

MINEOLA BIBLE INSTITUTE AND SEMINARY

Page | 1

The Biblical Response to Abortion

Radically Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



“Excellence in Apostolic Education since 1991”

Copyright © 2019

Mineola Bible Institute and Seminary

All Rights Reserved

Page | 2

This lesson material may not be used in any manner for reproduction in any language or use without the written permission of Mineola Bible Institute and Seminary

THE BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO ABORTION

Genesis 1:27-28 “So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

Genesis 9:6 “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.”

Isaiah 44:24 “Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I [am] the LORD that maketh all [things]; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.”

In teaching this course, I am aware that there are those that have had abortions. --> I must teach this in **2** ways...

1st: the problem - **2nd:** the solution

C. Everett Koop & Francis Schaeffer:

“Cultures can be judged in many ways, but eventually every nation, in every age, must be judged by this test: How did it treat its people? Each generation, each wave of humanity, evaluates it’s predecessors, on this basis. The final measure of mankind’s humanity, is how humanely people treat one another.”

The last issue to so pull at the American societal fabric was slavery!

It is volatile, because of what's at stake => HUMAN LIFE!

THE ARGUMENT?

Abortionist claim, that it is a "woman's right to private choice" (NONYA)

IT IS HER CIVIL RIGHT! --> back off men, it's her body!

WELL, IS IT HER BODY? --> Medically yes, Spiritually no!

I Corinthians 6:19-20 "What?" "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye

are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your Spirit, which are God's."

I Corinthians 7:1-5 "Now, concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: [It is] good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, [to avoid] fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife, due benevolence: and likewise, also the wife unto her husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also, the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except [it be] with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."

(INCONTINENCY = lack of restraint & control)

There is no question about the pro choice concept, if we were discussing a simple medical issue: gall stones, tumor, tonsils, kidneys.

But when HUMAN life is at issue: it is everyone's concern!

WE DO HAVE SOME limited FREEDOMS:

I have freedom of speech...but, I cannot yell, fire, in a crowded auditorium.

(my freedom of speech ends where the endangerment of others starts)

ABORTION IS AN OLD ISSUE: Dates back over 2,000 yrs. To Pagan cultures!

Ancient Greece etc...

There was obviously, a public outcry, at some point, because of the following clause in the Hippocratic Oath (400 BC).

"I will not give to a woman, a pessary to cause abortion."

In Bible days, children were looked down with disdain of sorts...until Jesus elevated them to a significant level!

Luke 18:15-57 “And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but, when [his] disciples saw [it], they rebuked them. But, Jesus called them [unto him], and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, shall in no wise, enter therein.”

JESUS SHOWED THE TRUE VALUE OF CHILDREN!

Athenagorus was a late second century Christian, that was called upon, to defend the Christian faith against certain charges. He outlined the basic CHRISTIAN POSITION OF THE EARLY CHURCH as follows:

1. Abortion is considered murder.
2. The guilty must give account to God.
3. The fetus is a living being, the object of God's care.

THE REASON THIS ISSUE IS ALIVE AGAIN IS THE HUMANIST SEXUAL REVOLUTION

Humanism says: --> Personal gratification repudiates Biblical morality!

To be “sexually free” has caused bondage in other areas, though.

STD Disease, Aids, Divorce, broken families!

THERE ARE NO "FREE" CHOICES! EVERY CHOICE CARRIES A COST!

WHAT IS THE TRUTH OF OUR CULTURE?

Allen Guttmacher Institute - research arm of Planned Parenthood

1% of Abortions are due to incest or rape.

1% is because of fetal deformities.

4% were due to a doctor deciding the mother's life was in danger.

50% of women, said they did not want to be a single parent - they were having relationship problems.

66% said, they could not afford a child.

76% said, a child would interfere with their lifestyle.

-----> 95% of abortions are for convenience of the mother!

LISTEN TO THIS STAGGERING FIGURE OF LEGAL ABORTIONS...(Swindoll figures)

55 million babies are aborted, every year, worldwide.

-- breakdown: 150,685 per day

6,278 per hour

105 per minute (- 12,556 during this Bible Study -)

IN THE U.S.: 1.6 million a year - 20 million legal abortions since 1973

More than died; Revolutionary, Civil, Korean, Vietnam & WW1 & WW2 combined

THIS TROUBLES ME BECAUSE:

Exodus 20:13 "Thou shalt not kill."

Exodus 23:7 "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked."

Numbers 35:33 "So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye [are]: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."

Listen to the terrible condition described ...

Psalms 106:36-38 "And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils. And shed innocent blood, [even] the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood."

THE ROOT OF THE DEBATE: - WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

SOME SAY: (unviable tissue mass - only “potential” life)

View a pregnancy as a “WHAT” instead of a “WHO”

Does life begin at conception?

MEDICAL CONCEPT: The moment of conception unites 23 chromosomes into 46

(- Full Human DNA is ready -)

19 days - develops eyes

24 days - regular independent heartbeat

4 weeks - trunk has 40 sets of muscles

6 weeks - skeleton fully developed (reflexes present)

43 days - Brain activity can be scanned with an EEG

(finger prints have formed)

8 weeks - Kidney, brain, liver, stomach fully functioning

10 weeks - Infant squints, swallows, hiccups, etc...

BIBLICAL CONCEPT

Job 31:13-15 “If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; What then shall I do when God riseth up? And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?”

Isaiah 44:24 “Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I [am] the LORD that maketh all [things]; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.”

These verses show the medical truth of formation in the womb...

But what about the RELATIONAL CONCEPT OF LIFE IN THE WOMB?

Psalms 139:13 “For thou has possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb.”

Isaiah 49:1 “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.”

Jeremiah 1:4-8 “Then the WORD of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak: for I [am] a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I [am] a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee,

thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I [am] with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.”

Luke 1:15 “For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” - John the Baptist

Page | 11

Luke 1:41 “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.”

Galatians 1:15 “But, when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called [me] by his grace.” (- PAUL)

LISTEN TO THE JUDGMENT GOD PRONOUNCES ON EPHRAIM...

(no glory from Conception)

Hosea 9:11-12 “[As for] Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. Though they bring up their children, yet, will I bereave them, [that there shall] not [be] a man [left]: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!”

THE LAW OF OUR LAND IS AN UMBILICAL VIEW: We need to honor the Bible!

Isaiah 5:20 “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

WE MUST MAKE BIBLICAL CHOICES!

Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, [that] I have set before you, life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but, be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

HUMAN LIFE **IS** MORE VALUABLE!

Peter Singer (Philosopher) says: “Humans who bestow superior value on the lives of all human beings, solely because they are members of our own species, are judging along lines strikingly similar to white racists, who bestow superior value on the lives of other whites, merely because they are members of their own race.”

---> this sounds enlightened, at first,

BUT CHRISTIANITY DOES NOT VALUE RACE OVER RACE, BUT HUMAN LIFE OVER ANIMAL.

All life comes from God! (we all share a common Creator, but not value)

**** Honda Corp., makes lawn mowers and Luxury cars: = VALUED DIFFERENTLY

All life was Created by God...But only Humans bear His image
(in any stage of development)

Genesis 9:5-6 “And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast, will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man, shall his blood

be shed: for in the image of God made he man.”

God has set mankind apart among His Creation: It is not self evaluation!

BOTTOM LINE:

Exodus 21:22 “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart [from her], and yet, no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges [determine].”

To harm an unborn was looked upon the same as harming an already born child.

Exodus 23:7 “Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.”

1 of the 7 things God hates in Proverbs: “hands that shed innocent blood.”

WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH DO?

Collectively, not much, due to current laws. But, as individual Christians:

1. Become Informed!

2. Influence society in the arena of ideas!

3. Make your feelings known to legislators!

4. Try to help those in need!

-- Volunteer at a pregnancy crisis center -- Take a pregnant teen into your home

--Adopt or become Foster Parents, etc...

MINISTER COMPASSION TO YOUR CITY!

Psalms 127:3 “Lo, children [are] an heritage of the LORD: [and] the fruit of the womb [is his] reward.”

“WHEN YOU HAVE DONE IT TO THE LEAST OF THESE...YOU HAVE DONE IT UNTO

ME.”

NOW THE SOLUTION

THOSE THAT HAVE MISCARRIED:

Do not blame yourself: Nature (God) makes choices for us sometimes.

(This is a loss: But, it should not be a devastating loss).

The loss is much greater for those that lose children they have held and bonded to:

(Oklahoma City Bombing - 1 yr. old boy)

FOR THOSE THAT HAVE HAD ABORTIONS:

#1. Repent! (ask God for forgiveness).

#2. You need a revelation of Grace!

Ephesians 2:4 “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.”

#3. Forgive yourself! (But, how do I release the pain?)

**** When a pregnant woman is delivering...her desire to go forward has to outgrow her present pain! --> Then she give birth to new life!

--> UNTIL YOUR DESIRE TO GO FORWARD BECOMES GREATER, THEN YOUR

MEMORIES OF THE PAST...YOU WILL NEVER HOLD THE POWER TO CREATE AGAIN!

Proverbs 29:18 “Where [there is] no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy [is] he.” == > **VISION IS THE DESIRE TO GO FORWARD!**

The DEVIL wants you to live in yesterday...but, GOD is calling you today; Satan draws your attention backward...God calls it forward!

Psalms 27:13 “[I had fainted], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”

Page | 16

I MUST HAVE A SEED PLANTED IN ME TO CULTIVATE - THAT LOOKS FOR JOY!

Hebrews 12:2 “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

GET RID OF YOUR NEGATIVE SPEECH! - YOUR DROWNING YOUR SEED OF FAITH!

AND WHEN YOUR DESIRE TO GO FORWARD IS GREATER THAN YOUR PAST PAIN...

YOU WILL BREAK THE CHAIN THAT HAS HELD YOU FOR YEARS

AND YOU WILL WALK IN THE LIBERTY & JOY OF THE HOLY GHOST!

II Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Abortion: The One Exception

-

Morals are not relative to the individual (subjective morality), but they are relative to the situation. In other words, the situation will determine which objective moral rule we apply (this is not relativism, because the same moral rule applies to every person in the same situation). For example, there are some situations in which cutting someone with a knife is morally wrong and others in which it is not. It is morally wrong to cut someone with a knife, if you are doing so to harm their life. It is morally good, however, if the cutting is at the hands of a doctor, performing a life-saving surgery. It's the same knife and the same flesh in both instances, but the circumstances determine whether or not the action is morally wrong or morally right. The difference between the two acts, is that one cuts to take life unnecessarily, whereas the other cuts to necessarily preserve life. That makes the moral difference.

The same principle applies to the abortion issue. In the case where a mother is likely to die, due to her pregnancy or delivery, abortion is morally justified. Abortion advocates want to cry, "Inconsistency!," at this point, but they fail to consider the difference in circumstances between this scenario and elective abortion. In elective abortions, the life of the mother is not in danger, so the taking of the life of the unborn, is simply, a selfish act, without regard for the life or value of the unborn. In the case where a mother will die due to her pregnancy/delivery, however, to abort the baby, is a regrettable act, deemed necessary, only to preserve life, not take it unnecessarily. In elective abortions, the life of the unborn, is not valued and can be discarded at will; in the life-saving abortions, you are describing the life of the unborn is valued, and can only be ended, if the goal is to preserve life. If we know a mother will die from carrying her baby to term, and we do nothing to intervene, both mom and baby, will die. From the pro-life standpoint, this would be the death of two valuable persons. Because our abiding moral principle is the preservation of life, we act to save one life, rather than lose two. Indeed, it would be immoral to allow, both to die, when we could have saved, at least one.

But, how do we go about saving one of the two lives? Arguably, we could do so, by saving the mother or by saving the baby (if, and only if, the baby is able to survive outside of the womb, at that time, otherwise, our only choice, is to abort the baby, to preserve life). Which one do we save? This is a personal choice, without moral consequence.

A decision to act in a manner to save the one, does not devalue the life of the other. It would be similar to a scenario, in which, two people were drowning, and I only had the time to save one. If those two people were my wife and some stranger, I would

choose my wife. My choice does not speak to the value of the stranger, or declare that he is not a human being. It would be clear, that my choice, was informed by personal and emotional reasons.

Not only is this analogy useful to show the inconsequential nature of the choice of whom to save, but, it also gives a principle that may influence our personal decision to save the mother over the baby. If I was faced with the mother-or-the-baby decision, I would personally save the life of my wife, since there is more of an emotional attachment between her and I, and because she has an irreplaceable role in the family, as my help-mate and the mother to our other children (assuming we had other children). I think it would be wrong to deprive my children of their mother, because of the damage this would have on the rest of their lives. Due to these practical and emotional considerations, I would argue, to save the mother. If someone chose the child, however, I could not argue that they have made an immoral choice.

In summary, the two types of abortions are very different. In the life-saving abortion scenario, both the life of the mother and the life of the child, are valued equally, and both are considered, full human beings. The act of abortion is not an act of disregard for human life, but an act of honoring and preserving life. In elective abortions, only the life of the mother is valued as fully human, and the act of abortion, is an act of disregard for human life. So, when it all boils down to the nitty-gritty, the one exception of the pro-life position, is intended to, necessarily preserve life, and speaks nothing about the value of the human child. This is entirely consistent with the pro-life ethics of valuing life, and in utter contradiction to the pro-choice treatment of the child, as a non-human, non-valuable “thing,” that can be discarded, at will.

Do You Support a Woman’s Right to Choose?

A common question asked of pro-lifers by pro-choicers is, “Do you support a woman’s right to choose?” This is a loaded question, intended to make us look bad. If we answer “no,” it will appear, that we are opposed to choice, in general. If we answer “yes,” well...we are simply, lying. So, how do we respond in a way that both, avoids the intended trap, as well as, makes our case for pro-life? Consider the following response:

the
all
not
par-
ticular choice.”

“This is a loaded question that needs to be unpacked. Of course, I affirm the right to choose. I, along with every other American, affirm the right of people, to make free-choices-women and men, alike. The question is is not whether I affirm the right to choose, but, whether or not I affirm a particular choice.”

good,
moral
is a
af-

“Choices do not hang in mid-air. We choose things. Not all choices are so each choice must be evaluated on its own merits, to determine its value. In this case, the sort of choice I am being asked to affirm or deny, woman’s right to choose to terminate the life of her unborn baby. I do not

evidence
inno-
in a

firm this particular choice, because the philosophical and scientific supports the idea, that such a choice, unjustly terminates the life of an cent human being. This is a moral evil, and any choice that results

moral evil against another individual, ought to be restricted.”

based
choose to
Does a
depends on
a hu-
its life.”

“Freedom of choice is not without its restrictions. Those restrictions are on what it is that we are choosing. Does a woman have the right to end my life? No! Why? Because I am a valuable human being. Does a woman have the right to choose to end her unborn fetus’ life? That depends on whether or not the unborn is a human being. If it can be shown, that it is a human being, then no, she does not have the right to choose to terminate its life.”

people,
whether
recipient of
beings,
woman’s
right,
to choose to kill another human being.”

“I believe free-choices need to be restricted, when they do harm to other people, as does every other sane human being. The abortion question hangs on whether or not the unborn is a genuine human person, who becomes the recipient of harm, because of its mother’s choice. If the unborn are genuine human beings, who are truly harmed by an abortion, then we should not tolerate a woman’s right to choose an abortion, anymore than we should tolerate a woman’s right, to choose to kill another human being.”

The tactic behind this sort of response is as follows:

simple,
 “no,” that it seeks, so we need to buy some time to unpack it, before we
 give
 our answer. Delaying a direct answer, however, opens us up to the
 charge of
 ducking the question. We can avoid this charge, by immediately
 calling, the
 spade, a spade. By contending that the question is loaded, we will be
 allowed
 the time to explain how it is so.

2. We explain, that it is loaded, because it presents choice, as something
 in the
 abstract, when in reality, the issue concerns one particular choice: the
 choice to
 end the life of the unborn. The real issue, is not choice, but the object
 of that
 choice. What is being killed?

3. The question also presupposes, that any limitation, on our choice, is
 morally
 evil, so we must give examples of situations, in which, all agree, that
 our
 choices, must be limited. This can be done through appealing to
 counter-intui-
 tive examples, and by appealing to the questioner’s own moral principles.
 Most

liberals hold to the ethic, that we are free to exercise our choice, unrestrained, so long as it does not hurt other people. Using this ethic as part of our argument against abortion, will resonate with the questioner. It is rather difficult, to argue that someone is wrong, when their position is informed by your own moral principles! The only place they can argue with us on, is whether or not the unborn are genuine human persons, which takes us right where we want to go - right to the heart of the debate.

Pro-Choice With a Footnote

It is fairly common to find individuals who are morally opposed to abortion...with a footnote. It is said, that abortion is morally wrong, except in cases of rape or incest. In those cases, abortion is morally acceptable. According to the Barna Research Group, approximately 32% of the American population, holds to this view (compared to 23%, who believe abortion is morally wrong and should be illegal, in all circumstances). I have developed a tactic, that will quickly and efficiently expose the muddled moral thinking inherent in their view, that you can employ, when engaging individuals who express this view to you, in conversation. Let me illustrate the tactic in a mock conversation.

Linda: I am opposed to abortion, except in cases of rape and incest.

Jason: Why is it that you believe abortion is morally wrong in all other cases?

Linda : I believe abortion kills a real human being.

Jason: So, you believe that abortion takes the life of an innocent human being?

Linda: Yes!

Jason: Does abortion do something different to those children conceived through rape or incest?

Linda: What?

Jason: You said you believe abortion is wrong, because it takes the life of an innocent human being. I am wondering if abortion does something different to those children conceived by rape or incest. Are they not innocent human beings? Does abortion not take their lives, as well?

Linda: Well, I guess they are innocent human beings, as well.

Jason: Would it not be more consistent, then, to be opposed to all forms of abortion, since abortion always takes the life of an innocent human being, regardless of the way, in which, the child was conceived?

Linda: I guess it would.

Strategically, what we are trying to do, is get the individual to think about why it is, that they are opposed to abortion, in all cases, except for rape and incest, and then evaluate whether or not, the principle(s) that make abortion wrong in those, also applies, in the case of rape or incest. Clearly, the same principle(s) applies. By making the individual state his/her moral principle, and then apply it to the case of rape or incest, they will see their own contradiction, in thought.

The conversation could take another turn, at this point. The individual may see the contradiction in thought, but use the emotion card, to trump the moral conclusion

they are forced into. They may say, it's not fair to require a woman to carry a baby (that was conceived through incest or rape) to term, because of the emotional pain it may cause the mother. After all, each day the baby is in the mother's womb, it is a reminder of the moral evil, committed against her.

While this is a compelling emotional argument, it has nothing to do with the moral issue at hand. The moral question, is determined, by asking, "What is the unborn?" If the unborn is a human being, then no justification for abortion, is adequate. While I admit that applying the moral rule can be emotionally difficult in circumstances such as rape or incest, the moral principle itself, is quite simple and straightforward.

The best approach to trumping the emotion card, in this situation, is to ask the individual, "Is it morally acceptable for the victim to kill the rapist? He brings her emotional pain, doesn't he? Is it OK for her to kill the family member that molested her?" After all, she may have to face that family member everyday of her life, for many years. The clear answer to these questions will be "no." Ask, "If it is not morally proper to take the life of the human being, guilty of committing the moral evil against the girl, why would it be morally proper to take the life of the innocent human being in the womb? Since when do we force another human being to forfeit their life, so someone else can feel better?" Conversation over.

What's the Big Deal About Those Tiny Little Embryos?

Stem-cell research has received a lot of media attention, in recent days, due to the 2004 Presidential race (in which, stem-cell research was a dividing issue), the passing of stem-cell legislation in New Jersey (where the cloning of human embryos for their stem-cells, is now state-funded), California's stem-cell amendment, the passing of Ronald Reagan and Christopher Reeve, as well as continued public campaigning for embryonic stem-cell research from Michael J. Fox. Unfortunately, very little attention has been given to a scientific and moral analysis of the research. This inattention has been filled in by media hype, junk science, empty promises, misinformation, and faulty moral reasoning.

Two of the more prominent voices have been John Kerry and Ron Reagan, Jr. On October 4, 2004, John Kerry said, "The hard truth, is that when it comes to stem-cell research, this President is making the wrong choice to sacrifice science for extreme right-wing ideology. ...This underscores, in my judgment, the perils of having the President, who turns his back on science, in favor of ideology and as a result, abandons millions of Americans' hopes."

Ron Reagan, Jr., capitalized on the death of his father to bring positive media awareness to embryonic stem-cell research - research he falsely claims, can cure the disease his father suffered from (Alzheimer's). At the 2004 Democratic National Convention, he framed the debate in the following terms: "We can choose between

the future and the past, between reason and ignorance, between true compassion, and mere ideology. This is our moment, and we must not falter. Whatever else you do, come November 2, I urge you, please cast a vote for embryonic stem-cell research."

In no uncertain terms, these statements imply that those who oppose embryonic stem-cell research are science-hating, right-wing, old-school, unreasonable, uncompassionate, ignorant fools. Why such harsh words? What's the big deal over these tiny little embryos? The deal is big...real big.

What is a Stem-Cell, and Where Do They Come From?

A stem-cell is an “undifferentiated cell,” meaning, it has yet to become one of the more than 200 types of somatic cells. They are found in embryos, at the blastocyst stage (approximately 1 week of age), umbilical-cord blood, and in some adult tissues.

Stem-cells are important, because they hold the potential to treat or cure many types of disease. Disease is caused by the uncontrolled multiplication of bad cells; i.e., cells no longer performing, according to their function. As these maverick cells multiply, they eventually cause the body to break down (disease). Because stem-cells can morph into virtually any type of somatic cell, when properly manipulated to do so, they provide a rich source of “good” cells that can act as healing agents, when injected into the diseased area of one’s body.

The Issue

Stem-cell research itself is not the issue; the source of the stem-cells is. There are two types of stem-cell research: adult stem-cell research (ASCR) and embryonic stem-cell research (ESCR). Only the latter, is morally problematic, because of the method through which embryonic stem-cells are obtained: an embryo (a full human being, in its first stage of development), must be killed. ASCR does not require the destruction of human beings.

To understand the issue more fully, some basic embryology, will be helpful. As a newly conceived zygote develops, it forms a hollow ball, called a blastula. Inside this blastula are the stem-cells, that will eventually differentiate into over 200 specialized tissues/cells. Ronald Bailey describes the process of obtaining these stem-cells, as follows: “Embryos...are grown in petri dishes for about a week, at which point, they have divided into a microscopic, hollow ball of about 100 cells. Researchers then remove the inner cell mass, the cells, of which, can differentiate into all the kinds of tissues in a human body.” While this process sounds so scientific and sanitary, he forgot to mention the fact, that the human embryo has to be killed, to obtain those cells. It is the killing of those human embryos, that we find morally problematic.

ESCR is not just morally problematic; it is unnecessary, as well. Adult stem-cells (gleaned from teeth pulp, fat, the spleen, etc.), offer more promise of providing treat-

ments/cures for disease, than do embryonic stem-cells, and no human is destroyed in the process of extraction. The British Medical Journal, goes on to say, "The need for fetal cells, as a source of stem-cells for medical research, may soon be eclipsed by the more readily available and less controversial, adult stem-cells." Adult stem-cells (ASC's), have already successfully treated multiple sclerosis, lupus, sickle cell anemia, spinal cord injuries, and Parkinson's disease; repaired cartilage damage, and heart damage; grown new corneas to restore sight to blind patients; new blood vessels to rescue legs from gangrene. Embryonic stem-cells (ESC's) have not treated or cured anyone! They have a habit of developing tumors, because scientists cannot control the differentiation of the stem-cells. Wouldn't it be wise, to spend our valuable tax dollars on research, that is both ethical and useful, rather than on research, that is ethically suspect and has produced no hope of profitability, to date?

Scientists know ESC's are not promising and cannot heal the diseases they are purported to heal, but as stem-cells researcher, Ronald D.G. McKay, told Washington Post reporter, Rick Weiss, "People need a fairy tale. Maybe that's unfair, but they need a story line that's relatively simple to understand." In fact, ESCR will probably, never be able to help Alzheimer's patients, because that disease is a whole-brain, not cellular disease. The junk science is being put forward, however, because it generates support for the bio-tech agenda.

Two Questions of Ethical Concern Relating to Our Handling of Life

The morality of ESCR, hinges on two important questions: What is it? What gives humans value?

What is It? We cannot answer the question, "Is it right to kill embryos?" until we first answer the question, "What is an embryo?" All questions, relating to our treatment of the unborn, are bound up in this one question. Is the embryo a member of the human family? If so, no justification for taking their life, is adequate; if not, no justification for

taking their life, is necessary. If embryos are human beings, research on them should be conducted within the same guidelines established for research on other children.

Those who oppose embryonic stem-cells research, pose the following argument:

Page | 28

P1 It is wrong to take the life of an innocent human being (moral)

P2 ESCR takes the life of an innocent human being (factual)

ESCR is wrong

Anybody wishing to discredit our argument, must demonstrate at least one of the premises, to be faulty. Seeing that virtually every human being-religious or not-agrees with the first premise, only the second premise, is disputable. Those in favor of ESCR, would not be so foolish as to argue, that ESCR does not take the life of the embryo, so they typically take exception, with embryo's humanity.

This tactic is bankrupt. The humanity of the unborn is not a religious doctrine, but a scientific fact, demonstrable through any standard textbook, on embryology. There is no question, that the embryo has being; i.e., it exists. Something is there! Since every living thing is something when it comes into existence as a living thing, the only question we need to answer, is What type of being does an embryo have? Two scientific principles make the answer clear; genetics; law of biogenesis. We determine what kind of being something has, by looking at its genetic code. The genetic fingerprint of an embryo, is distinctly human; therefore, its being is necessarily human. The law of biogenesis, is just as clear. This scientific law states, that everything reproduces after its own kind. To determine what kind of a being the unborn is, then, we need only look at its parents. If the parents are human, the embryo is human. It is clear, then, that an embryo is a human being.

Scientifically speaking, there is no question that life begins at conception, and that it is human. Embryos do not become human; they already are one. "It is an immature human, but a human being nonetheless. Living things do not become entirely different

creatures in the process of changing their form. Rather, they develop, according to a certain physical pattern, precisely because of the kind of being they already are.”

In summary, Christian opposition to ESCR, is rooted in the moral logic of the pro-life position. Abortion and ESCR, both destroy the same thing, but at different stages of development.

What Gives Humans Value?

What gives human beings their value? There are only two possibilities: (1) humans have value in light of their shared humanity; (2) humans have value when they can exemplify some additional requirement/trait. Those who define value in functional terms, typically make rationality or consciousness, the qualifying function for human value. Seeing that the unborn do not exhibit either, they do not qualify and can be killed, at will.

All functional definitions of human value suffer from the same fatal flaw: authority. Who gets to determine which functions one must exhibit, to be valued as a human being? The problem of authority is tied to a second problem: subjectivity. How do we determine which functions are value-defining and which ones are not? Functionalists cannot agree, among themselves, on this critical issue. A problem of subjectivity is tied to yet, a third critical problem: functionally-defined value has no room for inalienable human rights. As Greg Koukl noted, “Whatever can be functionally defined, can be functionally defined away.”

The fact of the matter is, that there are only four differences between the unborn and the born, none of which, are morally relevant:

1. Size -- Men are typically bigger than women, but does this

fact give men the right to kill women? Shaquille O’Neil is big-

ger than me, but that does not make him more human, or give him more value.

2. Level of Development -- Four year olds are less developed than 20 years olds, but we recognize both, to be equally valuable.

3. Location -- Why does where you are, have anything to do with, what you are? How does traveling down an 8" birth canal, give someone value?

4. Degree of Dependency -- Are people on insulin, or the elderly of less value than a healthy 20 year old, because the latter, is less dependent? Newborns, are entirely dependent, on their mother. Does this mean they have no value?

The differences between an embryo and a newborn, are morally insignificant, and thus, there is no justification to treat one with respect and value their life, while killing the other, for their spare parts. ESCR is just one more form of discrimination. As Scott Klusendorf noted, "We use to discriminate on the basis of skin color and gender. Now, with ESCR, we discriminate, on the basis of size, level of development, and intelligence. We've simply swapped one form of discrimination for another."

So, I'm sorry Mr. Reagan, but this is not a choice "between the future and the past, between reason and ignorance, between true compassion and mere ideology." This is a choice between protecting innocent human beings or allowing them to be killed in the name of gene therapy. I'm sorry, Mr. Kerry, but President Bush has not turned "his back on science," nor has he "sacrificed science for extreme right-wing ideology." He has upheld science, in affirming that embryos are full members of the human race, possessing intrinsic value, and as such, are deserving of our protection.

Bad Moral Logic

I find it interesting that most people agree, that killing an adult to harvest their organs for someone else's benefit, is wrong, and yet, so many think nothing, of killing an embryo to harvest its parts. The only explanation for such schizophrenic moral reasoning, is that they are convinced one is a human, while the other is not. But, if the unborn are fully human from conception, then both, the unborn and the born, should be treated with the same respect, given to all valuable human beings.

Page | 31

People argue, that we should use ESCR, because it holds the potential to save people's lives, but they often fail to recognize that we must destroy the lives of thousands, to develop the life-saving technology required in destroying the lives of other human beings. Are we justified in taking the life of innocent human beings to bring benefit to others? "No, we do not sacrifice human beings for medical purposes, regardless of the good it might bring to others." "We believe human beings are

special, the kind of beings that ought not be owned or manufactured for our benefit." ESCR treats the human embryo, as a means to an end, rather than as ends in themselves. Using human beings for their spare parts, transforms human life into a commodity, to be used by man. This is dehumanizing - an objectification of humanity. While the motives behind ESCR may be good (find cures), the means are evil and must be opposed by all those who value human beings, for the kind of beings they are, not the things they can do, nor the benefit they bring to others.

Objections

My treatment of this topic would not be complete without addressing some of the most common objections to our position:

O: *"They are going to die anyway."*

A: This is specious reasoning. The fact is that, we all die sometime. Do those of us who are going to die later, have the right to kill (and exploit) those who will die sooner? Is sooner, rather than later, (time) morally relevant? Do embryos cease to be human, and cease to have rights and dignity, simply because their death may be more immanent than our own? Even if an individual's death is imminent, we still do not have a license to use him for lethal experiments. We cannot, for example, conduct experiments upon death-row prisoners or harvest their organs, without their consent. Nor, can we extract body parts from mortally wounded soldiers, while they are dying on the battlefield.

As Patrick Lee and Robert George commented, "From the moral viewpoint, the certainty of death - whether in ninety years or nine minutes - does not alter our inherent dignity or relieve others, of the obligation, to respect our lives. That someone will soon die, no matter what we do, is never a license for killing him. That the human being, whose death is imminent, happens to be at an earlier rather than later stage of development, is morally irrelevant."

O: While we should not create embryos for experimentation and destruction (research embryos), we should be able to use 'spare embryos' left over from infertility clinics. After all, they are just sitting in freezers and will probably die anyway.

A: This distinction is morally incoherent and practically unworkable. Value is not determined by the location, or even the ultimate destiny of the embryos. The value of the embryo, is found in what it is: a member (albeit, immature) of the human race. If there were a bunch of two-year old orphans nobody wanted to adopt, could they be killed? The fact that they are more developed than embryos, is irrelevant to the moral question. Clearly, both are human beings. If it's the potentially imminent death of the embryos that makes them invaluable, then were infants, waiting to be slaughtered by the Nazis, not valuable, as humans? Are those with terminally ill diseases, worth less than healthy individuals their same age, simply because the latter will live longer than the former?

Yes, many "leftover" embryos, sitting in freezers, are going to die, due to the moral irresponsibility of the IVF clinics that created them, but they should be allowed to die, in the same dignified manner that we let all people die; naturally. If we would not

experiment on adults, whose death is imminent, then neither should we experiment on young humans, whose death is imminent.

O: Embryos in a Petri dish, do not have the same moral value, as embryos in utero, because the latter can develop on their own, whereas, the former cannot.

Page | 33

A: This argument mistakes the possession of capacities with the actualization of those capacities. The environment only affects the latter, not the former.

It also assumes, that where one is, determines what one is. Since when does physical location confer moral worth?

Thirdly, the researcher is the one responsible for placing the embryo in an environment, in which, it cannot sustain itself (a Petri dish), rather than in an environment, in which, it can (a womb). How can the researcher put the embryo in an environment, which she/he knows will prevent it from developing on its own, and then claim that because it cannot sustain its developmental trajectory in this unnatural and life-inhibiting environment, it has no moral significance? This claim would be just as preposterous, as putting a human being into the environment of outer space, and then claiming, that since he cannot continue to survive in that environment, he has no moral significance. Not only does the change in location not deprive him of his moral value, but the individual responsible for putting him in that developmentally - stunting location - the supposed robber of moral value-is the same individual, who claims this location deprives them of moral value. This begs the question. According to this line of reasoning, all that is necessary to conduct lethal experiments on human beings, is arbitrarily declare certain locations to be value-depriving, and then put individuals into such locations. If that is so, why not arbitrarily declare, prison cells to be value-depriving locations and kill the inmates who inhabit those cells? If we cannot do so with prisoners, we cannot do so with embryos.

Furthermore, artificial wombs are currently being developed and tested. Technology permitting, we will be able to gestate an embryo, to full term, in a lab, in the near future. Are you prepared to argue, that the human baby born from an artificial womb, is less

valuable, than a baby born from a woman's uterus, simply because of his location?
That is counter-intuitive.

O: "Embryos are not in and of themselves, human beings."

A: This statement is scientifically ignorant. Any standard textbook on embryology, indicates, that embryos are, human beings.

O: "No fetus is created by cloning embryos."

A: True. Cloning, no more creates a fetus, than it does a three-year old. A fetus is not a "thing." Both "fetus" and "embryo" are particular stages of development of a human being, just like "new-born," "adolescent," and "adult." The fetus stage begins, at 8 weeks. To say no fetus is created by cloning an embryo, then, is to say that cloning, cannot create a human being, that is 8 weeks old at the time of its creation. Of course! It takes 8 weeks for a cloned embryo to be 8 weeks old! By definition of the terms, then, the only thing cloning can do, is create an embryo. It is a red herring, to make the claim, that cloning does not create a fetus.

O: "Opponents of ESCR are motivated by religious theology, not science. The theology of a few, should not dictate the well-being, of the many."

A: While this is a convenient way to dismiss the argument of your opponents, it is not true. While one's position, on the morality of ESCR, may coincide with their religious convictions, the issue is not decided, by such convictions. Opposition to ESCR, comes from all sorts of ideological camps, including atheists, agnostics, and pro-choice feminists. Liberal nations, such as France, Germany, Norway, Australia, and Canada have even banned cloning.

O: “Approximately 45-50% of embryos die, prior to implantation, and yet, nobody holds a funeral for them, because they recognize, that they are not persons.”

A: First, we never know when this happens, so it is hard to mourn an event you are not aware of. Secondly, many of these miscarriages, are due to incomplete or defective fertilizations, and thus, what dies, never rose to the level of a human embryo. Thirdly, the way we feel about the death of living things, is not what gives it value, or takes value away from it. If I fail to mourn the death of my own five-year old child, does that fact mean, that he was not a person? “It proves nothing to argue, that a class of human individuals, are not persons, because others fail to treat them as persons, and to argue this, precisely in a debate where one’s opponents are, in fact, urging their readers, to treat them as persons. The analogy cannot be avoided: It is like arguing against abolitionists, that slaves are not persons, because others fail to treat them, as persons.” The infant mortality rate, just a century ago, was higher than 45%. Does this mean, infants have no value? “The high infant-mortality rates, that characterized societies for most of human history, provide no legitimate ground for denying the status of infants, as human beings. By precisely the same token, high rates of early miscarriage, do nothing to disprove the humanity of embryonic human beings.”

O: “An embryo is just a clump of cells.”

A: So are adults. They just happen to be a bigger and more complicated clump. At the one-cell stage, it has all the properties it needs to mature, according to its kind.

An embryo differs from a clump of cells, in that, an embryo is a whole, “self-integrating organism, capable of directing its own maturation, as a member of the

human species,” while a “clump” of cells, are merely, parts of a larger whole, unitary organism. Embryos are distinct, living, human beings, at an early stage of development, not a clump of cells.

“The critical difference between a collection of cells and a living organism, is the ability of an organism to act in a coordinated manner, for the continued health and maintenance of the body, as a whole. It is precisely, this ability, that breaks down, at the

moment of death, however, death might occur. ...What does the nature of death tell us about the beginning of human life? From the earliest stages of development, human embryos, clearly function, as organisms. Embryos are not merely, collections of human cells, but living creatures, with all the properties that define any organism, as distinct from a group of cells. ...Embryos are in full possession of the very characteristic, that distinguishes a living human being from a dead one: the ability of all cells in the body to function together as an organism, with all parts acting in an integrated manner, for the continued life and health of the body, as a whole. Linking human status to the nature of developing embryos, is neither subjective, nor open to personal opinion. Human embryos are living human beings, precisely because they possess the single defining feature of human life, that is lost, in the moment of death - the ability to function as a coordinated organism, rather than merely, as a group of living human cells.”

O: “If an embryo is a ‘person,’ then, so is every cell in your body, because with the proper culturing, every somatic cell can develop into another human being. The fact of the matter, is that every human cell is a potential person, because every human cell contains the full genetic code (DNA).”

A: This argument commits two fallacies: confusing wholes and parts; confusing potentiality with actuality.

An embryo is a person, because it is a unitary whole; a “self-integrating organism, capable of directing its own maturation, as a member of the human species.” Somatic cells, however, are mere parts of a larger whole, unitary organism. Embryos will actively develop themselves into a mature human being, if provided the proper environment to do so, whereas, somatic cells can only replicate themselves, for the survival of the larger organism, to which they belong.

While both, somatic cells and embryos have potentiality, only somatic cells, can rightly be called, “potential persons.” An embryo already is a human person, with the potentiality to mature, according to its kind. For a somatic cell to become a human person (activating its potential to be a distinct human being), requires a new environment (being inserted into an enucleated egg).

The presence of human DNA, while sufficient to demonstrate that an entity is human, is not sufficient to demonstrate, that it is an individual human being. Human value, is not derived from the mere presence of human DNA in a cell, but to the unitary organism itself to which the cell belongs (that's why we recognize, that a blood cell in

a petri dish, while human, is not an individual human being). We know something is an individual human being, because it has an intrinsic ability to direct its own activity/development, towards maturation. Somatic cells do not have this ability, so while they are human, they are not individual human beings, and do not possess the same moral quality, as somatic cells. While somatic cells and embryos, both contain DNA, the latter is qualitatively different from somatic cells, because it already is an individual human being, while the other is not.

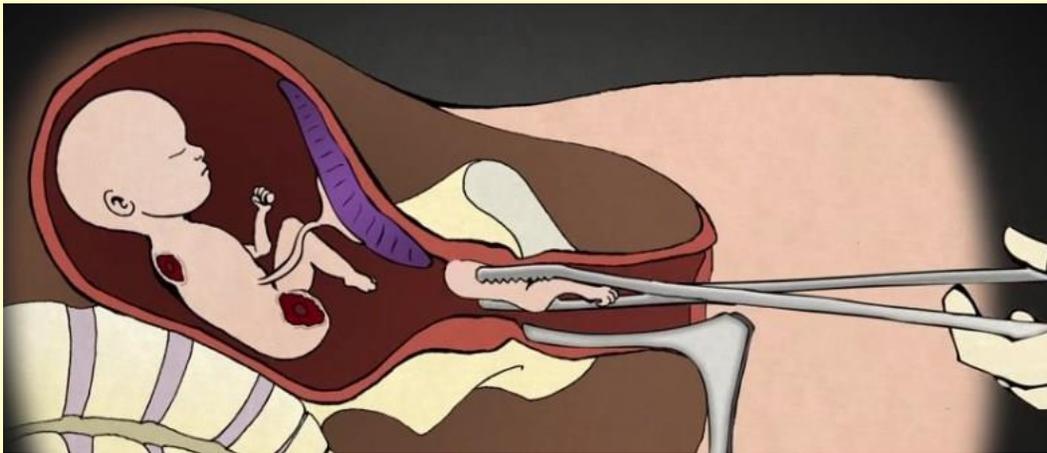
As Dianne Irving wrote, "There is quite a difference, scientifically, between parts of a human being, that only possess, 'human life' and a human embryo or human fetus, that is an actual 'human being.' ...A human kidney or liver, a human skin-cell, a sperm, or an oocyte, all possess human LIFE, but they are not human BEINGS - they are only parts of a human being. If a single sperm or a single oocyte, were planted into a woman's uterus, they would simply rot."

Conclusion

We already declared the unborn to be disposable, when we legalized abortion, and have begun to declare, that the elderly sick are disposable, when Oregon legalized euthanasia, and have already begun, to create human beings, for the sole purpose of their destruction. How did we get to this place? We are where we are, because we have declared, that there is life unworthy of life; that one's size and location makes them morally insignificant; that human value, is based on function, rather than essence. Whose value will be taken away next? Where does it end?

It ends, when the Christian majority stands up for their values, in the public square, defending the life of the unborn with good science, good theology, and good character. It ends, when we can successfully bring this society back to the understanding, that

human value is intrinsic, rooted in the kind of beings they are; not extrinsic, being instrumental or functional, in nature. “All living human beings, irrespective of age, size, physical or mental ability, condition of dependency, or stage of development are owed respect; none may legitimately be enslaved or in any other way, relegated to the status of a mere means to others’ ends.”



Footnotes

Ronald Bailey, “Are Stem-Cells Babies?”

Deborah Josefson, “Adult Stem-Cells May be Redefinable,” *British Medical Journal*, January 30, 1999.

Dr. David Prentice, “The Real Promise of Stem Cell Research.”

Steve Wagner, "In Vitro Fertilization: Is it Wrong to Discard Embryos?"

Scott Klusendorf, "Letter to President Bush Opposing Stem-Cell Research."

Greg Koukl, "The Confusing Moral Logic of ESCR," Solid Ground, September/October, 2004, p. 1.

Greg Koukl, "The Embryonic Stem-Cell Research Debate," Solid Ground, September/October, 2001, p. 2.

Scott Klusendorf, "Embryo Stem-Cell Research Help."

Greg Koukl, "The Confusing Moral Logic of ESCR," p. 4.

Wesley J. Smith, "The Proposition 71 Stem-Cell Scam: The Biotech Lobby Is Attempting to Buy a Law in California."

Ronald Bailey's statement in his article, "My Critics Are Wrong: Why Using Human Embryonic Stem-Cells for Medical Research is Moral:" "I know full-well, whom those readers accept, that God through his anointed representatives has told them, that embryos are babies, will believe. At the risk of being presumptuous, I still hope that the light that science sheds on this issue, will lead faith communities to come to a

different understand, one day. In the meantime, I hope, that other readers not so persuaded by the faith, will find my arguments enlightening and useful." Not only is he being condescending toward those with religious convictions, on this issue, but is implying that the source of opposition to ESCR is religious, rather than scientific/philosophic, in nature. He must deal with the case we are presenting, not the case he wishes we would present ("the Bible says").

Patrick Lee and Robert George, "Cellular Truths: The Debate Continues." "Reason, Science, and Stem-Cell," "Acorns and Embryos."

Maureen Condic, "Life: Defining the Beginning by the End."

Diane Irving, "When Do Human Beings Begin?: 'Scientific' Myths and Scientific Facts."

XXXXXX

