

LOVE PERIOD.

WITH REV. DR.
JACQUI LEWIS

**Unpacking a New Era of Women's Rights
with Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft**

Jacqui: Hey everyone, I'm Jacqui Lewis. Welcome to the third season of Love Period. In this season, we are exploring what fierce love looks like in a time of trauma, when all around the globe folks are trying to figure out how to be the best version of human they can be in these difficult and traumatic times. The episode you're going to hear today is a wonderful conversation I had with my friend and colleague, Reverend Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft. We were talking right as the SCOTUS decision on Roe V. Wade was leaked. We were outraged, upset and though we are activists, kind of thought, yeah, this might fall apart. But I'll tell you as candidly as I can, living in a post Roe world today has my mind spinning. It feels like we're in the middle of the end of something profoundly to be grieved. So listen as we have this conversation. And we're so glad that you're here with us. Amanda Hambrick, Ashcraft.

Amanda: Hi Jacqui.

Jacqui: My friend. How are you?

Amanda: I'm good.

Jacqui: I kind of miss bumping into you more.

Amanda: Well, we are here in person.

Jacqui: Yay. In person, safely. COVID free. And having a chance to see each other's mask-less faces. It's good. How are you doing, honey?

Amanda: I'm okay. It's been a fairly depressing week in our country, but I am rejuvenated by the work that people like you put in the world continually and by conversations that just have to move us forward.

Jacqui: Have to move us forward. Let's talk about this crazy week. This podcast, Love Period, is evergreen, so people will hear it another time. But in our lifetimes, have we really experienced this kind of last two years of just assault on our souls, right? COVID and Trumpism and violence against Blacks and Asians, and just oof. And the latest being this Roe V. Wade leak. Let's just dive in and talk about, how are we feeling about that?

Amanda: Well, and hopefully your listeners know also your church burned to the ground.

Jacqui: Oh yeah. There was that, huh?

Amanda: In the middle of all the two years as well. Yeah, it's been a horrific two years because it does feel like it's been political, societal attack after attack. And you and I keep saying, we're not surprised because we had been seeing the writing on the wall for this leaked draft decision. But that doesn't take away the gut-wrenching nature of it. I think just to actually see the leak draft and the violent language and the originalism language that Alito has put forth is really soul crushing, in a new kind of way. And when you and I think about all of the implications too, that such a leaked draft, which we know most likely is going to pass, have on all the different intersections of American life. It's really overwhelming. And a personal story, I was not okay, but I was moving through it in a very optimistic way for the first week. I think we're exactly a week now after the leaked draft. But then last night I got really sad.

Jacqui: Tell me about that.

Amanda: And I cried for the first time about it and it felt good. And I was like, why am I crying right now? And I was trying to put some kind of rational thought around that. And then I just let myself cry and recognize, like this really, actually is depressing when we think about all of the implications that this holds, not just for pregnant people, but for attacks that we've already seen come this week for Trans people. Jacqui you and I know too that this is all a matter of gerrymandered voting restrictions too.

Jacqui: Absolutely.

Amanda: Maybe we'll just talk about that for a minute.

Jacqui: I think we should talk about all of it. But just to pause for a second, my producers and I were thinking that it's just time to have a straightforward talk about the trauma we're all in. And, asking what does fierce love have to offer? I think there's a lot of conversations like that happening in different spaces, theological spaces, sociological spaces, historical spaces. What is this time, Amanda, going to leave us with as a people? Right? So I want to stick a second with our sadness. Like you're sad and you cried and I'm so angry. I didn't know I was angry, like I'm angry. I'm sleeplessly angry. And I don't even know if I can focus exactly why, but it feels to me like being personally assaulted. So we know that the sorrow and the anger are part of grief, are we just mourning? Are we mourning the loss of something or the upcoming of something? Like, let's talk about that for a minute.

Amanda: I think it's absolutely mourning. And I think that that kind of public event, piece of it too, is really important and I'm not afraid of that. I think I was surprised at when it came, like a week after and... But I was on an organizing call yesterday and a lot of emotions were in that space which is good, and this work is messy. But even in that call, which is some of the brightest women in the country, it was like, and what? And what do we do? And decades and generations of feminists who have been in this work in different ways forever, we're still butting heads on so many different ways that we talk about this. The different identities that people bring, how you're raised, how you're classed, people's lived experiences, which are all so real and so important. And then those people who have actually experienced abortions.

Amanda: Jacqui, we got another email this morning from a congregant who is just gushing and this is the first time I'm sharing it. And all this is so triggering and traumatizing. And so, even for those conversations and real lived human experiences to be felt like they are also being assaulted right now is traumatizing.

Jacqui: Absolutely.

Amanda: It's just traumatizing.

Jacqui: It is right. One of my Black friends was telling me, I had three abortions and I could never even tell my people about it. And once I told them about it, they were saying, how dare you and how could you? So there's a kind of coming out backlash. Can you advocate for abortions in a safe and public way? In some communities, one feels like you can't. I think the embarrassment, I want to say shame, but I feel like people are embarrassed. Shame feels like something some other people can do to you. But they're embarrassed. Did they make the

right choice?

Amanda: And who are those other people? I would actually argue that this country, specifically White evangelicals, which are usually aligned with the GOP, have intentionally shamed this conversation. You and I wouldn't say that. But I absolutely think that there is shame part of this that's been intentionally orchestrated and curated into how we talk about abortion in this country and access to reproductive healthcare. And that is a crying shame.

Jacqui: Amen. That's good. Yeah. And it's everything though. It's all connected to also, how the religious right has talked about sex. And that's just sort of how the church has talked about sex. I've been sharing my story recently, Amanda, in more public spaces about being that 22 year old girl who was a Virgin until two weeks before her wedding and then have a car accident and be clear that God did that to punish me. Like what kind of churchiness have we created so that women feel shamed about sex, about their bodies. Their bodies are ugly, their bodies are stinky. Their menstruation is horrible. You can't talk in church.

Jacqui: That whole patriarchal structure that the church continues to enliven, that then translates to anything that's perceived as feminine. So therefore Trans and therefore gay. And I'm not trying to oversimplify. I'm actually just trying to say that parts of Christianity, or I would say, so-called Christianity have created a giant net of horror and ugly and shame and anti-sex and antibody that has caused the taking of life, the robbing of joy. The feeling of suffocation that leads to suicide. And I'm pissed. I'm so mad about it.

Amanda: Well look, we're covering up our bodily parts in the garden of Eden. I mean, what's that about? Are we ashamed of our vaginas? I mean, so yeah. It's absolutely been there since the beginning. It's absolutely been there since the beginning, this idea of how we should not be sexual beings. But even right alongside that is the control piece. Because straight men in this country have been able to freely be sexual beings.

Jacqui: Yep. Sow their seeds be sexual beings, all of that.

Amanda: Exactly.

Jacqui: And we be the receptacles, we women, be the receptacles of.

Amanda: So the control piece, I think there, is so harmful as well, which this leaked draft is just another example of control. It's always been about control. Not really the babies.

Jacqui: It's not at all about the... If it was about the babies, if it were about the babies, we would have enacted gun laws to protect our babies. I had a beautiful conversation recently with Anna's mother, Nelba. Who, Anna was killed in Sandy Hook, horrible tragedy. 10 years now, I can't believe. Amanda, if there were a time when the so-called religious right cared about children.

Amanda: When those first graders were killed.

Jacqui: When those first graders were killed, they would've stopped everything to make sure that we enacted some gun laws that would make those children's life... So we don't care about alive babies who are hungry, who don't have drinking water.

Amanda: Or even when they're in the womb.

Jacqui: Yeah.

Amanda: Specifically for Black women.

Jacqui: Right. We don't care about that. We don't care about infant mortality. We just want to manage you, and your sexuality and the conversation. So let's, because you are smart about this. Let's talk about how this isn't really about that at all. Let's talk about how, because folks don't know. I'm thinking about amazing political articles, particularly one in 2014, that really kind of lays out this argument. Like, how do we get to the pretend issue of abortion as a rallying cry, for evangelical Christians?

Amanda: In the 1960s, a bunch of White conservative men got really freaked out. Why? Because of political gains on the left.

Jacqui: Because Black people were going to be able to vote.

Amanda: Yes.

Jacqui: Live a life.

Amanda: Women also were having control over their bodies. There were political gains being happened by the left. And, [Carolyn Anderson 00:12:29] would call that White lash, like White rage, excuse me, which we see throughout all of history, but specific to this conversation, it was happening in the sixties. And so a bunch of White, straight Christian men got in a room, this is how I envision it, with closed doors and said, how do we keep President Carter from getting a second turn? Because we're freaked out. We're starting to feel the erosion of liberation. God forbid.

Jacqui: God forbid.

Amanda: God forbid. And so they really, and specifically Bob Jones University which is a highly conservative school in Greenville, South Carolina was losing their IRS status on the grounds of segregation. And so they were freaking out. We can't let schools be integrated. We actually want to keep them segregated. Now that's not a really beautiful public story to tell.

Jacqui: But it is a true story.

Amanda: But it's a true story. But they, at that time thought, so what's our marketing tool? We actually want to keep school segregated. We actually want to stay in control. We want to control pregnant people's bodies. What can we do? And then they said, let's use unborn babies because everybody loves unborn babies. And let's say that what we're trying to, everybody loves babies, right? So let's say that what we're doing is we are

protecting unborn babies, and they did that.

Jacqui: Absolutely, they did.

Amanda: And that's what they have done. You and I know Frank Schaeffer too, he will talk about going around the country with his father and saying, this is what we're saying now, when in fact, get on board. When in fact, their Southern Baptist conventions, which is, I mean, listeners probably know, a very large Protestant, more conservative religious sect in this country. Prior to this, they were okay with abortion.

Jacqui: They were totally okay with abortion.

Amanda: They were drafting bills in support of abortion in certain scenarios. So this case in point is all we need to know that this has always been a racially coded attack.

Jacqui: Absolutely.

Amanda: It's just a racially coded attack. And I think we have to continue to tell that story because it really shifts the way we talk about this whole thing. We don't need to be asking the question. When does life begin? We don't. That is a tool of the patriarchy and of White supremacy. That question in and of itself. This whole conversation should be rather to how you are doing on this podcast. What's love got to say about this? Where's God in the conversation?

Jacqui: Absolutely. I loved your conversation with Doug Pagitt about that as well. People should look for that. Well, we'll put those things in the show notes. I think that's such an important narrative, Amanda, that is under reported and it was reported. So I just want to tell folks, if you Google, how did abortion get to be the issue of the evangelical Christians?

Amanda: Yep. That's a political article.

Jacqui: You're going to find a beautiful political article and a couple of more that will come up, including a CNN timeline, about how, yes, the White guys got in a room. Yes, they were pissed off about desegregating schools. Yes, they wanted their ability to make private, all White schools and have tax deductible donations apply.

Amanda: Yes, money.

Jacqui: Tax status. There was a court ruling that said, excuse me, hell no. If your school is segregated, you can't. So they tested, what? They tested prayer in schools, they tested pornography and they tested guns. But this little issue right here, when Roe V. Wade was passed, there was just enough energy in the spaces, in the White evangelical spaces, maybe abortion. So it takes hold and it becomes a text.

Amanda: And it's still here today.

Jacqui: Absolutely.

Amanda: And Jacqui, we're not just blowing steam here. I mean, of course we're not, we're brilliant women. But we can see statistically, the 24 states that in 2013, when the Voting Rights Act was beginning to be eroded and stripped away, that immediately rollback voting rights.

Are the same 24 states who, when Roe is officially overturned, are going to ban abortions? I mean, you can't get a more clear picture of how this is always about control and a White agenda of gerrymandering control and issues. It's actually the only reason that we have the Supreme court that we have right now too. Because we rushed in Supreme court justices illegally by a president who didn't even get the majority vote in this country.

Jacqui: A couple of times now that's happened.

Jacqui: In this crazy hotmess, traumatic time, I'm praying for wisdom. I'm praying for people to read and get smart and have conversations. I'm praying for folks to educate themselves. I'm praying, Amanda, for us to make tools so that like, on our website, read this, send this to mommy. We have got to disrupt this moving train. I know I just mixed metaphors there. Can we put some stuff on the tracks to slow down the moving train? Because here's what we haven't done, Amanda, we haven't gotten outraged enough as a populace, I think. We've watched the gun lobby continue to be able to make it easy to get a gun. And so we are massacring children and adults for some crap about the Second Amendment that has nothing to do, really, with the right to bear arms and everything to do with keeping those kind of slave codes in operation where the sort of malici-

Amanda: I'm protecting family and myself is somehow a moral good that trumps everything else.

Jacqui: Exactly. But also, origins of which is about, let me take some guns and catch me some Negros. That's the origins of that. And when we don't connect those dots, people think we're really talking about freedom. And what we're really talking about is policing.

Amanda: Absolutely.

Jacqui: Policing by a militia to reinforce White patriarchy. Let's get that straight. Let's get straight that the Voting Rights Acts and the Civil Rights Acts of the sixties were actually the second round of those kinds of acts, that happened at reconstruction. And the response to reconstruction was lynching. The response to reconstruction was the wholesale murder of Black folks, Dark folks, Indian folks, Jewish folks, but everything to keep the White patriarchy in order. And there's a PBS special in reconstruction, we've got to connect that dot.

Amanda: So, talk about your trauma for a little bit, then Jacqui, with all of that truth, which we don't say enough and we don't connect enough, you are a Black woman in these United States. And so how is this leak affecting you with all of who you are?

Jacqui: Yeah. I'm terrified. I don't know if I've said that out loud. Feels like South Africa. Feels like theologies of apartheid. Feels like a reign of terror. Feels like the poem, first they came for, and then they came for. And they came for our lives by creating these militias. And they armed them with guns and they get to keep them. And so when I feel deep inside my body, I feel Trayvon Martin's dead body on the sidewalk, because Zimmerman could stand his ground. And I feel, people on their lawns holding guns to shoot protestors. And I feel police shooting people with their hands up. And I feel Black women forced sterilization and Black women forced breeding in slavery. And I feel, the end is right here.

Jacqui: The end of my particular freedom and the freedoms of women and people of color and Trans

people. It's personal. When we say as feminist womanness, that the personal is political, Amanda, it's so personal, I'm worried that Ofelia and Octavius are going to inherit a world in which their little Black bodies won't matter at all, in which their lives are out of their control in which they're in danger. And I, as a grown up woman, feel afraid that this country is galloping toward putting me back in chains. That's how it feels.

Amanda: Thank you, Jacqui.

Jacqui: And it feels... I mean, I'm not the spokesperson for all the Black and Brown people, but I know in my conversations with other Black and Brown women and women identified folks and Trans folks, career folks, I want there to be an outrage about this leak and the potential ruling. And I want the outrage to travel across these intersections. We were not outraged when the court gutted voting rights. I cannot believe that we weren't outraged as a people. But it didn't affect White folk.

Amanda: Black women knew.

Jacqui: Black women knew. And Black women know that this is all the same thing. So how can there be a kind of... In my book I write about Ubuntu. Like, I am, because you are, how can it be that we would connect our lives together? The surviving and thriving womanness would say of all of us together, so that the outrage of this doesn't stand as a White women abortion issue, but it's actually outraged that democracy is gone. That the court has created a theocracy that we've let that happen. And that we need to go to the polls, Amanda. So we can fix this broken thing.

Amanda: Abolish the filibuster.

Jacqui: I got so much more, but that's how I feel.

Amanda: I want to be clear. I said, thank you, not because of how you're feeling, but because you shared that. And I recognize that even the sharing and letting yourself feel that is traumatic. And yet I think, I know it's so important, that's one of the ways I think I'm going to get to your question here in a roundabout way that we can try to bring about this sense of Ubuntu, that you always write about. Because, we have to understand and hear how this moment feels to all people's different lived realities and specifically Black women and Black Trans people right now, because it is a unique, more exhausted, more at risk way to be in this moment. And, I imagine that it feels, I've heard this from different Black and Brown organizers and people who are like, no, I'm not doing that. That's a White women's issue. That's White feminism, that's violent. And that's an end.

Amanda: And, we'll pull away because White women, White people do not hold all of this history. We don't acknowledge it. We run from it. It makes us uncomfortable. We are ashamed of it. And so we don't hold space for it. And we don't continue to tell that story. And we only show up to fights that are important to us when they are important to us. And that's never an intersectional fight. It's not what Black people have taught us collective liberation looks like. So just, one small way that I'm really trying to move in an intersectional way in this moment is always telling these stories of the real racist roots of the religious co-opting of this narrative. I think that's really important.

Amanda: And then too, a lot of White people kind of got on the, let's be progressive bandwagon, not until after 2016. They're like, oh my God, we have a pedophile in the office. Like, now I feel personally attacked. I was like, no, the GOP has been organizing intentionally for decades. And even in this specific moment for us to say, this is a Trump problem, this is a McConnell problem, yes. Those people are absolutely at fault, but they didn't get there on their own.

Jacqui: How many White women voted for Trump? 80 something percent?

Amanda: Yes. By Christian women, yes. So I mean, it is been decades of strategic, systematically orchestrated, organizing to get these people into place. And so, there's a really another article that we should lift up that The Cut published recently about how Democrats are still getting this conversation wrong because we're allowing White people to talk about it as it's just like a Trump issue. And it's a new problem. No, it's because of all the history that you have shared, this has been in the works since White people decided that they were going to be racist and try to control any non-White person that came to these shores, for 400 plus years. And we have to make those dots.

Amanda: So I had a family member of mine push back, "And well, but you know, it really is still Trump." I said, we can't say that. I said, when we say that, we are abdicating, we are removing ourselves from the implications that our people have had in getting us to this moment from the very beginning. Now we don't stop there. We're not going to stop in the past. But I imagine that us continuing to tell that story and being able to show that as White people, I'm a White Christian person that I understand that this has been decades in the making. I hope that that can do something to let other people feel like I have some skin in the game.

Jacqui: I think that's really important, Amanda. And when you say it, it also makes me want to say 50 things, but let me just say two. One is, that acknowledgement that this is a decades long strategy, we can take it further back. And we can remember that, just kind of go back to reconstruction, in a way the south is still fighting the civil war. The south lost around slavery. Lincoln makes a compromise. We have a reconstruction period, Black folks are elected, Black folks are killed for being elected, for appointing other Black people. There are decades of disenfranchisement. Voting Rights work in the fifties, sixties. The law passes again, as the second Voting Rights Act, the first one is in the 1870s. And what happened? We will not be moved. Whiteness, which you and I would define as kind of this systemic White power, White entitlement, White grief, White rage, all those things, that is the system that runs our country will not give in, will not give up.

Amanda: Natalie calls it a hell of a pill.

Jacqui: It's a hell of a pill. It's a hell of a pill. And it will not die. It will not die. It is in death rows and will not die. And it galvanizes energy and power because people who are afraid, then my freedom impinges their freedom. A Trans child's freedom, impinges their freedom. What the F? What kind of small mind do you have? That my liberty, my liberation makes you feel like there's not enough freedom for you.

Amanda: And what does that say about their God? You don't think God's big enough, to hold all that?

Jacqui: Read Christena Cleveland's book, y'all. What kind of God do you serve that you think only wants you and your five people to be free?

Amanda: And this is how it looks.

Jacqui: And this is what it looks like. So what we've done, those of us who do God, have to admit that we've created a God that is in our pocket, that is on our team. That a small, puny, petulant, punitive.

Amanda: Puny, petulant, punitive.

Jacqui: Do you like that? Mhmm Aliteration on that. And so, what are we going to do about it? The people who listen to us here, are people of faith, mostly. What is it that the average mommy, you're a mom. You're a mom to twin boys and a beautiful girl and perhaps some other human being cooking in your body. Yay.

Amanda: Pray for me, will hope it lasts.

Jacqui: No, I'm so excited for you. Me too, Amanda. Really praying there. But, what White mommies, what are they supposed to do about this? What are they supposed to do to raise the imagination of their children, that Black folks and Indian folks and Trans folks all have a right to life and Liberty and the pursuit of happiness, talk about that.

Amanda: Yeah, absolutely. Oh, so many things. One of the ways that we talk about this with our kids is just that in a very basic way. What's happening in the Supreme court right now is that people are trying to say, you can't have control over your body. And so, my body, my choice has been a refrain that, what do you think about that, when you ask questions? And we'll let them respond. Now it translates funny. Because kids are funny. I'll lay out some clothes, we're in a hurry. "No, I'm not wearing that. You said my body, my choice." I'm like, oh shit. I did say that.

Amanda: It definitely plays out in funny ways, but those are all conversation starters. And then, I think a lot of parents and caregivers are scared of the specific abortion conversation, because again, we have created a society where it is so taboo and it's something that we can't talk about, but I really don't think it's much harder. And Tabitha St. Bernard-Jacobs has a great article in Parents where she says, here's how you talk about abortion with kids. And it's really can be as simple as somebody's pregnant and for whatever reason, that is their reason, they no longer can be pregnant or want to be pregnant. And so they decide to stop being pregnant.

Jacqui: Wow.

Amanda: Period.

Jacqui: Period.

Amanda: And kids can handle that. In the same way, I was talking to my kids, I am expecting, and I'm like, I think 19 weeks today, and we didn't tell them until like 16 weeks. So one of my kids like, but why didn't you tell me for so long, you know, really caught up in this secrecy piece. And I said, well, sometimes when babies are new, they fade away. They stop growing in the belly. And we wanted to wait a little bit longer to see if this baby wasn't going to fade away.

Jacqui: Amanda, are you writing that stuff down? So parents can quote that. That's great.

Amanda: Yeah. But I think another thing, just to bust it even beyond like the parenting and caregiver thing, that I think we really have to do in this moment, Jacqui, and this is where I think you and I, and other clergy have a real prophetic call in this moment, is that we need to make sure that we co-opt back the narrative. Because we're still, you know, the day after this leak, Biden and Pelosi did not say the word abortion. They did not say the word abortion. And you can't defend something you can't say. Lizz Winstead says that so brilliantly.

Amanda: So we actually do have to stop tiptoeing around all these words and say the word abortion, because that is the thing that is being stripped right now. And I think that we also need to be able to say that an individual's ability to make the decision to have an abortion, we believe is a sacred and moral, right. I think we have to put that holy language around it, that we

believe. And we haven't even mentioned religious freedom in this, I mean, how this is an attack on all the things someone is impinging, what they think is a religious view on what really is a human rights issue.

Jacqui: That's correct. That's really true. I was in a conversation. Thank you for all of that, Amanda. I was in a conversation about, I feel like it was six weeks ago, but it could have been a year, at [RNS 00:33:31] in DC. They had this really beautiful forum on things the news should be covering. And I was on a smart panel with these women talking about abortion, talking about reproductive rights. And one of the rabbis, brilliant, just said, when y'all are talking about we can't have abortions, you're stepping all over Judaism, because actually, in some situations it is mandated that you terminate this pregnancy.

Amanda: That's the will of God.

Jacqui: That's the will of God. We've got to, we clergy, have to get interfaith in our conversation, our understanding. Where in the Christian Bible, I said, does it say thou shall not have an abortion? It doesn't say it at all. And since we share that Jewish part of the scriptures, that actually means that those Hebrew scriptures belong to us. And that means actually that there are times when the Hebrew scriptures that are our text y'all, would mandate an abortion. In Islam, there's all kinds of freedom. So stop acting White Christian-ish. We're going to call them Christian-ish, Christian light. Stop acting White Christian light, justices and elect-eds as though what you think human beings should believe is what should dictate policy and politics.

Amanda: Right. And is the religious moral truth.

Jacqui: Exactly, because it isn't, and this is in case you want to share this podcast, y'all who are listening, with someone else. Like, it's not there, it isn't in there. And this idea that we somehow are a Christian nation that should tell everybody else what to believe is absolutely bunk. It's also not even in the constitution. Oh gosh, what's the name of this website? We'll put this in the show notes. One of my favorite places to go is this constitutional website, they'd be like, nope, not there. So, I'm saying read, listen, learn, and maybe we could stop moving from this kind of blind place of kind of a compass, Amanda, that's not even pointing to the right place.

Amanda: Yeah. So just to like summarize again, because I think you've said so many things like the interfaith element of this conversation, we really need to be clear about in this moment. And, where is religious freedom in this? Is something that I think we have to keep lifting up. Being intentional about the language we use and redirecting to, no, it is a moral right that all people can make this decision for them. It is not the right of the court, or by themselves. I think that's something that we can do. I think being intentional about the way that we hear others talking about it. And when I hear White folks, oh this... Even for the first time being enraged or for the first time imagining that, this is all because of a 2020 election, 2016 election. Saying, Hey, you know what, we need to be clear about the history here. And here's how we've been complicit in this for a long time.

Amanda: Because if we don't do that here, one, it's harmful when we try to get into the movement that Black and Brown women have been leading for so long, but also we'll repeat it. We'll

never get out of this cycle of not knowing our history and how we got here. And actually, intentionally moving forward. And you know, Jacqui, we still have to be intentional about electing pro-choice candidates. And candidates that will work to abolish the filibuster, which is a racist construct in and of itself. And we can do this. It feels very, very overwhelming right now. I think another thing, Judson Memorial was really, really instrumental in this specifically in New York before Roe, but we're going to have to be creating communities of care.

Amanda: And mutual aid for each other, that's going to be hyper, hyperlocal. And one of the best places to do that and to organize is with your community of faith. So start talking now, what are we doing? How are we being prepared to welcome people? How can we say, we will pay for you to get here. We will pay for your additional childcare. And one for people who could have an abortion in their lifetime do. And the majority of people who have abortion are already parents. And to talk about all the ways that we have to care for the families that are already in place, when people have to travel out of Texas. As soon as this thing passes, it is literally criminalized in Texas. It is criminalized in Texas to get an abortion. So we're going to have people coming from all over where financial restraints are dire. And the other thing that criminalized people can't do is what?

Jacqui: Fight.

Amanda: And vote.

Jacqui: And vote.

Amanda: So again, this is all just a very, very orchestrated attack on voting rights and access and power and control. And we could go on and on.

Jacqui: But I think it's important to stress that. I mean, let's just underline that. Let's underline the demonic nature of this campaign. This campaign, that when you ask me, how am I doing with it? Has me terrified of all of the deeply reaching fingers of it. Deep down into the same, let's look, like the 13th amendment, like the way we can criminalize Black people around drugs. We can disenfranchise Black folks voting forever because they've done small crimes. We can criminalize parents caring for their Trans children.

Amanda: Already happened this week.

Jacqui: Right. We can criminalize women who've had a miscarriage. This is a horribly, and it'll make the handmaids take look cute. Listen friends who are listening, one of the things that can happen in a conversation like this is you can think to yourself, well, I'm not sure I'm for people to have abortions. Good for you. Have your own personal feeling about terminating pregnancies. I'd like you to read some science on that. I'd like you to be looking at the viewpoints on that. But your personal decision, your personal point of view about abortions cannot be the thing that causes, participates in, enables the wholesale killing of rights of other folks.

Jacqui: Like that's just, like have at that. Be in your Bible study, having that feeling. Be in your conversation with your partner, having that feeling. But when you think about the nation, in which we live, a nation of diversity and plurality and lots of different points of views and

lots of different socioeconomic stories, your personal decision is yours. And so is theirs. And that's the right that we want to stand up for. You, as a person of faith, I'm going to assume Christian for this moment, are kind of responsible to walk the Jesus walk.

Amanda: And Jacqui too, what do we know about Jesus and God?

Jacqui: Love.

Amanda: Love. We know love. And one of the ways that that love is manifests is by the ways that Jesus, you talk about this a lot, is this multiethnic, multi everything character who has a very intersectional,

Jacqui: Life.

Amanda: Theology and practical ways of embodying care. That word is not in the Bible. Of course not. But it can and should be applied to how we approach these issues. So yeah, to your point, you have your own thoughts on abortion. I would challenge people of faith too, to apply an intersectional theology to this conversation. And White evangelical voters specifically have to do that. We have to remove the wedge issue, single issue that this has become, from the way that we think about our faith and the way we think about how that translates to the voting booth. Because that's what's gotten us here. And in fact, the God we serve, Jacqui, is now one whoever just looks at one issue.

Jacqui: Absolutely. That's right, Amanda.

Amanda: God sees all the things. And God's not happy about the way that we do not advocate for life in all the ways. God's not only asking about when does life begin for that thing. God cares about all the life.

Jacqui: All the life. All the life, the life of the mother, the life of the pregnant person. And I'm sure I'm not being as articulate as I want to be right here. Y'all again, your personal faith is your personal faith. When you go to the voting booth, it seems to me, you want to vote on the side of love on the side of God's intersectional care for humanity. That is what Amanda is saying and that is what I'm saying. How do we vote for Mother earth? How do we vote for the poor and the disenfranchised? How do we vote for the person who isn't you?

Amanda: Yes.

Jacqui: Who has been raped, molested, or just can't do a baby right now. Doesn't want to do a baby right now. They have the right in this nation to make a choice for themselves and not have some far right, Supreme court justices who lied to get the job, tell them what to do. I'm sorry, y'all, I think our faith calls us to a hermeneutic of suspicion about those kinds of decisions made on values that we don't all share.

Amanda: Absolutely.

Jacqui: Yeah. Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft, I think you're amazing.

Amanda: Thank you, Jacqui.

Jacqui: I'm so glad you're here.

Amanda: I think you are too.

Jacqui: And listen, the world's better because of White feminist lady like you, who's always doing the Raising of Imagination. Who's always vulnerable and putting fierce love on the line. Always learning, always trying hard. And so we want you to follow Amanda at Raising Imagination and find out more about what she's saying and doing and teaching, and go to middlechurch.org, friends, for a beautiful resource page on all things, not just abortion, but all things, social justice. We're doing race, we're doing gender, we're doing sexuality. We're doing Trans. We're doing environment. And we are doing a woman's right to choose, a pregnant person's right to choose because created in the image of God, it's their damn right to be in charge of their destiny. Thank you, Amanda.

Amanda: Thank you, Jacqui.

Jacqui: Thank you so much, Amanda, for this incredible conversation, it's always so great to work on healing the world with you. I hope friends that no matter where you come out on this issue, that you can imagine that the real issue is freedom, liberty, freedom of choice, agency. That we live in a nation that is not Christian, that is a pluralistic nation. That the separation of church and state means folks get to talk to their God of their understanding and figure out what they want to do with their lives, through their faith, through their love, through their ethics. And we hope you'll stay in this conversation. We hope that you'll listen deeply to your neighbor and that you'll make decisions based on love. What does love have us do? Love Period. Amanda, thank you so much for being smart and thoughtful and a resource to us all. I appreciate you. It's not over. We've got work to do so. So let us breathe. Rest. Resist. Repeat. Thanks.