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IS ABORTION REALLY SO BAD?

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Dr. Joel R. Beeke is president and professor of Systematic Theology and Homiletics at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, a pastor of the Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a prolific author.

James W. Beeke is an elder in the Chilliwack, British Columbia, Heritage Reformed congregation, an educational consultant, a former superintendent of schools in China, and an author of several books.

Introduction

It is a sobering thing to visit the WWII memorial in Washington, D. C., and see 4,000 stars on the wall, each symbolizing a hundred human beings killed. The United States lost 400,000 lives during World War II. Canada lost 40,000. But if we made a similar memorial for unborn children killed by abortion, it would require three such walls for just one year of abortions. *Three times as many unborn children lose their lives in one year than the number of our soldiers who died in the entire Second World War.*

In the year 2005, hospitals and various clinics performed 1.2 million abortions across the United States and more than 96,000 in Canada. Two out of every ten pregnancies were aborted. In legal abortions committed in the United States (since 1973) and Canada (since 1969), over 53 million unborn children have been killed. To put this in perspective, the entire population of both nations is about 350 million. Legal abortion has killed the equivalent of one seventh of our population.

Historians estimate that the Nazi Holocaust killed 10 to 11 million people, including six million Jews. Many of them were children. Legal abortion in the U.S. and Canada has terminated five times as many lives as the Holocaust did.

We should certainly have a strong rational and ethical basis to sanction legally the ending of 53 million lives in our nations, plus over a million more each year. What would these millions of people be like today, from infants to adults over forty, if they had lived? Their termination off the face of the earth requires some compelling justification.

What is the justification for legal abortion? Let us examine the arguments used by those who promote abortion to determine on how strong of a foundation this practice is based.

Arguments for Abortion

Argument 1: The fetus is not a human life, therefore it may be killed.

While the fetus will eventually become a human child, this argument says it is not yet so. But science indicates otherwise. First, the words *embryo* and *fetus* are Greek and Latin words that simply mean “young one.” When scientists speak of a human embryo or fetus, they are not putting it in the category of another species, but are simply using technical terminology for a stage of development, like the words infant, child, adolescent, and adult. A human fetus is a young human person in the womb. It is natural and correct for mothers to speak of the fetus as “my baby” or for pregnancy books to say “your child.”

Second, from conception, the child has its own genetic code that clearly identifies it as *homo sapiens*—part of the human race. The child’s DNA also has a distinct code from the mother, showing that he or she is not a part of her body, but a distinct individual living temporarily within her.

Third, ultrasound imaging shows that very early in the process of development the embryo grows into a recognizable human form. The child is not a blob of tissue, but a highly complex, though tiny, baby. At three weeks after conception, a baby’s heart begins beating and pumping blood through the body. At six weeks, a baby’s brain waves are traceable. Virtually all surgical abortions silence a beating heart and a functioning brain. At eight weeks, the arms, hands, legs, and feet are well developed and the child’s fingerprints are starting to form. At eleven weeks after conception, all of the baby’s internal organs are present and functioning. By the end of the first trimester, the baby kicks, spins, somersaults, opens and closes hands, and makes facial expressions.

By any reasonable standard, a human fetus is a young human being. To kill an innocent baby is murder. That’s why the products of abortion are so ugly: severed hands, feet, and heads, wrapped up in bags and

discarded. On an intuitive level, we know this. People can shrug off the image of a side of beef or a chicken drumstick, but images of abortion horrify and grieve us because they are images of a dismembered human body. Unborn children are precious human beings and must be protected.

Argument 2: The fetus is not fully human because it is dependent on another.

Is a baby kangaroo not a kangaroo because it lives in its mother's pouch? Of course not. The location and situation of a human being does not make him or her any less human. Arguments for abortion based on dependence tread on dangerous ground. If dependency makes a person less human, then on that ground we would have the right to kill infants outside the womb, people on dialysis, handicapped people, and the elderly. May we kill all dependent people?

Consider two mothers several months into their pregnancies. One child is born prematurely, and the other remains in the womb. The first is utterly dependent on medical intervention to survive, and the other on her mother's body. Is it right to kill the prematurely born baby? How would the hospital staff react if the mother entered the neonatal ward with a knife to attack her child? If it is not right to kill the premature child, then why is it right to kill the child in the womb? Both are dependent. Both are children. Both must have legal protection.

Argument 3: A woman has a right to do with her body as she desires.

We affirm a woman's authority over her body. But there are limits to what we can *rightfully* do with our bodies, including causing harm to another human being. Abortion involves the death of her child. To argue that the living fetus is part of the mother's body defies reason: which organ of her body is it? When the unborn child's heart beats, whose heart is it? When the fetus's brain waves can be traced, whose brain is it? Every pregnancy involves two people, a mother and a child; the rights of both must be considered.

Whenever we speak of the rights of two human beings, we must guard against the more powerful person taking advantage of the weaker person. It is the responsibility of the powerful to protect the weak. It is especially the responsibility of a mother to protect her child. Does any mother have the right to do whatever she pleases with her children? On the contrary, she has the responsibility of caring for them or seeing that someone else cares for them. Certainly, motherhood calls for sacrifice. We should expect adults to make sacrifices of their resources and freedoms when necessary to preserve the lives of children.

Argument 4: Sex and reproduction are private matters into which we must not intrude.

We believe that human sexuality is a very private matter: it expresses the deep intimacy that a husband and wife share. But sex has very public consequences. How we exercise our sexuality contributes to the restraint or spread of disease, the treatment of women with honor or rape, the nurture or sexual abuse of children, and the strengthening or dissolution of families which are the foundation of society. Society therefore has a compelling interest to guard the dignity of marriage, women, and children with respect to sex and reproduction.

People sometimes argue that the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to privacy in sexual and reproductive matters. Read the Constitution, and you will not find any such right there. In reality, the Fourth Amendment acknowledges the right of security against "unreasonable searches and seizures" without a "warrant," but says nothing about sexuality, children, or abortion.

Someone might sarcastically say, "I thought what I did in my bedroom was my own business." But if there is reasonable cause to believe that you are murdering a child in your bedroom, then it becomes a matter of public intervention by the authorities. Privacy is not an absolute moral right. But killing a child is an absolute moral wrong.

Argument 5: Making abortion illegal would force women into dangerous, back-alley abortions.

The idea of the crudely done abortion resulting in a bleeding, dying mother (and a dead child) has been widely used by abortion advocates. But in reality, 90 percent of abortions performed before they became legal were

done by physicians in their offices. The idea of thousands of women dying yearly until abortion was legalized is a myth. In 1972, thirty-nine mothers died in the United States from abortions. The *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (March 26, 2010) admits that the legalization of abortion has had “no major impact on the number of women dying from abortion in the U.S...legal abortion is now the leading cause of abortion-related maternal deaths in the U.S.”

Every woman who dies from a botched abortion is a tragic loss. But so is every child who dies from a successful abortion. We should not make it legal to kill babies in order to make the killing safer for the adults involved. Furthermore, abortion has medical and psychological risks; making it illegal would actually protect the lives and health of millions of women.

Argument 6: Better to die before birth than to live as an unwanted child.

First, to give a human being the power to determine the future life of another individual based on whether he is “wanted” or “unwanted” is most dangerous. Do we have the right to kill people based on whether or not we want them? Such a viewpoint leads highly cultured societies to commit genocide against the mentally challenged and “inferior” races.

Second, is the child never wanted by anyone? Many mothers did not want the pregnancy but cherish the child, especially after birth. There are also many parents who want to adopt a child. To say that the child is not wanted now by its mother does not mean it will never be loved.

Third, this argument has horrifying implications for “unwanted” children already born. If it is better to kill the baby than to let it be unwanted, then what does that imply about homeless children? Children with abusive parents? Would it be loving to kill these children? Of course not; love calls us to teach their parents to care for them or to find parents for them. In the same way, if unborn children are truly “unwanted,” we should try to help their mothers to see them differently or help the children to find adoptive parents. Did you know that Steve Jobs was unwanted by his birth mother and the adopted parents the government initially chose?

Fourth, what gives us the right to decide whether it is better for a person to live or to die? Are we the owner of that person’s life? Do we know with certainty the child’s future? Do not many “unwanted” children overcome severe physical or emotional handicaps in their youth and function as useful adult citizens? Do not many people in painful situations nevertheless wisely choose to live rather than to kill themselves?

In the end, the seemingly compassionate argument for the “wanted” child makes no sense at all. At best, it is an emotional, illogical appeal; at worst, it is a mask for deadly selfishness.

Argument 7: Pro-life advocates are trying to force their beliefs on other people.

In reality, all who participate in an abortion force their views on another, namely on the unborn child—so strongly, in fact, that it results in his or her death. If the unborn child is a human being, then how can one be accused of trying to force his own belief on another when trying to protect the life of the child from his or her killer? If the unborn child is a human being, then abortion is *murder*. If abortion is murder, we must do all in our power to stop it.

The Declaration of Independence says, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” Currently the rights of some people are more “equal” than others are because their “liberty and the pursuit of happiness” apparently justifies taking the “life” of others. This seriously undermines the political foundation of our nation. But if people exercise their popular power of voting to direct the government to protect all people’s right to life, they simply do what the Declaration of Independence says they should.

After critically examining seven basic arguments for abortion upon demand, can we honestly conclude on a rational and ethical basis that abortion should be legal? These arguments are flimsy reasons for murdering more than a million babies each year. This is especially evident when we consider that less than 5% of all abortions are for reason of rape, incest, or a danger to the mother's life. More than 95% of abortions take place for the sake of finances, career, personal convenience, or other selfish reasons. Are these compelling reasons for killing human beings?

So far, we have concentrated on defeating the pro-abortionists' arguments on their own ground. But there are many other aspects of abortion: the screams of the unborn as they suffer pain and death; the cutting, slicing, burning, poisoning, and bleeding accompanying abortion; the tragic burial of the unborn in trash cans or their cremation in incinerators; the post-abortion anxiety, depression, sense of loss, anger, remorse, nightmares, infertility, and flashbacks of murdering mothers.

Let us now turn to a higher court of authority than human reasoning and human consequences. We are called to the even more important task of positively setting forth the truths and proclamations of God's Word that are involved directly and/or indirectly in the issue of abortion. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa 8:20).

Proclamations of God's Word

Proclamation 1: God created mankind in His own image.

Most people intuitively know that human beings are on a different level than animals. Even the theory of evolution cannot completely erase the sense most people have of how sacred human life is. Animals are beautiful and valuable, but we would kill a grizzly bear to save a child without any qualms of conscience. We know that people are special.

The Bible explains this sense of the sanctity of human life when it says in Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Men and women, whatever their age, have a special value far above the birds and beasts (Mat 10:31) because they are God's most special creation on earth. We should cherish and protect human beings, not just for their usefulness, but because they represent God's glory in a unique manner.

Proclamation 2: God rules life and death, ability and disability as the sovereign King.

We also have a sense that it is not right to "play God" with other people's lives. We realize that we do not have the right to treat people as if we owned them and could dispose of them as we see fit. The Bible explains this by telling us that God is the King who owns and rules all of His creation (Psa 95:3-5). He alone has the sovereign right to do what He pleases with people (Dan 4:35).

When God created the world there was no death or pain; all was "very good" (Gen 1:31). Death came through Adam's disobedience to God's law (Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12). But even so, God retained His sovereignty over human life and death. "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive" (1Sa 2:6). He rules over human ability and disability. "And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?" (Exo 4:11). So the Bible teaches us to receive each human life from God's hand, even if it is a child born with a handicap or into a difficult family situation. God has a wondrous way of bringing good out of evil (Gen 50:20). We are to bow before His authority as the King of the universe and not try to play God with other people's lives.

Abortion trespasses into divine territory by taking into the hands of man what belongs to the Lord alone. It insults His sovereignty, and foolishly grasps the authority to make decisions for which we don't have the necessary wisdom. Consider the following historical case. The father has syphilis, the mother has tuberculosis. They have already had four children—the first is blind, the second died, the third is deaf and dumb, and the fourth has tuberculosis. The mother is pregnant with her fifth child. Will you perform an

abortion for them? If so, then you just killed Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), a famous German composer and pianist! Playing God with human lives produces tragic results.

Proclamation 3: God forbids the killing of innocent human life.

Even after the fall, though man's heart was totally corrupted by sin (Gen 6:5), God told us that remnants of the image of God remain (Jam 3:9); and therefore we must treat human life with great respect. God says in Genesis 9:6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." The sixth of the Ten Commandments says, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exo 20:13), which in context means we must not take innocent human life. To kill innocent people is to attack God, for they bear His sacred image.

Proclamation 4: God reveals the human personhood of the unborn child.

God personally forms each child in the womb. Job said, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4). David exulted, "Thou hast...covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psa 139:13-14). What God makes in the womb is a "me"—a person who has a "soul."

David also confessed, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa 51:5). From his conception in the womb, David was "in sin." Objects and animals cannot be sinners; they have no moral accountability. Only a person can be a sinner. So the sad reality that we are in a state of sin from conception proves that conception creates a human person. Abortion is an attack upon a human person with the intent to kill. It is premeditated murder.

Proclamation 5: God declares His judgment against the killers of the unborn.

The Lord has a special compassion for the weak when they are oppressed by those more powerful than they are, whether it is the foreigner, the widow, or the orphan. He threatens deadly wrath against oppressors (Exo 22:21-27). No one is more vulnerable than an unborn child is.

For this reason, God included this law in His legislation for Israel: "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. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life" (Exo 21:22-23). "Her fruit depart" is literally "her offspring come out." The law envisions the accidental injury of a pregnant woman with the result of a miscarriage, when two men are fighting. If God decreed the punishment of an *accidentally* induced abortion, how much more will He punish an *intentional* abortion? God abhors all crimes against women, but violence against pregnant women especially provokes Him to punish the offending nation (Amo 1:13).

This does not justify taking personal vengeance or acts of violence against abortion providers. But it does warn us that if our nation will not protect the innocent, then God will deal severely with our nation. Senator Jesse Helms¹ wrote, "The highest level of moral culture is that at which the people of a nation recognize and protect the sanctity of innocent human life...Great nations die when they cease to live by the great principles which gave them vision and strength to rise above tyranny and human degradation...No nation can remain free or exercise moral leadership when it has embraced the doctrine of death."

Proclamation 6: God calls sinners to repentance for forgiveness of sins.

When we declare God's proclamations against abortion, we do so being painfully conscious that we all have sinned in many ways (Rom 3:23). We speak as sinners who have found mercy with God, inviting other sinners to find the same mercy. For this purpose, God sent Christ to die for sinners and to rise again: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Act 5:31).

¹ **Jesse Helms** (1921-2008) – five-term Republican United States Senator from North Carolina and a leading conservative. He served as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1995 to 2001. The quotation is from a speech in the U.S. Senate on January 11, 1977.

In Christ Jesus, there is a promise of forgiveness to all who come to Him. But that promise is coupled with the command to repent (Luk 24:47). Repentance is God's gift for the salvation of a sinner by which a sinner, out of a sense of the evil of his sin and the goodness of God's mercy in Christ, turns from sin to God with grief for and hatred of his sin, and with full intent to obey God by His gracious help.

Perhaps you have been a party to abortion: a father who encouraged the death of your child, a mother who submitted herself to the deadly instruments, a doctor or nurse who performed the procedure, a vocal supporter of abortion in public policy, or just a silent citizen who has allowed millions of children to die without voicing your protest. If this is the case, then you are guilty of bloodshed against the image of God.

But the Lord Jesus Christ invites you, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa 1:18). He stretches out His nail-pierced hands to you, calling you to "come" to Him, and promising, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa 55:1, 7).

What Can I Do to Make a Difference?

1. *Pray.* The most powerful act on earth is to fall to your knees and pray persistently for the Lord to intervene in the world and turn all nations away from abortion. Pray that the Lord will grant Supreme Court justices who will have the courage to uphold the sanctity of life and overturn *Roe vs. Wade*, no matter what the populace might say. Pray for doctors who perform abortions that they may repent and again be inspired by their oath to protect life. Pray for hospital administrators and nurses that they may lead those who work with them towards a genuine nurturance of life.

Pray for parents who have lost a child to abortion and whose hearts are closed to the mercy of God. Pray that God would grant them confession, repentance, and the healing embrace of divine forgiveness. Pray for those who are overwhelmed by grief and remorse and wish they could face their decision all over again. Pray that God would heal their broken hearts and help them to help others not to go through with an abortion.

Pray for those who are tempted by abortion that God would keep them from killing their own child. Pray for organizations that work to protect life. And have the courage to pray that God will judge those in leadership who disobey Him.

2. *Educate.* An abortion thrives on misinformation and poor thinking. Search the Scriptures yourself and encourages others to do so also—both to evangelize the populace and to educate them about Scripture's clear-cut teachings concerning the sanctity of life and the heinousness of destroying life without good and just cause. Stay abreast of the issues and debates. Read a good book on abortion and teach young people and others the truth. An older but still helpful book is C. Everett Koop's, *The Right to Live, The Right to Die*.² A more recent book is Randy Alcorn's, *ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments*.³

3. *Support.* Give your money to organizations that oppose abortion and to pregnancy centers that educate and counsel women about the child growing within them. Withhold your support economically from those causes and people who support the abortion holocaust.

4. *Speak up.* Let your voice be heard by writing to newspapers, journals, and clergy who support abortion, as well as your elected officials. Call your representative and senator or Member of Parliament and ask about his or her position on abortion. Respectfully but firmly explain why you oppose it.

5. *Serve.* Give of your time, talents, and finances to provide for unwed mothers in need, adoption programs, or ministries that care for women suffering from post-abortion guilt. Consider adopting children that are

² **Charles Everett Koop**, MD (b. 1916) – American pediatric surgeon and public health administrator. He served as thirteenth Surgeon General of the United States under President Ronald Reagan from 1982 to 1989.

³ **Randy Alcorn** – American evangelical author and director of Eternal Perspective Ministries.

unwanted, volunteering to work at crisis pregnancy centers, or getting involved in sidewalk counseling outside abortion clinics. Minister compassion and mercy to those in need.

6. *Vote.* Get to the ballot box at every opportunity to vote for candidates who oppose abortion consistently. While there are other issues that affect voting, none can be more important as this.

