

Abortion

Is the Christian objection to abortion justified?

Bill Clinton

“Abortion should be rare, safe, and legal.”

Ronald Reagan

“I’ve noticed that everybody that is for abortion has already been born”

Dr Bernard Nathanson M.D

“We spoke of 5,000-10,000 deaths a year...I confess that I knew the figures were totally false...it was a useful figure, widely accepted, so why go out of the way to correct it with honest statistics?”

Grace McCarville

“Republicans are against abortion until their daughters need one, Democrats are for abortion until their daughter wants one.”

Mother Teresa

“If we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people to not kill each other? Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want.”

Public policy *is not the same as* Church policy



- Does it serve a secular purpose?
- Does it tie the state to one religious sect?
- Does it properly respect human freedom?



- Does it reflect orthodox faith and practice?
- Does it reflect Kingdom values?
- Does it contribute to spiritual development?

Sexual promiscuity Slavery Monogamy Heretical Gospel
Divorce Sabbath rules Abortion Modes of baptism



Public policy

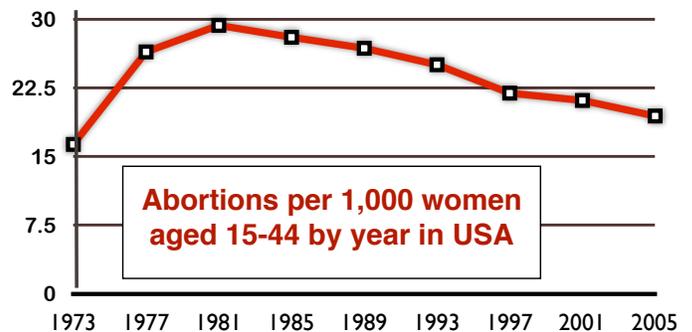


- Should public policy and law in a secular state reflect Christian doctrine?
- Is it possible and reasonable to be pro-life personally and pro-choice politically?
- Do the arguments in the abortion issue parallel those used in the slavery debates of the 1800s?
- Do Christians make a mistake when:
 1. They try to impose special revelation on the state.
 2. They fail to apply general revelation to the state.

General information

- **Roe v. Wade (1973)** was passed (under the pressure of intentionally misleading information about the number of abortions performed and the dangers involved) **giving the woman’s right to privacy priority over the state’s right to control abortions.**
- In subsequent decisions the **Supreme Court** favors pro-choice in the early stages and pro-life in the latter stages of pregnancy.
- **Twenty-two percent** of all pregnancies (excluding miscarriages) end in abortion in the USA.

The number of abortions in the U.S.A. is declining.

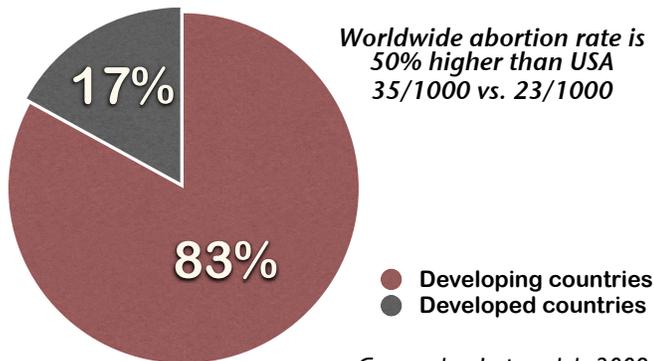


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Worldwide statistics

42,000,000 abortions

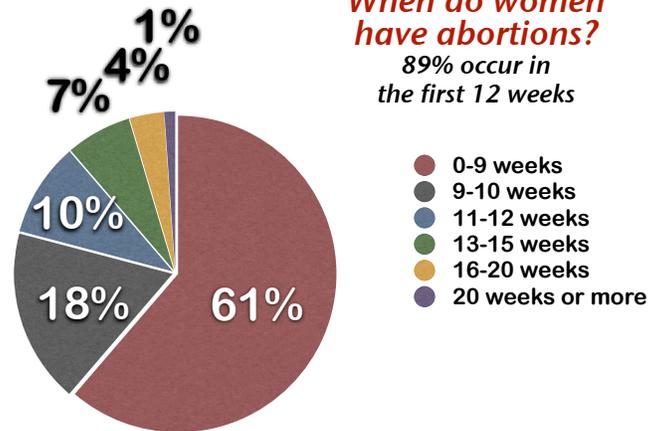
Worldwide abortion rate is
50% higher than USA
35/1000 vs. 23/1000



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When do women have abortions?

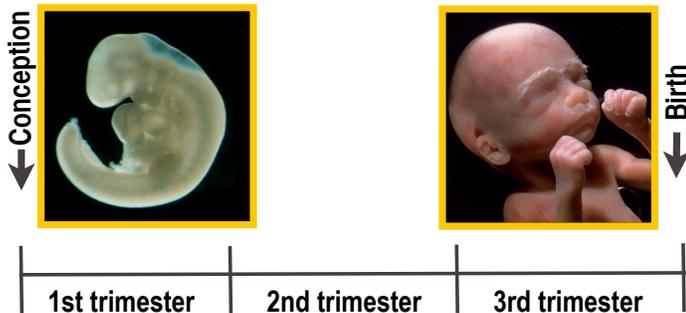
89% occur in
the first 12 weeks



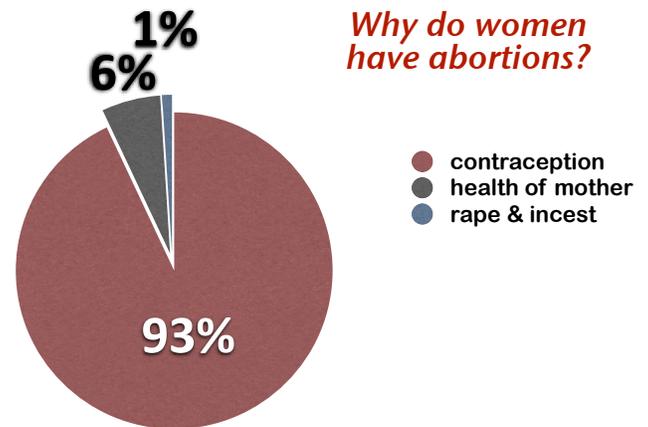
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89% of abortions
take place within
the first 3 months
of pregnancy

1% of abortions
take place within
the last 3 months
of pregnancy



Why do women have abortions?



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Abortion is a response to a problem -
an unwanted pregnancy.

Three critical questions.

- When does a human life become a **person** with full constitutional rights?
- What is the extent of a woman's **right to choose** to abort the fetus?
- What is the role of the state in **legislating** abortion issues and funding abortions?

Weak arguments for Pro-Choice

- Murder must have a **malicious motive**.
- There are too many **unwanted children** in the world.
- The world's **population is exploding** too rapidly.
- Private **religious values** should not dictate public policy.
- A **woman's body** is her own business; it should not be a political issue.

Mistletoe

is dependent on a host plant
but is not identified with the host.



Stronger arguments for Pro-Choice

- Science is not equipped to make a decision as to when “personhood” begins.

Some people make a distinction between “biological life” and “biographical life” (the sum of one’s aspirations, decisions, activities, projects, and human relationships).

Twinning occurs between the 10th and 14th day after fertilization.

- Scripture is unclear with respect to the onset of personhood and abortion. *Pre-birth references are not meant to be descriptive of human biology.*

Jeremiah 1:5

“**Before** I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Exodus 21

“22 If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a **miscarriage**, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. 23 But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life,”

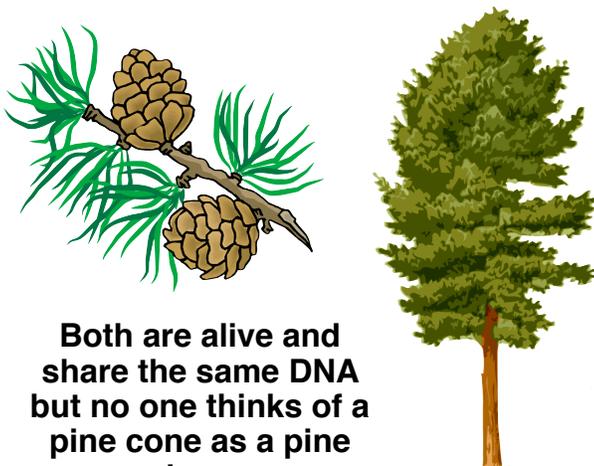
- Many leading religious authorities do not regard the fetus as a person.

Conservative Judaism

Reformed Judaism

Most main-line Protestant denominations.

- Abortion is not singled out as a moral issue in the Bible although widely practiced at the time.
- Common sense suggests that the fetus is not a full person.
 - ✓ Our age is marked by our “birthday” not “conception.”
 - ✓ A mother is not considered a mother until after the birth.
 - ✓ About 50% of pregnancies are spontaneously miscarried yet there are no memorial services.



Both are alive and
share the same DNA
but no one thinks of a
pine cone as a pine
tree.

Arguments for Pro-Life

- We may not be certain when personhood begins but **when in doubt** don’t kill a human life.
- The **social implications** of a liberal abortion policy may be hard to live with.
- The **Christian tradition** has been consistently pro-life until the modern era.
- Public policy and law in a secular state should reflect the **common good and the sanctity of life** and need not defer to special revelation (the Bible).
- **Scripture** is not as unclear as many would like to believe.

Psalm 139:13-16

“For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Thy works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from Thee, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.”

Exodus 21

“²² If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a **miscarriage**, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. ²³ But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life.”

- **The Hebrew word translated “miscarriage” when used alone (as it is here) refers to “live birth.”**

“When men strive together and they hurt unintentionally a woman with child, and her children come forth but no mischief happens - that is, the woman and the children do not die - the one who hurts her shall surely be punished by a fine. But if any mischief happens, that is, if the woman dies or the children die, then you shall give life for life.”

Three positions

1. Abortion-on-demand for any reason. (pro-choice)

2. Abortion permitted in restricted circumstances.

Abortion is a very serious issue.

Abortion is not necessarily murder.

Abortion may be justified (by the state) in some situations.

Abortion should never be justified in the following situations.

- ➔ after viability (with very few exceptions)
- ➔ as a means of birth control (after the fact)
- ➔ for population control
- ➔ for anticipated deformities

3. Abortion is permitted only when the physical life of the mother is at risk. (pro-life)

Pro-Choice applies at several levels

1. The decision to have sexual **intercourse**.

2. The decision to respond to the challenge of an unplanned or **unwanted pregnancy**.

3. The decision to take responsibility for unexpected burdens and **hardships** in life.

4. The decision to place the sanctity of **another’s life** ahead of personal comfort and convenience.

Advice to pro-life militants

- Support the **sanctity of all human life** (not just the unborn).
- Give thoughtful attention to the **original problem**.
- Respect the possibility of **differing opinions**.
- Avoid **emotionally manipulative** arguments.
- Avoid **Ad Hominem** attacks on those who disagree.
- Face the delicate, difficult, and **real issues**.
- For public policy use **common sense** arguments.
- Don’t outdistance **popular support** for your point.

Advice to pro-choice militants

- Don’t dodge the central point of “**personhood**”.
- Avoid **smoke screens** - woman’s rights, ch./state.
- Face the **consequences** of a pro-choice culture.
- Avoid **emotionally manipulative** arguments.
- Avoid **Ad Hominem** attacks on those who disagree.
- Address the widespread **abuse** of pro-choice law.
- Don’t marginalize the **emotional trauma** of abortion.
- Respect the possibility of **differing opinions**.