I give them a laundry list of items, they go, okay, well I'll do that and we'll write a check. We'll fill a baby bottle. We'll come and clean your gutters and we'll do those things because that's what you're asking us to do. And so now I'm looking at that through a lens and going, what if I said, I need you to disciple our clients? And my hunch is that the pastors are going to say, well, yeah, that's what we do. We'd love to disciple your clients. And so, Making Life Disciples is just another tool in the toolbelt to better equip and train. It's a 12-week Bible study going through with small groups, with home groups, with Sunday schools, however your church does things, and it's just a way to equip and train.

([10:08](#)):

And very similar to if someone comes to your church and they lost a loved one, you may point them to Grief Share. My dad had his life forever changed because of Divorce Care, to the point that he started leading Divorce Care at the church that I grew up in because it had such an effect on his life. So, in the same way, if a young lady wakes up on a Sunday morning, or if a mom wakes up on a Sunday morning, her daughter comes to her and says, I took a pregnancy test, and it says positive. Do they have any idea where to go within the local church? And so what are we doing to create moments where if someone in our church is facing that a pregnancy decision, or if someone in our church is post-abortive and they're struggling with the guilt and the shame and the weight of carrying that around, which we've all seen, do they have somewhere within the church that they feel like they can go?

([11:02](#)):

And so that's what Making Life Disciples can do. That's what Abortion Recovery and Care can do, is it can get a place within your church where people feel, where your folks feel like, Hey, I'm going through this and there's people here that can walk with me through it, love on me, disciple me. It may not mean that

the client from the pregnancy center immediately, she sees the pregnancy center staff person on Monday, and she's in your church on Sunday. It may mean you go to the park with her. It may mean that you're having coffee with her, but the eventual goal is that she would get to the church, be discipled in the church, that her baby would be raised up in the church. That families would be transformed, and then we can start linking back up the high ideas of God instead of delinking as the culture has done so much.

Roland Warren ([11:46](#)):

That's just fantastic. And I love that because the Making Life Disciples is sort of the pre-abortion construct so that hopefully we can help people not make the decision to have an abortion with small groups in the church, come alongside that person. And then our ARC Ministry, which is Abortion Recovery and Care, and we've got two ministry kits there Forgiven and Set Free for women and Reclaiming Fatherhood for men. These are Bible studies for folks who made that decision to help them get that healing and that help, and also get them back in the game. I always tell people that Peter aborted Jesus because an abortion is a rejection of the life that you see. He was isolated and he was afraid, which is the same dynamic that we see with someone who's facing a pregnancy decision. But what did Jesus do? He called him back, he restored him, and then sent him to a ministry that was an amazing ministry that we all are impacted by today.

([12:41](#)):

So that's incredibly important. And I would just say this one last piece, which I thought was so powerful in terms of Making Life Disciples and why that's so important. Someone who's facing a pregnancy decision is seriously considering killing one of their children. That's the way you have to think about this. And most people have never seriously considered killing one of their children. So if you're going to go there and try to help that person, you need to be equipped to be able to minister them in the same way that if we were sending some folks to short-term missions to a country where they've never been, you always give them short-term missions training. Why? Because they've never been there. It's a place they've never been. Or if you're going to minister to someone who's facing a pregnancy decision, it's a place that you probably never been, and therefore there's a training. So that's what Making Life Disciples is all about. So, people can go to, there'll be a link on this video where you can go and see some of the resources: Making Life Disciples and Abortion Recovery and Care. We really want to equip the church for the work that God has called us to do because that's the transition that needs to be made. Right, Andrew?

Andrew Wood ([13:42](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And I would say too, and I'll talk about this so you don't feel like you're tooting your own horn, but the Lord has really done some work in the last couple of years and kind of opening Care Net's eyes to a number of things, and one of those being pro-choice Christians. And you wrote a great little booklet on that that I think we are already seeing the fruit of that. And I think the Roe overturning the Dobbs decision really opened our eyes to a lot of things. I even told a group the other day, I said, once that decision was made, kind of the curtain was pulled back. And there were a lot of folks in my life that I just kind of assumed agreed with me on this issue. And it was all of a sudden, oh, we may not agree on this issue. And I think that'll be a great resource that we'll have available as well, the Pro-Choice Christian, and really how to have those conversations from a biblical worldview when we talk about the issue of life and abortion.

Roland Warren ([14:38](#)):

Thanks for mentioning Andrew. Right? Because the booklet is called *Is the Pro-Choice Position Consistent with the Life and the Teachings of Christ?* And really, I experienced some of that when Roe was overturned. People very close to me saying, hey, don't ever talk to me about Care Net ever again. And these were folks who were Christians, and it really focuses on the Great Commandment and the Great Commission and viewing the life issue through that lens. And I think it's a perspective that most people have not seen, and I think it's going to be really powerful for pastors and other Christians. I really believe that one of our key mission fields are brothers and sisters in Christ who have wandered from the truth on the life issue. Whenever there's disunity in the church, the vulnerable suffer. I can say that as a black man who comes from the legacy of slavery, there was disunity in the church around slavery in the north and in the south, and the vulnerable always suffer. And so what we want is unity in the church around the core issue, which is an absolute, which is the sanctity of life. And so I encourage pastors to download that little booklet, share it within your congregation. Hopefully it'll be helpful to you as you prepare sermons and things of that nature around the life issue. Love to hear from you any perspectives that you have. So as we close up, Andrew, is there anything else you'd want to add before we sign off here?

Andrew Wood ([15:51](#)):

Yeah, I would just say again, thank you to the pastors. Thank you to the pastors that are getting up every day and serving and loving, thank you to the bi-vocational pastors that are working 50 hours a week at kind of a normal job, so to say. And then they're also studying visiting hospice folks, visiting shut-ins and doing everything that y'all do. I was speaking at a church locally here in Tennessee a year ago, and I went in on a Wednesday night. It was the first time they met since the pandemic hit, and the pastor was in jeans and he was like, I was making toilet paper today. That's where he works on a day-to-day basis. And he was there that night and just watching that atmosphere and watching them worship and seeing the heavy weight that he's carrying, it's such a blessing. And so we're grateful for you. We're here for you. If there's anything that we can do as an organization to help, we take this para-church organization seriously, and we have open hands to come and do what you'd want us to do. And so thank you so much for serving, for loving, for praying, and for shepherding and pointing people to the good news of a good God. We're grateful for you.

Roland Warren ([17:05](#)):

Amen. Well said. So we'll just close with prayer pastors. We just want to lift you up. Father, we pray that these pastors Lord would feel your presence, especially during this period of time. I pray the Lord that you would help them to just withstand just the fiery arrows from the evil one. We know that the pastors are the watchmen on the wall and that the evil one wants to take pastors down. So, we just are thankful for your faithfulness and that Joshua 1:9 says, Lord, we pray that our pastors will be strong and courageous, and we thank you for the courage that you've given them as they trust in you. Jesus name we pray. Amen. Thank you very much.

Andrew Wood ([17:41](#)):

Much. Amen. Thanks y'all.