

August 2017

Abortion – Does The Bible Speak To It?

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Recommended Citation

McInteer, J. (2017). Abortion – Does The Bible Speak To It?. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/mcinteer-sermons-topic/80>

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ABORTION--DOES THE BIBLE SPEAK TO IT?

- I. On the mere mention of the word "Abortion" there are several questions that immediately come to mind.
 - A. What do you mean by "abortion" ?
 1. Stop something that has already begun.
 2. Bring to a premature end the process of fetal development.
 3. Expel the unborn from the womb & disappoint the cycle of nature - Jim Citty.
 4. It's an interruption or an intrusion into God's plan for life.
 5. (Can you hear now the rest of my speech w/o the ERA & the Jimmy Carter Adm. ties - just judge what I say on its merits.)
 - B. Is abortion widely practiced and if so, by whom? Increasing or decreasing?
 1. In 1973, the USA Supreme Court ruled abortion was legal. They said in the early stages of pregnancy the decision to abort could be made by a woman & her doctor.
 2. The profile of the abortion seeker shows she's young - 61% under 25, 71% white, 56% are single.
 3. In NY City 165,000 were done the 1st year of legalization.
 4. No. of abortions rose 900% during Va. 1st full yr. under new law.
 5. Dr. said prior to S.C. - 2 requests per yr. - now 1 every second working day.

2.

6. 12,584 - 1969

180,119 - 1970

480,259 - 1971

1 million illegal annually estimated

900,000 - 1974 - 25%+ teenagers

2 women every minute in USA.

7. More abortions in Wash., D.C. in '75 (9819)

than births (9746). 51.1% all born illegitimate -

57% to blacks & 12.9% to whites.

8. NY ratio 1313 abortions to 1000 births.

9. Attitudes changed - prior to '68 it was a visit to

back street abortionist or avantgarde going to

"legal abortionist of wealth." No longer a

double dose of castor oil nor "How shall I cope

c this pregnancy, but why should I!"

10. 50% of 2.4 million unmarried teenage girls who

admit sexual relations used no contraceptive -

rely on abortion as after the fact method of contr

11. 64% all Americans say the woman & her Dr.

should decide it.

12. Church views on abortion.

13. It's a lucrative business.

14. Cost America more lives than all wars.

C. What is the major issue in abortion? Phrased

two ways:

1.) When does life begin?

(If you take innocent life, is it not murder?)

2.) When is the child ensouled?

(At conception, at quickening, at birth when it
breathes).

3.) This we will have to come back to after we look at the passage question, which is --

D. Does the Bible speak to the subject?

Gen. 2:7

Exo. 21:22-25

1 Kings 17:21-22

Job 27:3

Job 33:4

Ps. 51:5

Ps. 104:29-30

Ps. 139:13-15

Ecc. 11:5

Isa. 42:5

Isa. 44:2

Jer. 1:5

Zech. 12:1

Luke 1:15

Luke 1:31

Luke 1:41-44

Luke 2:21

E. Why would one want an abortion?

1. Population explosion.
2. Avoid danger of illegal ones.
3. Mother's health.
4. Rape & incest victims.
5. Deformed child (Why not let birth come & destroy the deaf one!) (Do we have to be perfect to live)
6. Mother's mental condition (Who can define it).
(Does the circumstance of the conception determine it?)

- 7. Financial inability for child's future.
- 8. Unwanted - Dr. Citty illustration.
- 9. Alters an established life style.
- 10. Choice of life - mother or child.
 (If a man in boat c mother & child - overturn - save only 1 - make choice - choosing one is not deciding to kill the other.)
- F. When does life begin? When is body ensouled?
 - 1. We have fertilized ovum, embryo, fetus, child.
 - 2. Is birth control wrong - ovum & sperm carry only 1/2 genetic structure - not wrong in marriage.
 - 3. 1st International Conference on Abortion 1967 - 19 to 1 said "The majority of our group could find no point in time between the union of sperm & egg, or at least the blastocyst stage, & the birth of the infant at which point we could say that this was not human life."
 - 4. "Human life begins at conception & is continued whether intra or extra-uterine until death" Sept. 70 "Calif. Medicine".
See Clip.
 - 5. Supreme Court Hollis card.
 - 6. Willingham quote.
 - 7. Hollis & Jews' belief.
 - 8. Tertullian quote.
 - 9. Betty Frieden, "The life of an unborn baby is not to be compared with the needs of a full grown woman."
 - 10. Weilke Clip.

G. What are the end results?

1. Wielke clipping.
2. Break down of morals and a cheapening of life.
3. Affects not only attitude, health, but religion - Simpson quote.
4. Philosophy we are teathed on "Why right & can't be wrong", thus avoid abortion.

Pembroke, Ky. Church Lectureship 4-4-78
Franklin, Ky. Right To Life Banquet 5-13-78

Abortion is destined to be a major issue within the Church, which will threaten the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. A poll conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, contacting 2,738 persons, revealed the following attitudes toward abortion:

1. Age: While 72% of those over 60 opposed abortion and 60% of those between 30 and 60 years old were in opposition, only 47% of those under 30 were opposed.

2. Frequency of Worship: Among Catholics, those who worshipped every week were opposed by 83%; those who attended rarely or never were opposed by 41%.

Among fundamentalists, those who worshipped regularly

were opposed by 75%; those who worshipped rarely or never were opposed by 56%.

Abortion and Mercy Killing, by John P. Simpson, pp. 15-16.

Dr. Roy Willingham, a practicing physician (specializing in gastroenterology) in Dallas, Texas gives the following definition:

"Conception is the union of the male and female reproductive cells, each of which contributes an equal amount of hereditary material to the new, i. e., 23 chromosomes each for a total of 46. From the moment of conception, the individual possesses all of the genetic potential for every organ and every genetically determined characteristic peculiar to that particular person. From that time on the individual needs only the incubation and nourishment by the mother in order to develop into a full-term, newborn baby. In terms of its genetic structure and its biological potential the fertilized ovum is as much human being as a newborn baby. After conception the

original cell multiplies rapidly by geometric progression where each daughter cell produced has exact genetic identity with the original fertilized ovum. The heart is usually beating at day 25. By the sixth week of development the individual is beginning to take definite form. By the eighth week all organs are present and by the twelfth week all organs are fully formed. During the next 24 weeks while the individual awaits birth, changes are primarily growth in size."

Abortion and Mercy Killing, by Dr. John P. Simpson, pp. 17-18

Some commentators think the Supreme Court ducked the issue. You have probably read the much=quoted statement "We need not resolve the difficult question of where life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer."

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM FOR WOMEN

Harry M. Hollis

p. 163

abortion

The value of unborn life. The ancient Hebrews believed that conception was the result of direct intervention, in which God showed his favor to the woman by opening her womb. That would suggest that they considered unborn life to be very precious-- and they did. However, the Jewish rabbis believed that the fetus was not yet human life, but only the promise of human life. Their view was based on the statement in Genesis 2:7, which reads: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed out his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." They took this to mean that the infallible sign of life was breathing. They knew, of course, that when a man dies, he ceases to breathe. So they concluded that when a child takes his first breath, he begins his life as a human being. If there is a biblical view on this matter, presumably that is it.

Throughout the history of the church, a tremendous controversy raged around the time when the soul was implanted in the body of the developing child. Some said that this happened at conception; some said it happened at the time of quickening, when the mother first felt her child move within her; some said it happened at birth. For the Catholic Church, the matter was not finally settled until December, 1965, at the Second Vatican Council, when

abortion

Pope Paul officially declared that human life begins at the moment of conception.

The Catholic view is certainly logical, and in keeping with our new knowledge of human reproduction. Once the sperm and the ovum have fused together, a new, unique life begins; and every event that follows is no more than the progressive development of what came into existence at the moment of conception.

However, a great deal of development has to take place from this rudimentary beginning until the point at which the new life can survive independently; so it could be argued that this was not a complete, self-contained individual until it developed the capacity to exist by itself outside the womb. As we have seen, the Supreme Court decided, for the time being, that this would be considered as the point at which the fetus achieved the right to legal protection.

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM FOR WOMEN

Harry M. Hollis

P. 167-8

The whole question of abortion really comes down to this one simple question: "When does life begin?" If the unborn fetus is not a living human being, then no moral considerations are involved. But if that fetus is a living human being, then those moral considerations are paramount! Centuries ago, Tertullian stated the position that Christians have held:

To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing; nor does it matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to birth. That is a man which is going to be one; you have the fruit already in the seed.

have seen that of balancing a life for a life in certain situations or by due process of law.

- Never in modern times, except by Hitler, has a nation put a price tag of economic or social usefulness on an individual human life as the price of its continued existence.

- Never in modern times, except by Hitler, has a nation demanded a certain physical perfection as a condition necessary for the continuation of that life.

- Never since the ancient laws of paterfamilias in Rome, has a major nation granted to a father or mother total dominion over the life or death of his child.

- Never has our nation legally allowed innocent humans to be deprived of life without due process of law.

Yet our newly enacted permissive abortion laws do all of the above. They represent a complete about-face, a total rejection of one of the core values of Western man, and an acceptance of a new ethic in which life has only a relative value. No longer will every human have an absolute right to live simply because he exists. Man will now be allowed to exist only if he measures up to certain standards of independence, physical perfection, or utilitarian usefulness to others.

It makes no difference to vaguely assume that human life is more human post-born than pre-born. What is critical is to judge it to be, or not to be, human life. By a measure of "more" or "less" human, one can easily and logically justify infanticide and euthanasia. By the measure of economic and/or social usefulness, the ghastly atrocities of Hitlerian mass murders came to be. One cannot help but be reminded of the anguished comment of a condemned Nazi judge who said to an American judge after the Nuremburg trials: "I never knew it would

Dr. & Mrs. J. C. Neelke
"Handbook on Abortion!"

PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES REGARDING ABORTION ATTITUDES

SONDRA E. WILCOX
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Current literature regarding abortion attitudes has tended to lump all Protestants together and compare them with the Jewish and Catholic philosophies. Philosophically this cannot be done because there is such a wide divergence of opinions and beliefs among members of the various Protestant denominations.

In a study conducted during the fall semester of 1975 at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, 296 students were chosen from nine health classes to participate in an abortion attitude survey, using the Wilcox Abortion Attitude Questionnaire.*

Demographic material collected from these students included the student's religious affiliation. Eleven students (4%) indicated they were Catholic; two were Jewish (0%); and the Protestants comprised 89%. Of the Protestants, thirty-

eight percent indicated they were Baptists, nineteen percent were members of the Church of Christ, eighteen percent were Methodists, and six percent were Presbyterians. Seven percent professed no religious affiliation.

The following material as presented attempts to reveal the differences toward abortion on certain pertinent items of these four Protestant groups.

TABLE 1

"I would not respect someone who had an abortion."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	0.90%	3.57%	0. %	0. %
Agree	5.41	10.71	3.77	0.
Undecided	10.81	25.00	9.43	11.11
Disagree	43.24	32.14	33.96	44.44
Strongly Disagree	39.44	28.57	50.94	44.44

Results indicated in Table 1 revealed that fourteen percent of the members of the Church of Christ felt they would not respect someone who had obtained an abortion. This group also had the largest percentage of persons who were undecided. The Methodists and Presbyterians were in apparent agreement that they would not feel any disrespect for someone who had obtained an abortion.

TABLE 2

"Abortion is against my religious views."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	8.11%	23.21%	1.89%	5.56%
Agree	25.23	41.07	11.32	22.22
Undecided	19.82	17.86	30.19	22.22
Disagree	38.74	12.50	47.17	38.89
Strongly Disagree	7.21	3.57	9.43	11.11

Table 2 revealed that sixty-four percent of the members of the Church of Christ felt abortion was against their religious views. For the reader's benefit, it may be useful to know that the Church of Christ has no written creed or doctrine other than the Bible. Fifty-seven percent of the Methodists and forty-six percent of

*The Wilcox Abortion Attitude Questionnaire is a thirty item questionnaire, using a Likert format, with a reliability coefficient of .96. The WAAQ was developed as part of a doctoral dissertation at Boston University. For a free copy please write: Dr. Sondra E. Wilcox, MTSU Box 251, Murfreesboro, TN 37132.

the Baptists disagreed with this statement.

TABLE 3

"My close friends would not approve of abortion."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	8.11%	10.71%	1.89%	5.56%
Agree	18.92	33.93	22.64	16.67
Undecided	23.42	25.00	26.42	27.78
Disagree	38.74	21.43	43.40	44.44
Strongly Disagree	9.91	7.14	5.66	5.56

Information in Table 3 indicated that Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians were within one percentage point of exact concurrence. Forty-nine to fifty percent of them disagreed with this statement compared with twenty-nine percent disagreement from members of the Church of Christ.

TABLE 4

"The liberalization of abortion in the United States has sanctionized immorality."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	6.31%	8.93%	0. %	0. %
Agree	13.51	37.50	13.21	11.11
Undecided	34.23	17.86	24.53	38.89
Disagree	34.23	21.43	41.51	33.33
Strongly Disagree	9.91	10.71	20.75	16.67

Table 4 revealed that forty-six percent of the members of the Church of Christ felt this statement to be true. This group also had the smallest number of undecided students. Sixty-two percent of the Methodists disagreed with this statement.

TABLE 5

"Abortion would be acceptable if the couple expecting the child is in the process of divorce."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	9.01%	5.36%	7.55%	5.56%
Agree	28.83	12.50	32.08	22.22
Undecided	16.22	19.64	24.53	38.89
Disagree	27.93	33.93	22.64	11.11
Strongly Disagree	18.02	28.57	13.21	22.22

In Table 5 slightly more than one-third of the Baptists and Methodists agreed

with this statement, whereas almost two-thirds (62.5%) of the Church of Christ disagreed. The Presbyterians were the most indecisive.

TABLE 6

"Abortion should be permitted because it is a lesser evil than giving birth to an unwanted child."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	18.92%	14.29%	26.42%	5.56%
Agree	33.33	21.43	45.28	55.56
Undecided	20.72	19.64	11.32	0.
Disagree	18.92	30.36	14.09	38.89
Strongly Disagree	7.21	12.50	1.89	0.

Seventy-two percent of the Methodists agreed with this statement along with sixty-one percent of the Presbyterians, but forty-three percent of the Church of Christ students disagreed. The Presbyterians had an interesting division with no persons undecided.

Conclusions . . .

Data revealed in this study indicates that generally speaking the members of the Church of Christ are less supportive of abortion than are the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists in that order. The differences were great enough between the Church of Christ and the Methodists to be statistically significant as revealed by the Newman-Keuls test.

No one can speak authoritatively for all Protestantism. Attitude studies reveal that each denomination has its own individuality. □

SOME GOOD READING

For a copy of Norman L. Parks'

Woman's Place in Church Activity

send \$1 to Amos Ponder, 1269

Pickwick Place, Flint, MI 48507.

What if Mary, because she and Joseph were not married, had done as so many are doing today, and sought and obtained an abortion? I know this is a terrible thought, but we need to think about it. These passages convince me that the fetus is a human being with tremendous potential and not just a potential human being.

And let me tell you this, dear friend, science confirms the teachings of the Bible on this important subject. In the September 1970 issue of *California Medicine* (the official journal of the California Medical Association) this was stated: ". . . Human life begins at conception and is continued, whether intra or extra-uterine, until death." And in *The Drama of Life Before Birth*, a Life Magazine special publication, are these words: "The birth of a human being really occurs at the moment the mother's egg cell is fertilized by one of the father's sperm cells." And the New York court which upheld that state's permissive abortion law, admitted the following statement: "In the contemporary medical view, the child begins a separate life from the moment of conception."

And their

Week

and finally answered. It cannot be brushed aside or ignored. It must be faced and honestly met. Upon its answer hinges the entire abortion question, as all other considerations pale to insignificance when compared with it. If what is growing within the mother is not human life, is just a piece of meat, a glob of protoplasm, then it deserves no respect or consideration at all; and the only valid concern is the mother's physical and mental health, her social well-being, and at times even her convenience.

But if this growing being is a human being, then we are in an entirely different situation. If human, he (or she) must be granted the same dignity and protection of his life, health, and well-being that our western civilization has always granted to every other person.

For two millennia in our Western culture, written into our Constitution and Bill of Rights, specifically protected by our laws, and deeply imprinted into the hearts of all men, has existed the absolute value of honoring and protecting the right of each person to live. This right is inalienable, an unequivocal ri

THE BIBLE AND ABORTION

JIM CITY

JIM CITY, a 1961 Harding alumnus, returned to Searcy a year ago to serve the community as a general practitioner. He holds the M.D. degree from the University of Tennessee School of Medicine, and has in the past served as an instructor in the Medical Field Service School in San Antonio. City preached for six years at Redland, Okla., while providing medical services in the neighboring town of DeQueen, Ark. An active lecturer and youth group worker, he is the physician for the Harding Bison football team. This year, he is co-teaching a senior nursing class at the college with Dr. Bill White of Searcy.

The young mother stepped into a doctor's office carrying a little boy about a year old. She sat down across the desk from the physician, who was a family friend, and said, "Doctor, I want you to help me out of a problem. My little boy is only one year old, and I am pregnant again, and I don't want to have two children so close together." The doctor thought for a moment and then said, "Well, what do you want me to do?" The mother said, "Why, I'd like to have an abortion, of course." The doctor sat, silently thinking, for a few seconds, and then said, "I think I can suggest a better method for you, something that will help you out more than what you have suggested. If you object to having two children so close together, let me just kill the child sitting on your lap, and let the other one live. You see, it is so much easier to get at the one already born, and it makes no difference to me which one I kill. Besides, it could be dangerous for you if I undertake to kill the younger one." As the doctor was speaking he reached into his desk and took out a knife, and asked the mother to lay the child out on her lap and look the other way. The young mother then jumped up, clutched her little boy to her, and began

Photocopy entire chapter & put in my file on Abortion

Get

WHEN ABORTION IS MADE EASIER—

More and more States are discovering what happens when abortion laws are relaxed. Demand is rising to make such operations, by licensed physicians, more available. Even a national law is proposed.

Despite some setbacks, there is a growing trend toward State laws making it easier for women to obtain legal abortions from licensed physicians. For example:

- Five States—Alaska, Hawaii, New York, South Carolina and Virginia—have relaxed their abortion laws this year.
- The Maryland legislature adopted a measure that would make an abortion as easy to obtain as most surgical operations. It was vetoed by Governor Marvin Mandel on May 26 because, he said, it lacked safeguards. But it is almost certain to come up again next year, and a poll shows a majority of Marylanders favor relaxing the rules.
- A referendum on a “liberalized” abortion law is scheduled in Washington State on November 3.
- In several places, existing abortion laws are being challenged in the courts by persons seeking to make legal abortions easier. The challenges are in the District of Columbia and in States including Illinois, Kentucky, New Jersey, Texas and Wisconsin.

Behind the trend. Advocates of easier abortions say four main forces have been at work to create the trend:

- A gain in strength of the feminist movement with its insistence on women’s rights to careers and “personal fulfillment.”
- Increased concern over a possible “population explosion.”
- The apparent success of new abortion laws in Britain and Japan in cutting the cost of the operation and reducing the death rate among women who have it performed.
- A rising death toll from illegal abortions performed by unskilled persons—usually not physicians—in unsanitary conditions.

Differing laws. Efforts to ease abortion laws have been opposed on medical, legal and religious grounds. In none of the 16 States that have relaxed their laws since Jan. 1, 1965, has the result been achieved without a battle.

As a consequence of pressures for and

against easier abortions, State laws vary widely. In New York, where a new law goes into effect on July 1, the only requirement is that the operation be performed by a licensed physician in a certified medical facility, with the doctors themselves setting the guidelines.

Hawaii’s law is similar, with an additional requirement of 90 days’ residence by the woman desiring the operation.

In South Carolina, on the other hand, three consultants must agree that the operation is necessary either to preserve the patient’s mental or physical health, to forestall birth of a deformed infant,



—“Washington Star” Photo

Maryland’s Mandel vetoed an “easy abortion” bill, but it will be reintroduced.

or to avoid a birth resulting from rape or incest.

A national law? Every State, so far, has made its own rules on abortion. Now a national law has been proposed in Congress by Senator Robert W. Packwood (Rep.), of Oregon. It would follow the lines of the New York law. Action in this session of Congress, however, is not considered likely.

Those who argue for a national law on abortions say it would keep women from “shopping” for operations and from crowding facilities in States—and countries abroad—that do not have residency requirements.

How new laws work. Staff members of “U. S. News & World Report”

checked with officials in States where new abortion laws have gone into effect. Some results of their samplings —

Hawaii has been averaging 13 abortions each weekday since it legalized the operations on March 11. More than 600 operations were performed in the first two months under the law.

Most women requesting abortions were in their twenties and unmarried. Officials said the majority were Caucasians. Average cost is \$300.

Alaska, whose legislature passed an abortion law over Governor Keith Miller’s veto on April 30, has not had time to judge its effects. A residency of 30 days is required. An unmarried woman under 18 needs consent of a parent or guardian for the operation.

Colorado passed an abortion-reform law three years ago. In 1968, there were 497 abortions, with 60 per cent of them performed on psychiatric grounds. Estimated number for 1969 was 900.

Now there is a move to liberalize the law further. Even the legislator who led the fight for the law passed in 1967, Representative Richard Lamm, of Denver, says it is outmoded.

California changed its abortion law in November, 1967, to legalize the operation when “there is substantial risk that continuation of the pregnancy would gravely impair the physical or mental health of the mother” or when rape or incest was involved.

In 1969, about 10,000 legal abortions were performed, nearly double the number in 1968. Normal costs run from \$500 to \$700. Authorities believe there are 80,000 illegal operations annually in the State.

It has been estimated that California would save more than 4 million dollars a year in medical-aid payments if all restrictions on abortions were removed. The cost of an abortion is about half that of a live birth.

But Governor Ronald Reagan has taken a firm stand against changing the law. He said he is against “liberalizing the abortion law as a means of cutting welfare, or for any other reason.”

End of abortion trips? If the trend continues toward liberalized abortion laws, it may stop a growing practice among well-to-do American women—the “quickest abortion trip” to Britain or Japan.

An estimated 6,000 American women have made such trips to Britain since 1968. About half that number, it is believed, have gone to Japan for abortions in the past three years.

This Is a Person!

BASIC to any consideration of the human quality of prenatal life within the mother is the presently known scientific facts of embryonic development. Much has been learned in recent years. What are the facts? What do we know?

Question: When does the baby's life really begin? The sperm has life. The ovum has life. Why is either of these lives any different than when the two join and become a fertilized ovum?

Answer: Both the sperm and egg are alive, but in and of themselves have reached the fullest development of their potential. The sperm is part of the father, containing within itself the same genetic code as the father. The ovum is part of the mother, containing within itself her genetic code. Nutrition and time cannot add more to either of these cells alone, and in time both will die. Either alone cannot reproduce itself. When united together, however, they create a new being. This new being is totally different from either the sperm or the ovum, and from its mother or father, containing within itself its own complete genetic package programmed for active continuing development into a mature human person. It may live or it may die at any stage of its development and later life, but it is a unique being.

Question: Isn't the fertilized ovum only a potential human being?

Answer: No. It is not a potential human being. It is, rather, a human being with vast potential. You or I did not come from a fertilized ovum but each of us once was a fertilized ovum! To say that a mature adult comes from a child is hardly accurate. Rather, we would say that each one of us once was a child, and that as adults now we are more fully developed. Just so, the adult human person once was a child who was an infant who was a preborn infant who was a fetus who was an embryo who was a zygote who was a fertilized ovum. Each in turn has become more fully developed and a more mature form of the human being who was there in totality at the moment of conception.

Question: How many weeks are there in a pregnancy and how do you measure them?

Answer: We measure a pregnancy from the time the ovum begins to grow, that is, at the start of a woman's menstrual period. After about two weeks of growth it is released from the ovary. The fertilization of the egg can then occur. This is two weeks before her next period is due. Four of the forty weeks have already elapsed at the time she misses her first period.

* Dr. and Mrs. Wilke, physicians, of Cincinnati, Ohio, are widely known as lecturers on family life. Their book, a 144-page paperback, may be secured through Standard Publishing for 95 cents.

From "Handbook on Abortion," first edition,
May, 1971, copyright by the authors*

By DR. and MRS. J. C. WILKE

Question: But the embryo is just a simple fish-like creature.

Answer: The body of the unborn baby is more complex than ours. Before he is born, the baby has several extra parts to his body which he needs only so long as he lives inside his mother. He has his own space capsule, the amniotic sac. He has his own lifeline, the umbilical cord. And he has his own root system, the placenta. These all belong to the baby himself, not to his mother. They are all developed from his original cell ("The Secret World of a Baby," Day & Liley, 1968, Random House).

Question: When does the unborn baby's heart begin to beat?

Answer: The heartbeat begins between the eighteenth to twenty-fifth day (James M. Tanner, Gordon Rattray Taylor, and the Editors of Time-Life Books, "Growth," New York, Life Science Library, 1965, p. 64). Electrocardiogram recordings can be taken at nine or ten weeks.

Question: When does the brain begin functioning?

Answer: Electrical brain waves (electroencephalograph) have been recorded as early as forty-three days (J. W. Still, "J. Washington Academy of Science," Vol. 59, 1969, p. 46). The brain itself is completely present by eight weeks.

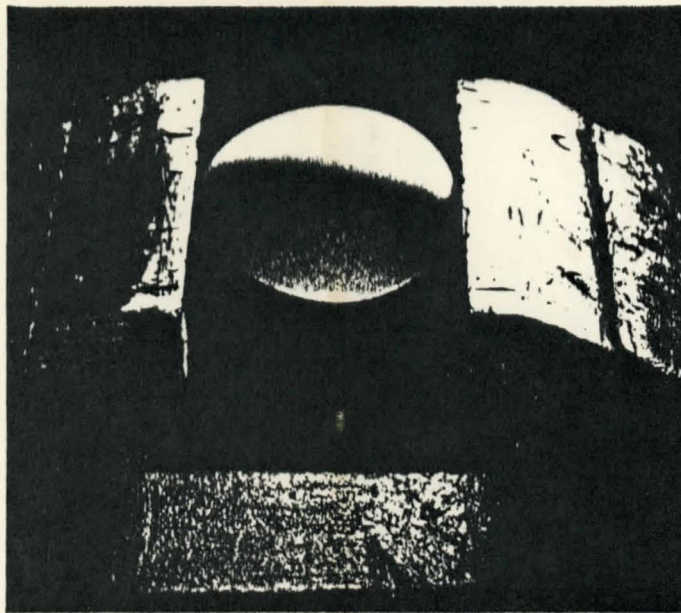
Question: When does the baby quicken?

Answer: "Quickening" is an ancient term usually referring to when the mother can feel the baby move. She usually will feel the baby kick at approximately twenty weeks (four-and-a-half-months). This, however, is far too crude and inaccurate a measurement for today and civil laws that speak of "quickening" as detected by the mother are simply irrelevant and obsolete. Actual skeletal movements of the unborn baby begin at six weeks (Hocker, Davenport, "The Prenatal Origin of Behavior," University of Kansas Press, 1952). The mother cannot feel them then, however.

The most dramatic accounting of movement very early has been the following:

Eleven years ago, while giving an anesthetic for a ruptured tubal pregnancy (at two months), I was handed what I believed to be the smallest human being ever seen. The embryo sac was intact and transparent. Within the sac was a tiny (one-third inch) human male swimming extremely vigorously in the amniotic fluid, while attached to the wall by the umbilical cord. This tiny human was perfectly developed with long, tapering fingers, feet, and toes. It was almost transparent as regards the skin, and the delicate arteries and veins were prominent to the ends of the fingers.

The baby was extremely alive and swam about the sac approximately one time per second with a natural swimmer's stroke. This tiny human did not look at all like the photos and drawings of "embryos" which I have seen, nor did it



SKIP BAKER

To abort or not to abort: that is the question

by Leonard McMillan

Relaxing of laws concerning abortion has sparked a national debate upon this volatile subject. Both sides support their premise and conclusions with vigor, perhaps so much so that the arguments become more important than the issue. I do not pretend to have *all* the answers. But I have one, a solid Biblical answer concerning the nature of man—central, as we shall see, to the controversy over abortion.

History of abortion

The earliest recipe to induce abortion is thought to be more than 4,500 years old.¹ It is well known that induced abortion was used as a means of birth control long before the Christian era. In fact, it became such a common practice that laws were enacted to regulate both abortion and infanticide. The legal objectives were to safeguard maternal life and to ensure that husbands would not be deprived of children by wives who were vain, fearful, or

otherwise unwilling to become mothers.²

The earliest Christian objections to abortion were raised on neither of these humanitarian grounds, but on speculation about the soul—its origin, its existence in time, and its ultimate destiny. Perhaps the most perplexing question was When does the soul enter the body?

Tertullian believed that the soul (*anima*) came into existence with the body as a biological transmission from Adam. In reality, he believed it came through one's immediate parents but could be traced back to Adam.³

Clement of Alexandria held that the soul was immediately and directly created by God. His view was known as "creationism."⁴

Augustine of Hippo presented the view that no soul was present in the fetus until "quickening"—that moment when the mother-to-be could detect the baby moving around within her body.⁵

Later, during the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas formulated the predominant medieval view that the soul is not created at conception but when it is "infused" into the body. Infusion occurred around the fortieth day in the male embryo and at about the eightieth day in the female embryo.⁶

One can readily understand why there has been so much confusion over abortion when we consider the confusion over the nature of man.

When does life begin?

Conception: One who holds that "personhood" begins at conception erects a psychological ladder to support his argument: "At conception man is called a zygote; at implantation, an embryo; at two months' gestation, a fetus; at birth, a baby; at fifteen years, a juvenile; and at twenty-one years, an adult. Zygote, embryo, and fetus are mere descriptions of a man at different stages of his development."⁷

About seven to nine days after conception, contact with the uterus is made, and nourishment begins. Already there are several hundred cells formed before the implantation. Blood cells form at 17 days and a heart as early as 18 days. The heart begins to pulsate irregularly at 24 days, and a week later smooths out into rhythmic contractions. The zygote becomes an embryo upon implantation and is called by this name until the third month. From that time on it is a fetus.

Brain waves have been noted at 43 days (of course the brain was formed earlier), and organs such as heart, liver, and kidneys are already functioning. After the eighth week, no further organs will form. From this point until adulthood, when full growth is achieved somewhere between 25 and 27 years, the changes in the body will be mainly those of dimension and gradual refinement. At the end of the first month the embryo is about a quarter-inch long and by birth will have increased its weight six billion times from what it was to begin with.

Fetus: Those who hold that human life begins with the fetal stage admit that all tissue, including fetal tissue, is made up of living cells composed of the same chemicals. Yet, fetal tissue is unique. "Of all the tissues in the body, it alone has a fixed genetic makeup different from that of the body in which it is lodged. A woman cannot say of fetal tissue, this is mine, in the sense she can say of her kidney tissue, this is mine. She cannot keep it, any more than she can give it to someone else; she must surrender it in birth—or die."⁸

Quickening: Very few today hold that life begins at quickening. Modern science has proved that any law based on quickening is based upon shifting sands—a subjective standard differing even among races.⁹ The fetus actually moves before this time. But some courts and legislatures have continued to consider quickening as the point when life is magically infused into the unknown.¹⁰

Viability: This is a commonly held view among many physicians today. As used with abortion, it means the capability of the newborn infant to live outside the womb. In the past, viability was thought to be approximately twenty-eight weeks. Thanks to modern science, this has now

been brought down to around twenty weeks. Some predict it will be brought as low as twelve weeks by the turn of the century.¹¹

Birth and breath: Other doctors prefer to equate humanity and "personhood" with the first breath, holding that it is at this moment that God gives not only life but the offer of life.¹²

However, we must consider four important facts. (1) A unique 46-chromosomal pattern is present from the moment of conception. (2) The placenta, the fluid in the sac, and the cord are all organs of the body; (3) attachment does not make the child part of the mother any more than a car becomes part of the pump filling it with gas. (4) The mother provides the same protective environment outside the womb as she did inside, including nourishment. (Note: there is no exchange of blood.) Actually, dependency is such a relative term I question whether it can ever be used to determine "personhood."

A basic issue

A basic issue in the abortion controversy concerns identity of the zygote-embryo-fetus. But does this identity depend upon a separate entity called a soul? James Barr notes: "The soul is not an entity with a separate nature from the flesh and possessing or capable of a life on its own. Rather it is the life animating the flesh. Soul and flesh do not therefore go separate ways, but the flesh expresses outwardly the life or soul. . . . Man does not have a soul, HE IS A SOUL."¹³

The Old Testament offers no indication of a separate soul. "The body was not something really extraneous to the soul. It was the man in action. A man was not like an angel driving a body about. It never occurred to a Hebrew to think of man as a soul, who had to carry around a piece of luggage called a body. A man was animated flesh."¹⁴ With this view in mind, when does man acquire that special something called a "soul"? The answer: He doesn't! Man is a living soul. The early church picked up the Hellenistic concept of the soul and body being two separate parts and thus caused confusion. "The speculations are myriad because the supposition is false. Man is one being, whole man, image of God from beginning to end and

presenting a body and soul aspect. Man begins one, is born one, dies one, and this is the glorious promise and sure hope—he is resurrected one."¹⁵

Thus we return to a question basic to the abortion debate: When does man begin? The Bible presents a holistic view of man. Nowhere does it support a body-soul dualism. Man, Biblically understood, is both a biological organism and a responsible self.

Circumstances and abortion

Before considering the question of circumstances and abortion, I would like to point out that our view of children is significant in our view of abortion. In the Bible, children were viewed as a gift from God. A man was greatly blessed if he had a large family (see Judges 8:30). In other words, children were an asset. The more children one had, the greater his economic status was likely to be. This remained the predominant view down through history until the past few decades. Suddenly the world is overpopulated! The child has become a liability rather than an asset. He is no longer viewed as a blessing from God, but as an unwanted by-product of sexual pleasure. Thus, the views that lead to contraception cannot help but carry over into our attitude concerning abortion.

This is not to suggest that contraception is wrong. Obviously contraception involves the "possible" person (and thus becomes an option of the husband and wife), while abortion involves the fetus (or zygote-embryo-fetus) as a "potential" person.¹⁶ Therefore, the decision not to conceive children is much different from the decision to terminate life. But can we fully separate ourselves from this mind-set of convenience? Can we look upon the "potential" person as an asset when obviously it is a liability?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists agreed on three reasons for therapeutic abortion (before the Supreme Court ruling of 1972):¹⁷

1) When the life of the mother is threatened or her health is seriously impaired.

2) When the conception is the result of rape or incest.

3) When indications are that the child will have grave physical deformities or mental retardation.

What of the mental health of the mother-to-be as grounds for abortion? In support of this position, almost 90 percent of the members of the American Psychiatric Association favor abortion if there is a significant risk to the mental or emotional health of the mother.¹⁸

But is it a sound assumption that abortion is going to cure her mental problems? Recent studies show that it compounds the problem. "Many psychiatrists now believe that the risk of suicide for women who have had abortions is much greater than for women who have not had abortions."¹⁹ "The psychically normal find it more difficult to stand the stress of a legal abortion. This means that the greater the psychiatric indications for a legal abortion are, the greater is also the risk of unfavorable psychic sequelae after the operation."²⁰

It seems evident that we must exercise extreme caution before we advise abortion on psychiatric grounds. There is much more at stake in the mother's mental health than her immediate situation.

The deformed fetus

Another commonly held reason for abortion concerns the deformity (or possible deformity) of the fetus. This question confronts us with an equation involving quality versus quantity of life. At what stage does a fetus become abnormal? How many faculties must be distorted? Who makes this decision? the government? the individual? the A.M.A.?

Because of problems in accurately detecting deformities in the unborn child, some have opted for infanticide as a more logical and humane method of controlling deformed individuals. Of course mathematical probability offers more than just a clue to deformity. But what if the fetus was normal? Does anyone ever say to the aborted mother, "I'm sorry, but your fetus was normal and you would have delivered a perfectly healthy child"? In the case of the mother who has German measles, the chances are 50-50 that the child will have from one to five serious deformities. Not very good odds, so abortion may be given serious consideration. Yet what about the 50 percent that would have been born normal?

What about the child who suffers deformity after birth? What if he is

afflicted with a debilitating disease that causes grave deformity after he is one or two years old? Is that child removed, as well? We are treading on dangerous ground when we consider eugenic engineering. Yet we recoil at the prospect of bringing into this world a badly deformed child that will never enjoy the quality of life God intended us to have. Once again we are faced with a dilemma. At best, the choice must be made with extreme caution and certainly much prayer, while we remember that the real choice is between being abnormal or being destroyed.

Conclusions and controversy

Other factors that should bear on our decision of whether to abort concern the woman undergoing the abortion. In most cases her emotional strain is much greater than in childbirth. There is danger that she will be unable to conceive again. Subsequent babies are more likely to be premature. Abortees suffer more menstrual irregularities and more miscarriages. These factors alone would suggest a search for alternatives to abortion: in the preventive category, sex-education and birth-control procedures (though some of these would be classified by Roman Catholics and others as another form of abortion); marriage (unwed mothers account for a high percentage of abortions); motherhood (the stigma of the unwed mother is not so great today as even a decade ago); adoption.

Of course, many would include other factors: the age of the abortee, her health and economic status, the health of the father, other children in the home, abnormality of the fetus, whether the child is wanted and what the home offers it, whether the fetus is the product of incest or rape, and whether the mother is in the first trimester of the pregnancy.

Inspired counsel

The Christian will turn to the Bible for guidance in his decision. It would be nice to find a text that says simply, "Thou shalt not abort." But guidance is not that direct, though some would find the equivalent in the command, "Thou shalt not kill." Certainly the Bible's pervasive regard for life will be material in our decision. The Bible emphasizes that God is the Giver of life; that all life, including the fetus, develops be-

cause of God's power; that every living soul belongs to Him; that innocent blood should not be shed. And we will wish to consider Christ's revelation that all law finds its fulfillment in love of God and love of neighbor. Could it be significant, ultimately, that love is more a condition of the heart than an accumulation of facts?

I have found helpful the conclusion of R. F. R. Gardner, a gynecologist confronted often (as few of us are) with the dilemma inherent in abortion: "The human fetus is not merely a mass of cells or an organic growth. At the most, it is an actual human life or at the least, a potential and developing human life." "When a pregnancy threatens the well-being of a patient and her family I will explore the threat just as thoroughly as I would a fever, a fibroid uterus, or an ovarian cyst. Then it becomes a matter of seeking the Lord's will in each particular case. I am confident that He can guide me in these decisions as He does in other areas of life."²¹

In the final analysis, what more can we do?

¹⁸ Harmon L. Smith, *Ethics and the New Medicine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 26-28.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*
²⁰ Tertullian, "De Anima," 27 (J. P. Migne, ed.), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* (Paris: Apud Garnier Fratres, 1879), Vol. II, p. 694.

²¹ Clement of Alexandria, "Stomata," IV, 6, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), Vol. II, pp. 413-416.

²² Augustine, "De Anima et ejus Origine," *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Philip Schaff, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), Vol. V, pp. 315-317.

²³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), Part I, q. 118, arts. 1-3.

²⁴ Clifford E. Bajema, *Abortion and the Meaning of Personhood* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), pp. 36, 37.

²⁵ Paul K. Jewett, "The Relation of the Soul to the Fetus," *Christianity Today* (Nov. 8, 1968), p. 6.

²⁶ Bajema, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁹ Robert H. Williams, "Our Role in the Generation, Modification and Termination of Life," *Archives of Internal Medicine* (1969).

³⁰ R. F. R. Gardner, *Abortion: The Personal Dilemma* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 110.

³¹ Lewis B. Smedes, "Christ and His Body," *Reformed Journal*, vol. 17, No. 3 (March, 1968), p. 16.

³² Bajema, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 35.

³³ John Pelt, "A Study of the Total Person in Contraception and Abortion," an unpublished doctoral dissertation (Fuller Theological Seminary, Dec., 1969), p. 155.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 148.

³⁶ Bajema, *op. cit.*, pp. 69, 70.

³⁷ M. Ekblad, "Psychiatric Indications for Therapeutic Abortion and Sterilization," *Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology* (1964), 7:67.

³⁸ Gardner, *op. cit.*, pp. 87, 130.

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An Unborn Child to His Mother

Bill Drake

Flesh of your flesh,
Breathing your air, eating, when you do.
With you working, resting, laughing, crying,
Almost inseparable, closer than any lover,
I am your child, you are my Mother.

I have never seen you -
Oh I have eyes (your color),
But in this dark and sheltered place,
They do not need to see -
I know that you are there, for I am here.

Such a fine small universe, all dreamy and soft.
When loud noises startle me sometimes,
The gentle rhythms of your body
Put me back to sleep again.
I am safe here.

I have lips, I smile and suck my thumb.
I can't talk yet,
You must give me time to learn your language:
You must wait to hear me say "I love you."

I am young and weak
And depend on you for everything.
For many years I will hold your hand and gain strength,
Then when you are old and weak,
You can lean on me.

You cannot come to me, so I will come to you.
I will come and we will laugh and play and sing together.
If you will teach me wisdom, I will teach you innocence.

Though flesh of your flesh, eyes your color,
I am the "it" you're not sure you want.
How do you know yet?
You judge me too soon.

Please let me see the light and your face.
Let me sleep in your arms
Let me crawl and walk and run free
(With a look backward for reassurance).
Let me become what I am, be what I am becoming.
Then decide.

I'm not too young to die,
But I won't die easy.
I will be there in your dreams,
Calling in the night, staying close, whispering
"I am the I that will be -- let me be."

April 24, 1978