

# **Culture and Theology**

## ***Abortion***

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Reformation Church  
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## Introduction

Why are we talking about this?

- *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.* (Ephesians 5:11)
- The relationship between politics, morality, and ethics.
- The question of anthropology.
  - Who or what are we?
  - “If the unborn is not a human person, no justification for abortion is necessary. However, if the unborn is a human person, no justification is adequate.” (Gregory Koukl)
- “abortion harms far more than the child in the womb. The case against abortion is far more comprehensive. Abortions harm every single one of us by perpetuating deeply rooted falsehoods about what it means to be human. Abortion attacks the humanity and value of the child in the womb. Abortion strikes at the bond between mother and child, turning it into a conflict between adversaries and a justification for violence, a relationship not of love but of antagonism and mutual destruction.” (Ryan Anderson and Alexandra DeSanctis, *Tearing Us Apart*)
- Abortion pop quiz
  1. Is it ethically worse to murder a toddler or a fetus?
  2. Which is worse: to abort a 3 week old embryo or 36 week fetus?
  3. Is abortion acceptable in the case of rape or incest?
  4. What if the child would be severely mentally or physically disabled?
  5. Should abortion doctors be charged with murder?
  6. What about the mom? Or the dad who pressures for abortion?
  7. In what city did Christ’s incarnation take place?

- “the human nature formed in and out of Mary...from the earliest moment of conception was united with, and taken up into, the person of the Son.” (Herman Bavinck)
- What do we mean by abortion?
- The intentional manipulation of language
  - “Through public conditioning, use of language, concepts and laws, the idea of abortion can be separated from the idea of killing.” (1960s pro-abortion journal)
  - Racism
  - Hate speech
  - Safe spaces
  - Microaggressions
  - Reproductive freedom/justice, pro-choice, clump of cells
  - “Unwanted early human life is often described as merely a “cluster of cells,” a “clump of tissue,” “uterine material,” the “product of conception,” etc. Of course, each of us adults is also a “cluster of cells,” a “clump of tissue” and a “product of conception,” but we do not refer to each other in these terms because they under-describe the reality of what we are as human beings.”
  - “Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.” (George Orwell)
- abortion is the deliberate termination of a human pregnancy?
  - What makes abortion abortion?
  - Need to clearly distinguish between natural miscarriages and medical procedures which contravene the natural process.
  - make some mention of intentionality and purpose so as to distinguish abortion from something like the removal of a fetus in an ectopic pregnancy or uterine cancer in which the life of the mother is at stake and the death of the child is not the desired result.
- therapeutic vs elective abortions?
- Abortion is a form of medical intervention in which the purpose is to terminate a pregnancy by means of terminating the life of an unborn child.

- Methods
  - Surgical methods: suction, D&E, MOLD
    - 1. Suction (82%)
    - 2. D&E: dilation and evacuation
    - 3. MOLD technique
  - Pharmaceutical
- Facts about abortion
  - About 1,000,000 / year in US
  - Leading cause of death
  - 22% of all pregnancies
  - More than 64 million total!
- Who it is who gets abortion?
  - The vast majority of those who abort are unmarried women in their 20s, with a significant correlation to race in which there is a disproportionate percentage of abortions by blacks and Hispanics.
  - About 1/3 of women who abort identify as Protestant. About 1/4 as Catholic. According to some statistics, nearly 3/4 identify as some form of Christian.
- “If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved. And to be steady on all the battlefields besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.” (Elizabeth Rundle Charles)

## Abortion as child sacrifice

- Pharoah and Herod
- “It is not immoral to choose abortion; it is simply another kind of morality, a pagan one...Abortion is a sacrifice to Artemis. Abortion is a sacrament for the gift of life to remain pure.” (Ginette Paris, “The Sacrament of Abortion”)
- “Abortion is the demonic parody of the Eucharist. That’s why it uses the same holy words. This is my body. But with the opposite blasphemous meaning.” (Peter Kreeft)
- Judges 6: Baal and Asherah - pedophilia and pedicide
  - “Our objective is unlimited sexual gratification without the burden of unwanted children.” (Margaret Sanger)
  - “When the history of our civilization is written, it will be a biological history, and Margaret Sanger will be its heroine.” (H.G. Wells)
  - “At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races.” (Charles Darwin)
  - “The 1916 Project” by Seth Gruber
  - “Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.” (Voltaire)

## Sex without consequence

- “Birth control appeals to the advanced radical because it is calculated to undermine the authority of the Christian churches. I look forward to seeing humanity free someday of the tyranny of Christianity no less than Capitalism.” (Margaret Sanger)
- Planned Parenthood, the single largest killer of children, is also, according to their own literature, the single larger provider of sex education in the US
- “In a society in which idolatry runs rampant, a church that is not iconoclastic is a travesty. If it is not against the idols it is with them.” (Herbert Schlossberg)
- “You are to claim your godlike, God-given role in creation by saying yes or no, secure in the knowledge that whatever you decide, after having honestly sought what is right, God will bless.” (Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice)
- “Abortion is a divinely blessed and guided act that can be practiced by a sovereign, isolated moral agent without regard to any external moral or legal restraints and without concern about the moral status of the target of the act.” (Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice)

How did we get here?

- Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a rather consistent cultural revulsion at abortion.
- Even the first feminists were opposed to abortion.
  - “No matter what the motive, love of ease, or a desire to save from suffering the unborn innocent, the woman is awfully guilty who commits the deed. It will burden her conscience in life and burden her soul in death; but oh, thrice guilty is he who drove her to the desperation that impelled her to the crime...Much as I deplore the horrible crime of child-murder, earnestly as I desire its suppression...I cannot believe...that such a law [banning abortion] would have the desired effect. It would only be mowing off the top of the noxious weed, while the root remains. We want prevention, not merely punishment. We must reach the root of the evil, and destroy it.” (Susan B. Anthony)
  - “When we consider that women have been treated as property, it is degrading to women that we should treat our children as property to be disposed of as we see fit.” (Elizabeth Cady Stanton)
- So how did we go from a culture in which the consensus voice of the church and even the leading voices of feminism and even the founder of the largest organization dedicated to the slaughter of children opposed abortion to one in which its almost seen as a moral imperative?
- Understanding the history of ideas...the genesis of cultural change.
  - The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self and Strange New World by Carl Trueman
  - Step 1: the psychologizing of the self: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Nietzsche, Marx and Darwin
  - Step 2: the sexualizing of psychology: Freud, later Albert Kinsey
  - Step 3: the politicizing of sex: Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse
- Revolution as process not event.
  - “The revolution will not happen with guns, rather it will happen incrementally, year by year. We will infiltrate their schools and bureaucracies, transforming them into Marxist entities as we move toward universal egalitarianism.” (Max Horkheimer, Frankfurt)
- the strategy of the robes
- Waves of feminism
  - 1<sup>st</sup>: equality is interchangeability, women’s independence
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: act like men vocationally and sexually
    - Down with oppressors: nuclear family, tradition, Church, sexual purity, & biology.

- Choice?
  - “No woman should be authorized to stay at home and raise her children...Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one.” (Simone de Beauvoir)
  - Informed consent?
- Abortion as a moral imperative
  - “there will always be human beings who are dispensable, who must be sacrificed for the greater good.” (George and Tollefsen, Embryo)
  - “The most merciful thing that a large family can do to one of its infant members is to kill it.” (Margaret Sanger)
  - safe, legal, and rare? – Shout Your Abortion!
  - “abortion is a moral good...an act of love, an act of grace, a blessing” (PCUSA Rev. Rebecca Todd Peters)
- What if women didn’t want to take a pill? What if women forgot to take a pill?

Need abortion!

Roe v. Wade, 1973

- Right to privacy? Its in there somewhere...right?
- Three trimester approach
  - 1<sup>st</sup>: the state had no business prying into a woman’s right
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: state could impose some minimal regulations related to maternal health
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>: states were permitted to regulate or even prohibit abortions, except in cases where the mother’s life or health was at risk.
- But Doe v. Bolton decided on the same day!
  - even mental distress would present a risk to the mother’s life or health.
- Dobbs, 2022 – reversal of Roe

## Session 2: History and The Pro-Life Position

- Roman Empire: infanticide
  - “choosing some of the cruelest [deaths] for their own children, such as drowning, or starving with cold or hunger, or exposing to the mercy of dogs, dying by the sword being too sweet a death for children” (Tertullian)
  - “I will follow that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is harmful and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion.” (Oath of Hippocrates)
- A Christian counterculture
- “There are two ways: the way of life and the way of death...therefore, do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant” (Didache)
- “Thou shalt love thy neighbor more than thy own life. Thou shall not murder a child by abortion.” (Epistle of Barnabas)
- “We say that women who induce abortions are murderers, and will have to give account of it to God. The fetus in the womb is a living being and therefore the object of God’s care.” (Athenagoras, 2<sup>nd</sup> century)
- “outright murder of the fetus” (Clement of Alexandria)
- “Our whole life can go on in observation of the laws of nature, if we gain dominion over our desires from the beginning and if we do not kill, by various means of a perverse art, the human offspring, born according to the designs of divine providence; for these women who, in order to hide their immorality, use abortive drugs which expel the matter completely dead, abort at the same time their humanity.” (Clement of Alexandria)
- “Our faith declares life out of death. Therefore, murder is forbidden once and for all. We may not destroy even the fetus in the womb. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man killing. Thus it does not matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. In both instances, destruction is murder.” (Tertullian)
- “They deny in their very womb their own progeny. By use of parricidal mixtures they snuff out the fruit of their wombs. In this way life is taken before it is given. Who except man himself has taught us ways of repudiating our own children.” (Ambrose, 4<sup>th</sup> century)
- “She who has deliberately destroyed a fetus has to pay the penalty of murder. Moreover those who aid her, who give abortifacients for the destruction of a child conceived in the womb are murderers themselves, along with those receiving the poisons.” (Basil of Caesarea)

- “They who drink potions to ensure sterility are guilty of rebuffing God’s own blessings. Some, when they learn that the potions have failed and thus are with child through sin, practice abortion by use of still other potions. They are then guilty of three crimes: self-mutilation, adultery, and the murder of an unborn child.” (Jerome)
- “provoke women to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to murder the unborn child.” (Augustine)
- “It is really remarkable how uniform and how pronounced was the early Christian opposition to abortion.” (Bruce Metzger, foreword to *Abortion and the Early Church* by Michael J. Gorman)
- Discussion of ensoulment?
- “The unborn child...though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being...and should not be robbed of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man’s house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy an unborn child in the womb before it has come to light.” (John Calvin)
- “This assembly regards the destruction by parents of their own offspring, before birth, with abhorrence, as a crime against God and against nature; and as the frequency of such murders can no longer be concealed, we hereby warn those that are guilty of this crime that, except they repent, they cannot inherit eternal life. We also exhort those who have been called to preach the gospel, and all who love purity and the truth, and who would avert the just judgments of Almighty God from the nation, that they be no longer silent, or tolerant of these things, but that they endeavor by all proper means to stay the floods of impurity and cruelty.” (Presbyterian Church, 1869)
- A changing Church
  - “full freedom of personal choice.” (PCUSA, 1972)
  - “work for legislation that will allow the possibility of abortion under such circumstances as rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal deformity, and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental, and physical health of the mother.” (SBC 1971)
- By 1980, SBC reversed course. What happened?
  - Understanding liberalism and the conservative resurgence
  - Science advancement.
  - Theology is king, the Bible is supreme, but science is a handmaiden to theology that can sometimes correct our blindspots.

Why this historical analysis is helpful.

- Prosecution of abortionists.
  - Why not mothers?
  - Why not before quickening?
- See our blindspots
  - “History must be our deliverer not only from the undue influence of other times, but from the undue influence of our own, from the tyranny of the environment and the pressures of the air we breathe.” (Lord Acton)
  - right side of history
  - “Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead.” (G.K. Chesterton)
  - “Be assured, there is nothing new in theology except that which is false.” (Charles Spurgeon)
- Spot the lies
  - “conservative Christianity’s ferocious opposition to abortion is relatively new in historical terms.” (Nicholas Kristof, NYT)

What is the pro-life position?

- Abortion is murder and thus a moral and ethical wrong. It should be not only prohibited by law, but also driven from our cultural consciousness.
- Anthropology on the forefront of the culture war.
- What is man?
  - Are men mere machines as pragmatism suggests.
  - Are men mere sexual beings as Freud or Kinsey suggest?
  - Are we economic beings as Marx thought?
  - Are we mere animals as Darwin or Pavlov proposed?
- Metaphysics and ethics
- Can I kill it?
- But I can’t say what to do with it – ethics - without first understanding what it is – metaphysics.

- Many of our battles today are a result of conflicting metaphysical presuppositions
  - Are gender & sexuality distinct things? Is there a gender spectrum or is there a binary?
  - What is marriage? What are the bounds of marriage?
  - What about sex? What are the boundaries? Is it simply consent?
    - “there are only two kinds of sex: sex with victims and sex without. Sex with victims is always wrong. Sex without is always right.” (Planned Parenthood)
  - What is the cultural mandate and how does that relate to questions of welfare?
  - Is our identity to be found in our race? How should we think about race and ethnicity?
  - What is politics? How should we order our political priorities?
  - What does the Bible say about immigration and immigrants?
  - When does a person acquire the imago dei and therefore sanctity and rights?
- Ours is an anti-biological, anti-creational, anti-fact, anti-truth age.
- The root anthropological question: Is what is aborted a person or not?
- “The abortion debate is really about human identity, about who and what human beings are.” (Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*)
- “A prohibition on abortion really depends on the notion of personhood. Is an embryo a person with potential or a potential person.” (Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*)
- So is the object of the abortion a baby or not?
- When does a person become a person and when does life begin?
  - Aristotle or quickening (when the mother feels the baby)
  - the “logic” of *Roe v. Wade*: implies that life begins at viability
  - Not even at birth (Peter Singer)
- the problem with these arbitrary standards: no objective boundary
  - “Infanticide is not a great wrong. I do not want to be construed as condemning women who, under certain circumstances, quietly put their infants to death.” (Beverly Harrison)
  - “There is no basis for a radical moral distinction between abortion and infanticide.” (philosopher Jeff McMahan)
  - Bioethicist Jonathan Glover: “infanticide is sometimes right” and “the objection to infanticide is at most no stronger than the objection to frustrating a baby’s current set of desires, say by leaving him to cry unattended for a longish period.”
  - Bioethicist John Harris: “There is no obvious reason why one should think differently, from an ethical point of view, about a fetus when it’s outside the womb rather than when it’s inside the womb.”

## Logic:

- you cannot “not know” in one area of your life what you know in every other area
  - bald eagle eggs or sea turtle eggs
- "I've never met a pro-life vegan...why the odd preference for chicken embryos over human ones?"
  - Fetuses vs. scrambled eggs
- Laws that charge someone with double homicide when they kill a pregnant woman.
- Laws that prohibit women from doing drugs while pregnant
- the law of God is written on our hearts, but we suppress the truth (Romans 1)

## Science:

- The male sperm and the female ovum both have 23 chromosomes. When they combine, they form a new entity marked by new and complete DNA, an entity that begins to autonomously direct its own development.
- “human embryos are, from the very beginning, human beings, sharing an identity with, though younger than, the older human beings they will grow up to become” (Robert George, Christopher Tollefsen, Embryo)
- “The unborn child is human, and at all periods differs in degree and not in kind from the infant and the adult. Therefore, we must regard it as a human being with an inalienable right to life, and that its destruction is homicide.” (Journal of the AMA, late 19<sup>th</sup> century)
- “I think we can now also say that the question of the beginning of life – when life begins – is no longer a question for theological or philosophical dispute. It is an established scientific fact.” (Dr. Hymie Gordon, professor at Mayo Clinic)
- “The onset of individual life is not a dogma of church, but a fact of science. How much more convenient if we lived in the thirteenth century when no one knew anything about microbiology, and arguments about the onset of life were legitimate. Nowadays, it is not some misguided ecclesiastics who are trying to suppress embarrassing scientific fact. It is the secular juridical-journalistic establishment.” (Physician and novelist Walker Percy)
- “Human development begins at fertilization when a male gamete or sperm unites with a female gamete or oocyte to form a single cell – a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual.” (embryology textbook – quoted in Anderson and DeSanctis)
- “The basic fact is simple: life begins not at birth, but conception.” (Ashley Montague, geneticist)

- “Physicians, biologists, and other scientists agree that conception marks the beginning of the life of a human being – a being that is alive and is a member of the human species. There is overwhelming agreement on this point in countless medical, biological, and scientific writings.” (Senate Report on Bill 158 “the Human Life Bill”)
- “Abstracted from the abortion debate, the biology of when the life of a new human being begins is neither complicated nor controversial. We all know it.” (Anderson and DeSanctis)
- “It is an indisputable scientific fact that each and every legal surgical abortion in America today stops a beating heart and stops already measurable brain waves.” (Randy Alcorn, Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Questions)
- Stephen Schwarz: SLED - size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency.
  - Are any of these morally relevant to the value of or right to life?
  - Size: are larger humans more important than smaller?
    - “Because, after all, a person is a person, no matter how small.” (Dr. Seuss, Horton Hears a Who)
  - Level of development: does a 24 year old have more value than a 10 year old?
  - Environment: Does journeying 8 inches down the birth-canal somehow change your essential nature?
  - Degree of dependency: are the disabled or those who are dependent on some medical device or drug somehow subhuman?
- “All human beings, irrespective of age, size, stage of development, or condition of dependency, possess equal and intrinsic dignity by virtue of what kind of entity they are and not by virtue of any accidental characteristics, which can come and go and are present in human beings to varying degrees.” (George and Tollefsen, Embryo)
- Essential vs. accidental attributes. What makes you you?
  - “human beings are equal in human dignity and human rights, precisely because these are predicated on what human beings are, rather than on what they have achieved or what we have seen fit to bestow upon them” (George and Tollefsen, Embryo)

- Moving the goalposts...embryos ARE humans, but NOT persons.
- “Over the last several decades...the term ‘personhood’ has often been used to deny protection to the developing fetus. The term points to a set of capacities – usually including consciousness and self-awareness, ability to feel pain, at least some minimal capacity for relationship with others, and perhaps some capacity for self-motivated activity. ‘Personhood’ becomes something a living human being may or may not possess, and the class of persons becomes smaller – perhaps considerably smaller – than the class of living human beings.” (Gilbert Meilaender, *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians*)
- we first dehumanize those whom we desire to exploit, enslave, or kill
- “As soon as one allows direct suppression of innocent human life in any form, he has priced human life. That is, he has subordinated it to some temporal value: economic advantage, physical well being, the good life, protection of reputation or whatever it may be. Once he has done this, there is nothing *in principle* that prevents his destroying human life at other stages and in other circumstances: the aged, the infirm, the socially or economically burdensome, the crippled, the suffering. It is only a matter of waiting until the going price has been reached.” (Catholic theologian, Richard McCormick, 1965)
- Humanity is established by conception, but personhood is something we acquire.
- What is speciesism?
  - “It is species-ist to judge that the life of a normal adult member of our species is more valuable than the life of a normal adult mouse.” (Singer)
  - “We should reject the doctrine that places the lives of members of our species above the lives of members of other species. Some members of other species are persons; some members of our own species are not. No objective assessment can give greater value to the lives of members of our species...” (Singer)
- “If we compare a severely defective human infant with a nonhuman animal, a dog or a pig, for example, we will often find the nonhuman to have superior capacities, both actual and potential, for rationality, self-consciousness, communication and anything else that can plausibly be considered morally significant.” (Singer)
- “Human babies are not born self-aware, or capable of grasping that they exist over time. They are not persons. Hence their lives would seem to be no more worthy of protection than the life of a fetus.” (Singer)
- “The pro-life groups are right about one thing: the location of the baby inside or outside the womb cannot make such a crucial moral difference. We cannot coherently hold that it is all right to kill a fetus a week before birth, but as soon as the baby is born everything must be done to keep it alive.” (Singer)
- “the grounds for not killing persons do not apply to newborn infants” (Singer)

- “an individual becomes a person only when he or she becomes a responsible moral agent – around 3 or 4...until then...infants – like fetuses – are nonpersons; defective children, such as those with Down syndrome, may never become persons.” (Newsweek article)
- “Prolife groups are right about one thing: the location of the baby inside or outside the womb cannot make such a crucial difference...the solution, however, is not to accept the prolife view that the fetus is a human being with the same moral status as yours or mine. The solution is the very opposite: to abandon the idea that all human life is of equal worth.” (William Tillman, Christian Ethics)
- “There clearly is no logical or moral distinction between a fetus and a young baby; free availability of abortion cannot be reasonably distinguished from euthanasia. Nevertheless we are for it. It is too facile to say that human life is always sacred; obviously it is not.” (New Republic editorial)
  - Notice how abortion and euthanasia are linked. What can be given can be taken.

Bible:

- Reject the minimalism that says, “The Bible contains no texts about abortion.” (Richard Hays)
- The Bible speaks about murder. The Bible speaks about the baby in the womb. The Bible even speaks about the personhood of the baby in the womb and the penalty for harm to an unborn baby. So, though the word abortion isn’t in Scripture, the concept is.
  - Texts about pharmakeia?
- Even on questions related to conception vs. implantation vs. birth, the Bible contains hints:
- *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.* (Psalm 139:13)
- *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* (Psalm 51:5)
- *The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.* (Psalm 58:3)
- *On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother’s womb you have been my God.* (Psalm 22:10)
- *Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.* (Isaiah 49:1)
- *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.* (Jeremiah 1:5)
- *And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.* (Luke 1:41)

- *When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (Exodus 21:22–25)*
- So when it comes to discussing the morality of abortion, Christians need to ask two questions:
  - Is an unborn child a human life?
  - Does God ever give man the right to kill innocent human life?
  - *You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13)*
    - You shall not kill?
- *There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood... (Proverbs 6:16–17)*
- Not murder? At least manslaughter.
  - Build a parapet
  - Don't let an animal known to attack get loose
  - "if you see a body lying at the side of the road, you check to see if its breathing before you start shoveling dirt" (Ronald Reagan)
- Biologically: the fetus represents a new human being at conception.
- Morally: humans are created as the imago dei and thus possess intrinsic dignity and worth.
- Politically: governments exist to protect the life and welfare of its people, including those not yet born.

### Session 3: Questions, *Exceptions*, and Objections

#### 1. What are the implications of the pro-life position on contraception?

- what is contraception?
- “No single event since Eve took the apple has been as consequential for relations between the sexes as the arrival of modern contraception.” (Mary Eberstadt, *Adam and Eve after the Pill*)
- “Evangelicals were not on the front lines of the abortion revolution. I think the contraceptive revolution caught Evangelicals by surprise. We bought into a mentality of control. We welcomed the polio vaccine and penicillin and just received the Pill as one more medical advance.” (Al Mohler)
- all contraception is a form of birth control, but not all forms of birth control are contraceptive.
- Abortifacient effect
- Does the Birth Control Pill Cause Abortion (Randy Alcorn)

#### 2. Should the Church just avoid politics?

- “America needs to get over its love affair with the fetus.” (Jocelyn Elders, Surgeon General)

#### 3. Can we legislate morality?

- “Statecraft is soulcraft.” (Aristotle)
- What is the function of laws?
- “At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.” (*Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 1992)

4. Should we advocate for incrementalism or abolitionism?

- “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it.” (Upton Sinclair)

5. Should doctors who perform and mothers who receive abortions be charged with murder, prosecuted, and punished?

- “we state unequivocally that we do not support any measure seeking to criminalize or punish women and we stand firmly opposed to include [sic] such penalties in legislation.” (National Right to Life organization)
- “What I can say pragmatically is that arresting women is a sure way to arrest the progress of pro-life ideas in the twenty-first century.” (Marvin Olasky)
- “The modern world is full of the old Christian virtues gone mad. The virtues have gone mad because they have been isolated from each other and are wandering alone. Thus some scientists care for truth, but their truth is pitiless. And thus some humanitarians care only for pity; but their pity – I am sorry to say – is often untruthful.” (G.K. Chesterton)
- The gift of guilt!

6. Is it inconsistent for Christians to oppose abortion, but support capital punishment or the Second Amendment?

- a consistent pro-life ethic...a whole life...womb to tomb
- Do liberal solutions actually solve the problems they aim to solve?
- A confusion of categories: sanctity of life vs. quality of life
- “The biblical view of the overarching sanctity of life is the same principle that leads people to be both anti-abortion and pro-capital punishment.” (R.C. Sproul)
- *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.* (Genesis 9:6)

7. What should we think about IVF?

8. Are there exceptions? What about ectopic pregnancy or other threats to the life of the mother?

9. What about exceptions for rape and incest?

- *In those days they shall no longer say: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge. (Jeremiah 31:29-30)*
- *The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ezekiel 18:20)*
- *Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin. (Deuteronomy 24:16)*
- "hard cases make bad laws"

10. What about women's rights?

- You are not your own.
- The baby is not your body.
- Competing views of rights:
  - Negative vs. positive rights
  - Inherent (from God) vs. acquired (from state)
- "One of the reasons women are so special is precisely because we can conceive and that we are equipped physically and psychologically to nurture and protect new life. However, the new feminists consider that ability a definite liability, some even call it a curse, thereby denying the unique value of feminine biology and psychology." (Mary Winter)
- "the ultimate exploitation of women." (Mary Winter)
- don't like abortion, don't have one?

11. What should we think about the argument that abolishing legal abortion will just create a black market trade?

- 5000 illegal back alley abortions per year?
- “I confess I knew the figures were totally false...But in the ‘morality’ of our revolution, it was a useful figure, widely accepted, so why go out of our way to correct it with honest statistics? The overriding concern was to get the laws eliminated, and anything within reason that had to be done was permissible.” (Bernard Nathanson)

### Conclusion

- “Lies are the wheels that turn every holocaust.” (Randy Alcorn)
- “Most people who say they oppose abortion do just enough to salve the conscience but not enough to stop the killing.” (Gregg Cunningham, quoted in Scott Klusendorf, The Case for Life)
- “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” (Edmund Burke)
- So what can we do?
- It depends on who we are.
- “If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly.” (G.K. Chesterton)

## **Bibliography and Recommended Resources** (\* recommendations for primary resources)

### Overview of Cultural Changes Related to Sexual Identity:

- The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Carl Trueman
- Strange New World: Carl Trueman
- Adam and Eve after the Pill: Mary Eberstadt
- Feminism Seminar: Reformation Church website

### General Overviews of Abortion

- Abortion: R.C. Sproul
- Tearing us Apart: Ryan Anderson and Alexandra DeSanctis
- Evangelicals and Abortion: Cameron Fraser
- Embryo: Robert George and Christopher Tollefsen
- ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments: Randy Alcorn\*
- Deliver us from Abortion: Brian Fisher
- The Gospel and Abortion: Russell Moore and Andrew Walker
- Defending Life: Francis Beckwith
- The Case for Life: Scott Klusendorf\*

### Historical Surveys of Christian Approaches

- Abortion and the Early Church: Michael J. Gorman\*
- Abortion Rites – A Social History of Abortion in America: Marvin Olasky
- Third Time Around: George Grant
- Defenders of the Unborn – The Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade: Daniel Williams

### The History of Margaret Sanger and Planned Parenthood

- The 1916 Project – The Lyin', the Witch, and the War We're In: Seth Gruber\*

### Larger Works Featuring Discussion of Abortion

- Medical Ethics and the Faith Factor: Robert Orr, M.D.
- Ethics for a Brave New World: John and Paul Feinberg
- Bioethics: Gilbert Meilander

### Philosophical Approaches

- The Unaborted Socrates: Peter Kreeft
- Three Approaches to Abortion: Peter Kreeft

### The Birth Control Pill

- Does the Birth Control Pill Cause Abortions: Randy Alcorn
- The Pill: Bernard Asbell

### Politics of Abortion

- Politics according to the Bible: Wayne Grudem
- The Party of Death: Ramesh Ponnuru