

# THE HUMANITY OF THE UNBORN

## “Thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb”

### Key question

How should Christians posture themselves in the abortion debates?

### Key text

Psalm 139:13-14

### Introduction

1. The facts.
  - a. About one third of all pregnancies in America are aborted through medical procedures.
  - b. Since the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision, the annual number of abortions performed in the U.S. has risen from 744,600 to over 1.6 million. By comparison there are approximately 3.3 million live births and approximately 1.9 million deaths from all other causes per year in the U.S.
  - c. It is estimated that 40-60 million abortions are performed worldwide each year -- about 33 million are performed illegally.
  - d. Since 1973, nearly 30,000,000 legal abortions have been performed in America.
  - e. Apart from circumcision, abortion is the most common surgical procedure in the U.S.
  - f. Over 77% of the abortions in the U.S. were performed on unmarried women in 1977.
  - g. Over 95% of the abortions in the U.S. are convenience abortions (birth control after the fact).
  - h. The Nonwhite abortion rate (57/1000) is more than double the white abortion rate (21/1000).
  - i. About 85% of all abortions are performed during the first trimester.
  - j. Internationally, abortion has become the most common form of birth control. It is most common in communist countries -- USSR, Red China.
  - k. *Roe v. Wade* (1973) held that a woman's right to an abortion falls within the right to privacy protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. The *Roe v. Wade* decision gave women the right to abortion during her entire pregnancy and defined

different levels of state interest for regulating abortion in the second and third trimesters.

2. The issue

- a. Abortion is a response to a problem - the problem being an unwanted pregnancy.
- b. There appear to be three questions the answers to which, will determine the position a person will take on the abortion issue.

- 1. When does a human become a person with full constitutional rights?
- 2. What is the extent of a woman’s right to choose to abort her fetus?

NOTE: Everyone agrees that a woman should have a right to choose but the real question is **when** and **where** is that right to be exercised - at the point of sexual intercourse or after impregnation.

- 3. What is the lesser of three perceived evils - abortion, adoption, motherhood?

Abortion	Motherhood	Adoption
Most pro-choice advocates know that abortion is killing innocent life. But for many women this is seen as the lesser of three evils.	This option is viewed by many women as “death to self” or the complete loss of control over their present and future self.	This option is viewed by many women as the worst of the three in that it is death to self as “a bad mother” and “death of the child” through abandonment.

- c. The two opposing sides to this issue are generally identified as PRO-LIFE (those who feel question #1 (above) is the central issue and that the fetus is a person with constitutional rights) and PRO-CHOICE (those who feel that question #2 (above) is the central issue because the fetus is not a full person).
- d. An additional question has to do with the role of the State in legislating abortion issues and funding abortions.

3. A look at the history of attitudes and policy.

- a. In the early church –
- b. In late-eighteenth-century America, early abortions (before quickening) were legal. The Christian church accepted this view.
- c. By 1900 almost every state had passed a law against abortion.
- d. Doctors (not theologians) were the first to oppose abortion because (for example) in 1930, 18% of all abortions in the US ended in the death of the mother.
- e. In the 1940’s doctors added “the psychiatric” problems of pregnancy to the list of what might threaten a mother’s life.

**A. The theological arguments for pro-choice must be understood and not misrepresented if they are to be addressed.**

- 1. **Science is not equipped to make the decision of when human “personhood” begin.**

- a. We do know that the fetus is genetically part of the species *homo sapien*, but so is an acorn part of the species *quercus* (oak), and no one would argue that an acorn is an oak tree.
- b. The **American Fertility Society** argues that individual human life (personhood) is not established until sometime in the second week after fertilization, given that twinning can occur up to two weeks after conception.
  1. About 50% of all fertilized eggs (zygotes) are abnormal. Most of these survive a few days, then disappear.
  2. In some fertilizations, the zygote forms the precursors of the placenta by the fourteenth to sixteenth days, but not the embryonic tissues. This material is a unique genotype (an entity with a specific set of genes), but it does not develop into an embryo.
  3. Mechanical or hormonal problems may make it impossible for zygotes to implant in the uterus (they fall out within a week or so).
  4. Twinning occurs between the tenth and fourteenth day after fertilization. If a zygote is a unique life at fertilization, how can it later divide?

**NOTE:** By day 21, nearly two-thirds of the fertilized eggs are gone, never to develop. During the next eight weeks another 8-9% are lost in miscarriages. During the rest of pregnancy another 2-3% are lost.

- c. It has never been clear when personhood begins. Some people make a distinction between “**biological life**” and “**biographical life**” (the sum of ones’ aspirations, decisions, activities, projects, and human relationships) - James Rachels.

*“The unborn is involved in a process of becoming personal as its capability for personhood develops with its biological framework, a process that is not completed until well after birth.”* Richard Bube, *Journal of the ASA*, Sept. 1990, p167.

- d. There are two general frameworks used to determine the onset of personhood.

1) “**CRITICAL STAGE**” framework.

- a) conception
- b) implantation
- c) transition from embryo to fetus (8 weeks)
- d) quickening (20 weeks)
- e) viability (26 weeks)
- f) birth
- g) a year after birth

**NOTE: This argument is used to justify early abortion.**

2) “**POTENTIALITY**” framework.

- a) a person in a future generation -- FUTURE PERSON
- b) a human sperm or egg -- POSSIBLE PERSON
- c) a being with the capacity of personhood -- TEMPORARILY UNCONSCIOUS PERSON
- d) a human fetus -- A POTENTIAL PERSON
- e) a normal human being after birth and before death -- AN ACTUAL PERSON

**NOTE: This argument is used by those who would see a fetus as human but not a full person.**

2. **Scripture is unclear with respect to the onset of personhood and abortion.**

- a. **Ex.21:22-25** suggests that there is a different value placed upon the aborted fetus than on the mother.
    - 1) The destruction of a fetus is penalized far less severely than is the killing of the mother.
    - 2) When the fetus becomes a child (is born), and then becomes a girl, and eventually becomes a pregnant woman, then she is more valuable than is a fetus in the womb.
  - b. **Gen.2:7** suggests that soul life begins with breath. (See also Job 34:14-15; Isa.57:16; Eccl.6:3-5; Matt.26:24)
  - c. **Lev.17:14** tells us *“the life of every creature is its blood.”* The first primitive blood cells form sometime in the fourth week after conception.
  - d. Passages like **Lk.1:41,44** are not meant to describe the consciousness of the unborn and therefore do not necessarily support personhood before birth.
    - 1) For example, some such passages speak of persons not only before birth but before conception.
    - 2) It is quite natural for us to refer to what is in the process of becoming (the zygote or fetus in a Semite woman’s womb) in terms of what it will eventually become (a King David), but we are not then speaking with technical accuracy.
  - e. *“I believe in an attitude of acceptance, tolerance and love, which is certainly what Christ taught.”* Dr. Pamela Maraldo head of Planned Parenthood.
3. **Many leading religious authorities do not regard the fetus as a person.**
    - a. Conservative Judaism.
    - b. Reformed Judaism.
    - c. Most main-line Protestant denominations.
  4. **Although abortion was widely practiced in the ancient Mideast, it was not singled out as a moral issue by the writers of the New Testament.**
    - a. This is significant because other non-canonical documents do forbid abortion.
      1. *“Love your neighbor as yourself . . . You shall not murder a child by abortion nor shall you kill a newborn.”* Didache
      2. *“You shall love our neighbor more than your own life. You shall not murder a child by abortion nor shall you kill a newborn.”* Barnabas
      3. (in a vision of hell) *“I saw . . . women . . . who produced children out of wedlock and who procured abortions.”* Apocalypse of Peter
    - b. Although proscriptions against abortion were common in the early church it was not an issue that apparently deserved special attention in the N.T. suggesting that it is not as big an issue as some people make it today.
  5. **Augustine of Hippo & Thomas Aquinas** adopted a view that saw a distinction between the “formed” and the “unformed” fetus.
  6. **In the case of twins, triplets,** and so forth, the cell mass does not separate until six days after conception. If conception is the point at which the soul is present, then a twin would have half a soul.
  7. **Common sense suggests that the fetus is not a full person.**
    - a. We recognize our age by our birthday not our conception day.
    - b. Pregnant women are not considered mothers until they give birth.

- c. Although early spontaneous abortions are common in nature (over 40% of all pregnancies) few churches conduct funeral services for the aborted fetus.

**B. The theological arguments for pro-life must be understood so that they are not overstated or overlooked.**

1. Nearly all conservative religious groups embrace some form of the pro-life position.
2. Scripture is clearer than many would be willing to admit.
  - a. It is true that the Bible does not deal specifically with abortion, but it does deal specifically with murder. If it can be demonstrated that the Biblical record assumes that the unborn fetus is a person, than one would not need to find specific prohibition of abortion.
  - b. Significantly, the Bible does **not** make a clear distinction between the child after birth and before birth.
    - 1) YELED (Hebrew) is used of both. **Ex.21:22** *“And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with **CHILD** so that she has a miscarriage (her **CHILDREN** come out)---”*
    - 2) BREPHOS (Greek) is used of both. **Acts 7:19** (the children killed at Pharaoh’s command) and **Lk.1:41** *“the **BABY** leaped in her womb.”*
  - c. The significance of **Ex.21:22-25** deserves special consideration. The issue in this passage is the apparent difference in value between the life of the mother and her “fruit” (vs.22). *“And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a **MISCARRIAGE**, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined as the woma’s husband may demand of him; and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”*
    - 1) The fact that a fine is to be paid suggests that some injury was done. Premature birth may not justify an injury. This is why most translators use “miscarriage” in this passage.
    - 2) The Hebrew word YATZA (translated “miscarriage” above) when used alone, as it is here, refers to “live birth” (Gen.25:26, 38:28-30; Job 10:18; Jer.1:5, 20:18) and is translated “came out.” This term is used of stillbirth only when accompanied by some form of “to die,” as in Num.12:12 and Job 3:11.
    - 3) The term used in Ex.21:22, YELED, means “child,” including the newborn child, whereas for “embryo” or “unformed fetus” the word is GOLEM, which is not used in this text.
    - 4) The usual Hebrew word for “miscarry” is SHAKOL (Gen.31:38; Ex.23:26; Job 2:10; Hos.9:14).
    - 5) Even if we do take it to refer to a miscarriage, we must note that under O.T. law the only offense for which no fine is levied is premeditated murder. It requires the death penalty.
    - 6) The Hebrew scholar, Umberto Cassuto, rendered this passage as follows:
 

“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.”

- d. The following Biblical references to the fetus seem to consistently have a person in view:
- 1) **Ps.51:5** “in sin my mother **CONCEIVED ME.**”
  - 2) **Ps.139:13-14** “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.”
  - 3) **Jer.1:5** “Before I formed you **IN THE WOMB** I knew you.”
  - 4) **Lk.1:44** “the **BABY** leaped **IN MY WOMB** for joy.”
  - 5) **Matt.1:18** “she was found to be **WITH CHILD** by the Holy Spirit.”
3. From the first, Christians were opposed to abortion on the basis of the child’s right to life.
- a. The DIDACHE (an early 2nd century document) -- “*Thou shalt not murder a child by abortion/destruction.*”
  - b. Many of the early church fathers made pronouncements against abortion -- Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Minucius Felix, Tertullian.
  - c. Thomas Aquinas (thirteenth century), under the influence of the erroneous biology of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, felt that the soul was received forty days after birth for a male and eighty days for a female. He nevertheless opposed abortion at any stage during prenatal development. He made a distinction between things that were “properties” (defined by their function) and those that were “substance” (defined by their essence). A human person was not identified by anything he or she could do but rather by his or her essence as a human life.

### C. **The medical argument for the human life of the fetus is irrefutable.**

1. If the only case for pro-life was based on Biblical revelation, that would be sufficient for the Christian community, but it would do little to influence a secular society committed to pluralism and separation of church and state in moral legislation.
2. **Dr. Bernard N. Nathanson**, M.D., a co-founder of the National Association for Repeal of Abortion Laws (now the National Abortion Rights Action League), was also director (1971-72) of the Center for Reproductive and Sexual Health, the largest and busiest abortion clinic in the world. In 1974 he came to the sobering conclusion that he had in fact presided over 60,000 deaths. The following paragraphs are from his book *Aborting America* (pp. 259-260):
 

“The obvious scientific conclusion is that alpha (the fetus) is demonstrably an independent human entity (life). The obvious moral conclusion is that alpha’s destruction cannot be justified unless, on clear medical grounds, the mother’s life is at stake. A life is a sound humanistic basis on which to sanction the intentional destruction of human life; nothing else is. The sociological conclusion is that abortion is not just a private matter; it has to do with all of us. Even though I end up agreeing with the Right-to-lifers at many points, I do not think of myself as part of their ranks. I have come to my views wholly independently, based upon my extensive experience in abortion, which the Right-to-lifers will never share. I have reached my conclusions very reluctantly, after six years of self-examination, but that makes the conclusions no less certain. On the contrary, it makes them much more certain. Let me state once again that this is a humanistic philosophy drawn from modern biological data, not from religious creeds. What if the biological findings are not as conclusive as they appear to me? In western medical ethics and cultural tradition, one of the cornerstones is that if you are unsure whether life is present, you give it the benefit of the doubt. Civilized societies cannot afford to destroy even what MIGHT be a human life, except under unusual circumstances. Otherwise we are at the stage described by Germain Grisez, the Catholic philosopher: ‘To be

willing to kill what for all we know COULD be a person is to be willing to kill if it is a person.’ A judge's charge to a jury asks only that its conclusion be ‘beyond a reasonable doubt,’ not a ‘virtual certainty.’ To me, we have virtual certainty in the matter of alpha, but certainly we are beyond reasonable doubt. With life present, the doctor has a duty as a member of society to act on behalf of life; in fact, we all do.”

3. At the subcommittee on Separation of Powers, report to Senate Judiciary Committee S-158, 97th Congress, 1st session, 1981 the following testimony was offered by **Dr. Micheline M. Matthews-Roth**.

“In biology and in medicine, it is an accepted fact that the life of any individual organism reproducing by sexual reproduction begins at conception, or fertilization.”

4. The chromosomal patterns that mark every cell in a woman’s body as unique to her and her alone are not shared by her fetus. The fetus has a distinctly personal chromosomal pattern. This seems to prove that the fetus is distinct from the mother as a person.
5. It is difficult to escape the fact that most of the arguments used to support abortion can also be used to support infanticide and euthanasia.

**D. Christians should understand and respond to the politics of abortion with a full understanding of several options.**

1. It must be recognized that sincere Christians differ on the issue of abortion and appropriate legislation. That does not mean that there is not a correct Christian position, but it does mean that **WE SHOULD KEEP AN OPEN MIND AND CHARITABLE POSTURE TOWARD THOSE WHO MAY DISAGREE WITH US ON SPECIFIC POINTS.**
2. Those who argue against an activist Constitutional philosophy resist Roe vs. Wade.

Constitutional philosophy categories

Political categories	Activists	Originists
Liberal	Serves a liberal agenda	Attempts to interpret the constitution apart from a political ideology.
Conservative	Serves a conservative agenda	

**E. There are three widely-held positions on this subject.**

1. **ABORTION-ON-DEMAND FOR ANY REASON.**
  - a. This view is held by many secular thinkers and is articulated by **Joseph Fletcher**.
  - b. This view is based on the conviction that the fetus is not a person since it does not have a minimum degree of human consciousness and intelligence - roughly a minimum score of 20 on the Binet I.Q. scale.
  - c. Few conservative Christians would hold this view.
2. **ABORTION IN VERY RESTRICTIVE CIRCUMSTANCES.**
  - a. This view is held by many secular and Christian thinkers and is articulated by **Norman Geisler** (professor of theology and philosophy at Liberty University).

b. Geisler summarizes the view with the following points.

1) **ABORTION IS NOT NECESSARILY MURDER.**

- a) Ex. 21:12 suggests that the unborn baby may not be fully human.
- b) Ps. 139:13-15 suggests that the unborn baby is “*being made*” and therefore is not a full person.

2) **ABORTION IS A VERY SERIOUS ACTIVITY.**

- a) Abortion is less serious than murder. It is the killing of a potential human person.
- b) Abortion is more serious than birth control.

3) **ABORTION MAY BE JUSTIFIED (by the state) IN SOME SITUATIONS.**

- a) Abortion for therapeutic reasons - when the life of the mother is at stake.
- b) Abortion for eugenic reasons. In some very rare and severe cases where the birth will result in a sub-human existence, abortion may be permitted.
- c) Abortion in conception without consent - rape.
- d) Abortion in conception by incest.

4) **ABORTION SHOULD NEVER BE JUSTIFIED IN THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS.**

- a) Except in very unusual situations abortion is not justified after viability.
- b) Abortion because of convenience (an unwanted child) is not justified.
- c) Abortion for population control is not justified.
- d) Abortion for anticipated deformity of the child is not justified.

3. **ABORTION IS PERMITTED ONLY WHEN THE PHYSICAL LIFE OF THE MOTHER IS AT RISK.**

- a. This position is represented by **Harold O.J. Brown**.
- b. It is presented as the PRO-LIFE POSITION in these notes.
- c. It is the position that seems to be most consistent with the Biblical record, although Geisler’s position is perhaps most appropriate as a guide to public policy.

F. **Those who take a MILITANT PRO-LIFE POSITION would be well advised to note the following points.**

1. Signal loud and clear to all men and women that you stand unequivocally for the **sanctity of all human life**, including issues like nuclear war, poverty & hunger, racism, etc.
2. **Give careful attention to the original problem** of the unwanted pregnancy and not just to the fight against abortion (the intolerable solution to the problem). To focus almost exclusively on the unborn child, not the mother, will build resentment, not sympathy particularly among women of child-bearing age.
  - a. Pregnancy support services need to be put into operation.
  - b. Care for unwanted children needs to be provided by the State.
  - c. Sex education and responsibility need to be encouraged in the church, home, and school.
3. Recognize that there is **some room for differing opinions** with respect to the Scriptures’ teaching on the state of the fetus as a full person.

- a. Exodus 21
- b. Church history
4. Arguments against abortion that are **emotionally manipulative**, overstated, and sensational should be avoided.
5. ***Ad Hominem* blasts against those who disagree** (calling them murderers, butchers, and criminals) should be avoided since they do nothing but alienate opponents.
  - a. If pro-lifers feel uncomfortable dialoguing with “murderers,” pro-choicers feel uncomfortable dialoguing with those who call them "murderers."
  - b. It is not fair to assume that all who advocate a pro-choice position do so out of financial greed, selfishness, or disrespect for life. Many are motivated by a genuine compassion for the quality of human life.
6. Refusal to face the **delicate and difficult questions surrounding this issue** should not be allowed.
  - a. Make distinctions that show that careful thought has been given to the implications of laws against abortion. Should there be exceptions, i.e., rape, incest, the mother's health or life?
  - b. Give assurance that you are prepared for the consequences of a strict law against abortion, i.e., support for troubled families.
7. Be careful that the pro-life movement does not **outdistance its popular support**. The American public is sympathetic to therapeutic abortion, but solidly against abortion on demand for any reason. Any legislative bill will have to respect that fact if it is to be successful. We live in a democracy where the political process must be respected.

**G. Those who advocate a PRO-CHOICE position should be advised to:**

1. Not dodge the central question of when personhood begins.
2. Avoid the smoke screen of cliché phrases that often do not address the real issue (separation of church and state, a woman's right over her own body, etc.).
3. Avoid reference to emotionally manipulative and misleading arguments like:
  - a. Abortion is needed to solve world overpopulation.
  - b. The fetus is mere tissue.
  - c. The doctor and the woman make the decision.
  - d. “Men don’t get pregnant.”
  - e. The high economic cost of unwanted children.
  - f. Abortion as a social panacea.
  - g. Unwanted children are without hope.
  - h. Psychiatric scare tactics.
  - i. The coat hanger.
  - j. Incest, rape, and the mother’s health.

Note: In a serious debate of this issue it should be expected that those arguing for pro-life would refrain from using the emotionally powerful but extremely rare pictures of

third trimester abortions, while those for pro-choice would refrain from referring to the circumstances of rape and incest, which are equally as rare.

- k. Prohibiting abortion will favor the rich women who can travel abroad for their abortions and discriminate against the poor.
- 4. Wrestle seriously with the possible consequences for our culture as a pro-choice society.
- 5. Don't gloss over the common miscalculation of young women that abortion can make them "un-pregnant," that it will restore them to who they were before their crisis. A woman is never the same once she is pregnant, whether the child is kept, adopted, or killed. Abortion may be a kind of resolution, but it is not the cone the woman most deeply longs for, nor will it even preserve her sense of self.
- 6. Consider the following analogy: If your 90 year old grandfather was on life support with no hope of recovery to a normal life, would you allow nature to take its course and let him die by withdrawing support? This is would be a very difficult decision. But how would the decision be effected if you knew for certain that within 9 months he would be restored to good health if he could be sustained through that period on artificial support? This finds an analogy in the "potential life" represented by the fetus.
- 7. Strive to address and correct the widespread abuse of pro-choice freedom - abortion as birth control for personal convenience only. Admit that there is a moral consensus for a stricter abortion law. (This is a remarkably well-kept secret - a minority is currently imposing its belief on a demonstrable majority.)

**NOTE:** A *Boston Globe*/WBZ-TV Poll indicated that 89% of those polled felt that abortions performed simply as a means of birth control should be illegal. The relevant survey research indicates that public opinion on abortion has been remarkably stable for more than ten years. About 20 percent of Americans favor an unconditional right to abortion, about 20 percent favor an absolute prohibition, and the remaining 60 percent think abortion should be legal in certain circumstances. When those "certain circumstances" are specified, it becomes evident that 75 percent of the people in America think that the law should not allow more than 95 percent of the abortions done today.

#### H. Some (personal) thoughts on Christian political action.

- 1. We have a God-given responsibility to "render to Caesar (the secular State) what belongs to Caesar."
  - a. In a democratic republic this involves (at least):
    - 1) Our **VOTE** -- participating in the selection process of leaders.
    - 2) Our **VOICE** -- speaking our sense of what is in the best interest of the "public good."
    - 3) Our **VENERATION** of existing laws and authority structures (if at all possible).
    - 4) Our **VIRTUE** in personal conduct and example.
  - b. It also means that our right to **LOBBY, DEBATE, PROTEST, CONTEST, and DISAGREE** should sometimes be exercised. This is especially true when we sense that policies and laws seem (to us) to be in violation of the letter or spirit of the Constitution or "common sense" morality.

**NOTE:** We do not have a constitutional right or a **CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY** to impose Biblical standards on a secular State or to demand that the State be perfectly just or fair.

2. We must balance our SECONDARY responsibility as citizens of a secular State with our PRIMARY responsibility as citizens of the spiritual nation (the Church). In the first, we expect to suffer and forbear with much foolishness, injustice, and evil. In the latter, we are to be a light on a hill that reflects the truth and grace of God (in contrast to its environment). This will mean that:
  - a. We do not expect to successfully reform or reconstruct the State along Biblical grounds THROUGH POLITICAL POWER.
  - b. We do expect to build the Church as a subculture within the State through the authority structures within the covenant community.
  - c. We expect that the Christian community will influence the State to the extent that the people of the State will personally submit to the truth of what is good and vote their renewed minds.
3. **This means that I will:**
  - a. Vote for common sense justice and conservative respect for the constitution.
  - b. Openly voice my opinions with sensitivity and understanding.
  - c. Sponsor and participate in “pregnancy support services.”
  - d. Seek to reach mothers & doctors with a sensitive, thoughtful, & forceful pro-life message. The following ads are offered as examples.
    - 1) *(A woman in front of a nice house, raking leaves, She says good-bye to her daughter, then turns to the viewer.) “I was sixteen when I found out that I was pregnant with Carrie, I wasn’t married and I was really scared. You know some people today say that I should have had an abortion, but it never occurred to me that I had that choice, just because it wasn’t convenient for me. Hey, I’m no martyr, but I really can’t believe I had a choice **after** I was pregnant. Think about it.”*
    - 2) *(A woman rises from her bed, the clock showing 3:00a.m. She goes to the window, staring into the black, rainy night. She stands silently, as a female voice speaks.) “They said you wouldn’t be bothered by a voice calling for you in the night. . . There would be no trail of cereal through the house, no spills or stray toys. The clock ticks. All is calm. And you realize, there is still a voice. If you’ve faced the pain of an abortion, call 1-800. . .”*
    - 3) *(A young woman sits by a fireplace, facing the camera.) “You know, I used to be pro-choice, and then something happened to me - I had a baby of my own. When I was pregnant I finally realized that all this little kid was trying to do was make it, just make it, just like all of us. So I haven’t figured it all out yet, but why, when I wanted the baby, it was a baby, and when I didn’t, it was something else? Think about it.”*
    - 4) *(A young woman is jogging through city streets. It is raining. As she runs, her inner thoughts are made audible.) “Everyone’s telling me how I should feel. . . It’s not like I planned to get pregnant. Not now. (Referring to angry boyfriend, shown in brief flashback.) Telling me how to feel, what to do, then not sticking around when it really counts. So now it’s all up to me. But abortion? Not me. I have to live with myself. (Pause. She runs into distance, skies clearing.) We’ll make it. Yeah, we’ll make it just fine.”*
  - e. Do all I can to build Christ’s church.
  - f. Pray for a renewed respect for:

- 1) the life of the unborn.
  - 2) the renewal of our national conscience.
  - 3) the consistent & powerful example within Christ's church.
- g. Allow women (whenever possible) to wage the debate. When men speak against abortion there is always the prospect of their arguments being lost simply because they do not bear the unwanted child.
- h. Tearfully tolerate the foolish, selfish, & sinful (though legal) decisions of my neighbors when I cannot dissuade them.
4. **FINAL NOTE:** I believe that the least we can conclude is that **THERE IS REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FETUS IS A PERSON AT SOME POINT BEFORE BIRTH.** That being the case, I would not advocate abortion (especially after the first trimester), lest I risk killing another person.

## Pastoral advice

### How should Christians talk about the abortion question?

1. Christians should first understand and appreciate all the facts or aspects of the question from both sides of the issue if they hope to change people's minds.
2. Christians must understand that this issue is not simple and both sides have something to learn in the debate.
3. Christians should persist in framing the question in the right way - When does personhood begin? A woman's right to privacy is a proper question only after it can be demonstrated that the fetus is not a person.
4. Christians should recognize that personal Biblical convictions and appropriate public policy are not always to be the same.
5. Christians should recognize that ads and political expressions that do not address a woman's fears will be largely ineffective in changing a woman's decisions.

### Questions that you should be able to answer.

1. **Specific facts you should know.**
  - a. Which Scripture texts are most critical to the abortion issue?
  - b. What is the meaning of Exodus 21:22-25?
2. **Issues that you should be able to discuss.**
  - a. What are the root issues in the abortion debate?
  - b. What are the strongest arguments for the pro-life position? for the pro-choice position?
3. **Questions you should wrestle with.**
  - a. What is appropriate public policy with respect to abortion?