

## Christian Ethics: Lesson 2

### Abortion

#### I. Introduction:

Abortion is arguably the single most politically, morally, and emotionally charged issue of our time. Not since the national discussion on slavery has this country been so overwhelmingly divided on a single issue.

A. Why do many of pro-choice advocates feel so strongly about abortion? In their mind what are the stakes?

B. Why do many of the pro-life persuasion so vehemently oppose abortion?

While many in evangelicalism want to side step the issue, or posit a compromise to “reduce the number of abortions” we must directly confront the ethics of abortion. Given the emotional power of the arguments on all sides this can be difficult to do. A woman who has had an abortion will stop at nothing to defend herself against the charge of murder. The survivor of a botched abortion will proclaim that her life proves that young lives have value. But a biblical ethic must move beyond anecdotes and allegations. God’s word must settle the issue. Fortunately, the Bible gives us much direction and insight regarding the sanctity of human life and the morality of abortion.

#### II. Definition:

By definition an abortion involves an “expulsion of the human fetus ... before it is capable of surviving outside the womb.”<sup>1</sup> Broadly speaking there are two kinds of abortion: spontaneous and induced. A spontaneous abortion takes place naturally without any external intervention. For instance a fertilized egg may implant itself in the mother’s womb but is expelled during her monthly period.

At issue in this discussion is the induced abortion – one brought about by external medical means.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, *Biblical Answers to Contemporary Issues* (Chicago: Moody, 1991) 85.

### **III. Abortion Procedures:**

#### **A. Suction Aspiration**

This procedure is used in 80 percent of first trimester abortions. With the mouth of the cervix is dilated the doctor inserts a hollow tube with a knifelike edged tip into the womb. A suction force 28 times stronger than a vacuum cleaner literally tears the developing baby to pieces and sucks the remains into a container.

#### **B. Dilation and Curettage**

Dilation and curettage (commonly called D&C) is a procedure which involves dilating the cervix with a series of instruments to allow the insertion of a curette—a loop-shaped knife—into the womb. The instrument is used to scrape the placenta from the uterus and then cut the baby apart. The pieces are then drawn through the cervix. The tiny body must then be reassembled by an attending nurse to make sure no parts remain in the womb to cause infection.

#### **C. Saline Injection**

Saline injection, also known as “salt-poisoning,” is an abortion procedure which involves removing some of the amniotic fluid surrounding the baby and replacing it with a toxic, saline solution. The baby then breathes and swallows the solution. In one or two hours the unborn child dies from salt poisoning, dehydration, and hemorrhaging. The mother goes into labor about 24 hours later and delivers a dead (or dying) baby.

#### **D. Hysterotomy**

During the last three months of pregnancy, abortions are performed by hysterotomy, which involves opening the womb surgically and removing the baby as in a Caesarean section. However, the purpose of this procedure is to end the infant’s life. Instead of being cared for, the baby is wrapped in a blanket, set aside, and allowed to die.

#### **E. Prostaglandin**

This abortion procedure involves the use of chemicals developed by the Upjohn Pharmaceutical Company. Prostaglandin hormones, injected into the womb or released in a vaginal suppository, cause the uterus to contract and deliver the child prematurely—too

young to survive. A saline solution is sometimes injected first, killing the baby before birth, in order to make the procedure less distressful for the mother and medical staff.<sup>2</sup>

#### **F. RU 486**

Also known as the morning after pill, this is taken orally with the intent of blocking certain hormones which allow the fertilized egg to develop normally in the womb. While it is labeled the morning after pill, it is most effective when taken between week seven and nine of gestation. The obvious appeal of this drug is that it allows for a non invasive abortion procedure; however research has shown that the fatality rate is at least fourteen times higher than such-aspiration abortions.<sup>3</sup>

#### **IV. History:**

Beginning in 1973 a series of court rulings has defined the shape of the practice of abortion in this country. A brief survey of the rulings will give us a better understanding of the current legal situation.<sup>4</sup>

##### **A. Roe v. Wade (1973)<sup>10</sup>**

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that an unborn child is the property of the mother. It concluded that she might dispose of it for any reason during the first six months of pregnancy, and at any other time (last trimester) if, in the opinion of a single licensed physician, it is necessary to preserve her life and health. During the first three months of pregnancy, abortion may not be regulated. During the second trimester, it may be regulated only with reference to the protection of the “mother’s” health.

- In this ruling how did the court’s majority view the life of the child?
  
- Why do you suppose they supported increasing regulations as the child progressed through gestation?

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<sup>2</sup> J. Carl Laney, “The Abortion Epidemic: America’s Silent Holocaust” *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 139*. Dallas Theological Seminary, 1982; 2002, S. 139:343-344

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RU\\_486](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RU_486)

<sup>4</sup> Michel A. Grisanti, “The Abortion Dilemma”: *Master's Seminary Journal Volume 11*. Master's Seminary, 2000; 2003, S. 11:171-173

<sup>10</sup> 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

**B. Doe v. Bolton (1973)<sup>11</sup>**

In a companion case decided on the same day as *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court struck down a Georgia law that placed several limitations on abortion. Any attempts to place limits on a woman's right to an abortion had to conform to "a compelling state interest." It is important to note that the Supreme Court justices interpreted the mother's health to include her psychological and emotional health in addition to her physical health.

- Why is it significant that the term health was expanded to include psychological and mental health? How has this impacted our nation's abortion policy?

**C. Planned Parenthood v. Danforth (1977)<sup>12</sup>**

This case removed some of the limits that had been placed on abortion by *Roe v. Wade* (e.g., spousal consent, parental consent for a minor child). The woman and her physician were the only ones legally involved in the decision-making process.

**D. Webster v. Reproductive Health Services (1989)<sup>13</sup>**

This case represented one of the first significant limits on an individual's right to an abortion. Reversing certain lower court decisions, the Supreme Court upheld a Missouri law that prohibited the use of public funds or medical facilities for "non-therapeutic" abortions. Building on the Hyde Amendment that dealt with the use of federal funds for abortions, this case concerned the right of states to limit or prohibit the use of tax funds to pay for abortions.

**E. Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992)<sup>14</sup>**

Pro-choice proponents brought this case to the Supreme Court to protest limitations placed on abortion in the state of Pennsylvania (Casey was the governor of the state). The state law in question required that a woman seeking an abortion give informed consent after receiving certain relevant information 24 hours before the procedure (explanation of procedure, risks of abortion, probable gestational age of fetus), informed parental consent for a minor child, and evidence of spousal notification. Pro-life advocates regarded this case as the best opportunity to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and pro-choice proponents hoped that the Supreme Court would strike down all the limitations. Neither side was totally satisfied with the outcome. The Supreme Court did not overturn *Roe v. Wade* but retained all the limitations except the spousal notification feature.

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<sup>11</sup> 410 U.S. 179 (1973).

<sup>12</sup> 428 U.S. 52 (1977).

<sup>13</sup> 109 S. Ct. 3040 (1989).

<sup>14</sup> 112 S. Ct. 2791 (1992).

## F. Clinton's Withdrawal of Executive Support for the Unborn

Although it does not belong to the legal/court history of the abortion battle, one should remember President Clinton's contribution to this debate. On January 20, 1993, while the annual protest against *Roe v. Wade* was going on outside the White House, President Clinton reversed more than a decade of executive support for the unborn with one stroke of the pen.<sup>15</sup> He signed an executive order that did three things:

- He lifted the "gag rule" that had prohibited workers in federally funded health clinics from mentioning abortion as an alternative to dealing with an unwanted pregnancy.
- He lifted the federal prohibition against performing abortions on military bases and in military hospitals.
- He ended the moratorium on federal funding for research that utilizes fetal tissue procured from induced abortions.

However, in his two terms as president George W. Bush has reversed this order and increased federal restrictions on abortion.<sup>5</sup>

## G. *Stenberg v. Carhart* (2000)<sup>16</sup>

At least 30 states have passed a ban on partial-birth abortions. Shortly after Nebraska passed a law of this kind (June 1997), a physician who performs abortions, Leroy Carhart, filed a complaint challenging the constitutionality of the statute. In September of 1999, the 8th Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals declared Nebraska's partial-birth abortion law unconstitutional.<sup>17</sup> On January 14, 2000, the Supreme Court agreed to hear its first partial-birth abortion case, *Stenberg v. Carhart*. Attorneys for both sides presented oral arguments for the case on April 25, 2000, and the court rendered a decision on June 28, 2000, overturning Nebraska's ban on partial-birth abortions by a 5–4 vote. Supreme Court justice Stephen Breyer, writing for the majority, affirmed that the Nebraska law results in an "undue burden upon a woman's right to make an abortion decision."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Rae, *Moral Choices* 117.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/1023/p01s02-usju.html>

<sup>16</sup> 16. 99–830. For a brief summary of this case and the perspective of Planned Parenthood, see <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/library/facts/stenberg.html>.

<sup>17</sup> For the full text of this case presented at the state level to the U.S. District Court, see <http://lw.bna.com/lw/19970909/3205a.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> [Http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/scotus\\_partialbirthruling\\_000628.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/scotus_partialbirthruling_000628.html).

## **V. Positions On Abortion:**

### **A. Always:**

Various factors relate to a woman's determination to have an abortion. Some of the reasons include but are not limited to:

- Therapeutic: The life of the mother may be at risk if she carries the child to term.
- Eugenic: The baby is retarded or handicapped.
- Psychiatric: The mother's mental health may be damaged.
- Socio-economic: The birth of the child would thrust economic hardship upon the child.
- Violation: The pregnancy resulted from rape or incest.

### **B. Rarely:**

An abortion may be allowed if the mother's life is at risk, as is the case with ectopic or tubal pregnancies. This occurs when the fertilized egg becomes lodged in the fallopian tube. The doctor has only two options:

1. Intervene by surgically removing the child in order to save the mother's life.
2. Do nothing and allow both the mother and the baby to die.

Please note that there is abundant medical information that no ectopic/tubal pregnancy has ever resulted in a live birth.

Other pro life advocates permit abortion in the case of rape or incest. In their mind it is unfair to force a victim of sexual abuse to live with the consequence of such an action for nine months.

### **C. Never:**

Under absolutely no circumstance should any woman have an abortion.

## VI. Biblical Response:

### A. The Prohibition Against Murder:

***Exodus 20:13 “You shall not murder.***

Pro Life and Pro Choice advocates both affirm that murder is wrong. However, at issue in abortion is whether or not the fetus/unborn child constitutes a person. While this question has been oft discussed philosophically<sup>6</sup> or biologically<sup>7</sup> as Christians we must settle the matter biblically.

### B. When Does God Ascribe Personhood:

1. Personhood is continuous; it occurs before and after birth.

***Genesis 4:1 (ESV)***

***<sup>1</sup> Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.”***

- Why is it significant that Eve “conceived and bore” Cain? In other words, when did Cain become Cain?

2. God “knew” certain people before birth.

***Psalms 139:13-16 For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb.***

***<sup>14</sup> I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; <sup>16</sup> Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.***

- What was God’s sentiment towards David when he was in His mother’s womb? How does this help to clarify the origin of personhood?

*The Bible never speaks of fetal life as mere chemical activity, cellular growth, or a vague force. Rather, the fetus in the mother’s womb is described by the psalmist in vivid pictorial language as being shaped, fashioned, molded, and woven together by the personal activity of God. That*

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<sup>6</sup> The only difference between a fetus and a human are the size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency.

<sup>7</sup> The fetus is a genetically unique individual.

*is, as God formed Adam from the dust of the ground, so He is actively involved in fashioning the fetus in the womb.*<sup>8</sup>

3. King David Was a Sinner from Conception:

***Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.***

- How does this verse contribute to our understanding of when a person becomes a person?

4. John the Baptist Reacted Personally While Inside Elizabeth's Womb:

***Luke 1:44 "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.***

- How does this verse contribute to our understanding of when a person becomes a person?

C. **Exodus 21:22-24:** A Special Case:

***Exodus 21:22-24*** <sup>22</sup> *"If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide.* <sup>23</sup> *"But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, <sup>24</sup> eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot"*

*This is an oft debated passage with two potential interpretations. Both of which point to the fact that God values the life of the unborn child.*

1. *Miscarriage interpretation*

According to this interpretation, if a pregnant woman attempts to break up a fight, and in the ruckus the men send her into labor, a fine is to be levied on account of a miscarriage. However, if further damage is done to the woman, the Law of Retribution or *Lex Talionis*<sup>9</sup> applies.

- a. The problems with this interpretation are many. The usual term for miscarriage is not used in this text but the normal term for live child birth.

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<sup>8</sup>The Master's Seminary: *Master's Seminary Journal Volume 11*. Master's Seminary, 2000; 2003, S. 11:179

<sup>9</sup> Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, etc.



- b. The text makes no distinction between the harm done either to the mother or the child. It merely addresses cases of injury or no injury without a subject stated. If only the mother was in view, the Hebrew would use the feminine pronouns “she” or “her.”
  - c. Even if one assumes the above interpretation is true, the text does not condone abortion. In abortion there is a purposeful and intentional execution and removal of the child.
  - d. Even if you agree with the above interpretation, you would still have to conclude that the death of the infant is evil as God requires punishment for causing a miscarriage.
  - e. If the above interpretation were correct it is in keeping with the law of Moses which normally does not require the death penalty for accidental death (**Ex. 21:13-14, 20-21; Num. 35:10-34; Deut. 19:1-13**).
  - f. The text cannot argue that a fetus is less than human because there is a lesser penalty for ending its life. For instance, in the preceding context a master who accidentally kills his slave escapes without penalty (**Ex. 21:20-21**) but this does not mean that the slave is less than human.<sup>10</sup>
2. The *Premature live child birth* view of **Exodus 21:22-25** teaches that in a safe premature death a fine is levied. But in the next verse if harm is done to the child/mother then a judge will require an “eye for an eye.” Consequently, if the child dies the men who unintentionally sent the mother into labor will receive the death penalty. The fact that the death penalty is reserved for first and second degree murder and not manslaughter shows that God places a greater premium on the life of the child and His mother.
- a. The normal Hebrew word for miscarriage is not used in this text but the normal word for live child birth (see **Gen. 25:26; 38:28-30**).
  - b. Moses knew the normal word for miscarriage. He used it both before and after this text, but he did not use it here which tells us he did not have a miscarriage in mind, but premature live birth (see **Gen. 31:38; Ex. 23:26; Job 2:10**).

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<sup>10</sup> Jack Hughes, Abortion: Biblical Principles for Key Social Issues:  
[http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/teaching/key\\_social\\_issues\\_2007/7%20Abortion.pdf](http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/teaching/key_social_issues_2007/7%20Abortion.pdf)

- c. The word “injury” in **vv. 22-23** is indefinite in that it does not designate either the mother or the child. Because the term is ambiguous we know that it is talking about both the mother and the child.<sup>11</sup>
- d. According to the case law listed above, what would happen if the woman miscarried and the baby died?
- e. What does this suggest about how God esteems the unborn child?
- f. With what authority can we say abortion is wrong and why?

## VII. Difficult Circumstances:

### A. The Mother’s Health:

A point of clarification, when we speak of a Mother’s health we limit it to the mother’s physical well being (precluding economic situation or mental health). Statistically, situations when a pregnancy seriously threatens the life of the mother are rare. One such possibility is an ectopic pregnancy where gestation takes place outside the uterus in a fallopian tube. If the baby is not removed both he and the mother will die. In my view one is not guilty for failing to do something which they are not free to do. In the case of an ectopic pregnancy, the woman cannot save the life of the child.

Therefore, while it may be a courageous action for the mother to refuse an abortion and die along with the baby, she is not morally obligated to do so. Secondly, the value of life may lead her to terminate the baby who will die anyway to save her own life. In no way does this justify abortion on demand, and it is an exceptionally rare circumstance which will be more rare with improving technology. C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General of the U.S. and a leading pediatric surgeon, has stated, “In my thirty-six years in pediatric surgery I have never known of one instance where the child had to be aborted to save the mother’s life.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jack Hughes, *Abortion: Biblical Principles for Key Social Issues*:

[http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/teaching/key\\_social\\_issues\\_2007/7%20Abortion.pdf](http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/teaching/key_social_issues_2007/7%20Abortion.pdf)

<sup>12</sup>Michael Grisanti, “The Abortion Dilemma,” *The Master’s Seminary: Master’s Seminary Journal Volume 11*. Master’s Seminary, 2000; 2003, S. 11:188

## B. Pregnancies Caused by Rape/Incest:

Undoubtedly, victims of these crimes feel tremendous humiliation, shame, and anger. And the unborn child will be a reminder of the sexual abuse. In addition, an act of incest increases the risk of a severely handicapped child. Yet, the circumstances of the conception have no bearing on whether or not the unborn is a human, or if the termination of his life is murder. It is never right to commit an act of evil to achieve good. Two wrongs do not make a right. Secondly, while rape and incest are acts of violence against the mother, so is abortion against the child. Thirdly, abortion is still murder. Fourthly, it is never right to commit murder to alleviate the distress of the mother. Fifth, asking the mother to bear the child is not a lack of compassion, rather it shows deep compassion towards the child and the mother who will not have the looming guilt of an abortion on her conscience.

- Besides abortion, what other options does a woman impregnated by rape or incest have at her disposal?

## C. Pregnancies Facing Fetal Handicaps.

Taking care of a handicapped child is an enormous task to take on which requires tremendous sacrifice. Therefore, we should not be trite when addressing this issue. Secondly, handicaps cover a wide range, some extreme and mild. In some cases, a baby may only have three to four hours of life after birth. While this is a painful experience for any parent, an abortion is not moral. Life and death are in God's hands and not man's, and we have not right to take someone's life. In addition, how we treat the handicapped children will have a shaping influence on our society's view of life. If we abort such children who are deemed as a burden to society, what will stop us in the future from terminating the lives of others for some other reason? Taking an innocent life no matter how crippled is forbidden by God. And obeying this command may come at a high price, but God is always worthy of our obedience.<sup>13</sup>

## VIII. Thought Questions:

- A. What are some common reasons for having an abortion?

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<sup>13</sup>Feinberg, John S. ; Feinberg, Paul D. ; Huxley, Aldous: *Ethics for a Brave New World*. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 1996, c1993, S. 77

A 1998 aggregated study, from 27 countries, on the reasons women seek to terminate their pregnancies concluded that common factors cited to have influenced the abortion decision were: desire to delay or end childbearing, concern over the interruption of work or education, issues of financial or relationship stability, and perceived immaturity.<sup>14</sup>

B. Biblically speaking, why do many women and couples choose to have an abortion?

***James 4:2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.***

C. What kinds of actions should the horror and reality of abortion lead us to take?

D. What do you think of this statement “I am personally opposed to abortion, but I can’t make that decision for someone else”?

E. Should our goal as Christians be simply to “reduce the number of abortions”?

F. What are some practical steps we can take to reverse this moral evil?

## **IX. Conclusion:**

God’s Word clearly teaches that abortion is murder of the worst kind. The termination of innocent life incenses our Lord, the creator and giver of life. Yet, for those who have had an abortion, do not let God’s displeasure towards this sin drive you away from the cross. The fact of the matter is that all of us, to a certain degree have committed murder (***Matt. 5:21-26***). Paul himself assisted in the murder of innocent Christians. Though abortion is abhorrent to God, our Lord has an abundance of mercy to forgive even this most heinous act.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion>

## Appendix 1:

**A classic argument used by pro-abortionists** to defend a woman's right to do what she wants with her body is found in Judith Jarvis Thomson's "A Defense of Abortion." She asks the reader to imagine awakening to find that he or she is in bed with a famous violinist who is unconscious. The violinist has a fatal kidney ailment, and only you have the right blood type to help. Therefore, while you slept, his blood was passed through your system to cleanse it. To unplug him would kill him. You express your displeasure with the set-up, but are advised that it will only take nine months to complete your task. Thus, the question you are faced with is simple. Since all persons have a right to life, are you morally obligated to spend the next nine months of your life keeping this world-famous violinist alive? Thomson's answer is no. [Thomson's reasoning is as follows,] She claims that even if the fetus has a right to life, the mother's right to control her own body outweighs the right of the child. The mother and child are not seeking control of a body that has unfortunately been rented to both of them. Rather, the mother owns the house. The child is the intruder.<sup>6</sup> Judith Thomson has tried to use this argument to support a woman's right to do what she wants with her own body. Problems with her argument and reasoning are listed below.<sup>15</sup>

1. The violinist is a stranger, but an unborn child is not, they are blood relatives of the mother.
2. The woman is bed ridden for nine months which is not the case in a typical pregnancy.
3. The woman and the violinist are linked together deceptively without consent of the woman while a pregnancy is the natural outcome of willful intercourse. Feinberg has written, "whenever a woman consents to sexual intercourse, she must understand that she is consenting, explicitly or implicitly, to becoming pregnant if that should eventuate. Adult privileges and pleasures include adult responsibilities!"
4. The violinist's need for the woman's body is not something the woman is responsible for, but the woman is responsible for the life of her own child.
5. In Thomson's example the woman can willfully unhook herself, but an abortion requires the assistance of others.
6. Thomson's illustration would be more analogous if: 1) The violinist was the woman's son or daughter. 2) If the woman only had to be hooked up to them at night, not twenty-four hours a day. 3) If the woman volunteered for the procedure.

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<sup>15</sup>Feinberg, John S. ; Feinberg, Paul D. ; Huxley, Aldous: *Ethics for a Brave New World*. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 1996, c1993, S. 67

Without these alterations Thomson's example most closely resembles pregnancy caused from rape.

7. Thomson argues that a woman's "ownership" of her body gives her the right to kill her baby. We have a right to own property in our country, but we do not have a right to kill trespassers or guests whom we have invited to come onto our property. Ownership does not give us the right to kill others, on the contrary, if someone gets hurt on our property we are held liable.
8. Finally, Thomson's illustration fails to address a person's moral duty. The sixth commandment "you shall not murder" requires two moral responsibilities. First, the responsibility not to terminate life. Secondly, the responsibility to preserve life. Abortion is the willful act of ending the life of another.
9. **Conclusion** The illustration by Thomson is but one of many that might be examined. Though popular, and often referred to as a classic argument, it fails to hold up under close examination.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Jack Hughes, Abortion: Biblical Principles for Key Social Issues:  
[http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/teaching/key\\_social\\_issues\\_2007/7%20Abortion.pdf](http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/teaching/key_social_issues_2007/7%20Abortion.pdf)

## Appendix: 2

During my two-year stint in Hungary, I had the opportunity to tour much of Europe. One of my most memorable excursions was a day trip my friends and I took during a stay in Krakow, Poland, to visit Auschwitz.

The mere mention of Auschwitz can change the tone of a conversation, as it is the infamous scene of one of the foremost manifestations of evil the world has ever known. Millions of Jews and others deemed less than human were abducted from their homes, transported to death camps, and systematically slaughtered. Such a crime evokes rage, indignation, and sorrow in one's heart, and on that clear summer day, as I walked through the iron gates of Auschwitz into a tranquil sanctuary devoted to the memory of lost lives, I wondered how millions of Poles and Germans could look the other way in the midst of such atrocity. Some, I figured, may have been uninformed; but most of the population chose to ignore their suspicions—whether out of fear for their lives, their possessions, or simply because it was inconvenient.

The visit to the camp was stirring and powerful, but it was a conversation with my friends as we departed that left the most profound impact on me and changed my outlook on our own silent holocaust. As much as we despise the Nazis for their crimes against humanity, and deride those who looked the other way for their hatred and willful ignorance, in reality we must look to ourselves and our nation as well, as we continue to tolerate the murder of millions of unborn children. Every day in America, four thousand little lives are poisoned, ripped, and scraped away. Just as the Nazis exterminated those it deemed subhuman, so too does our nation permit, protect, and aid in the slaughter of those it labels less than human.

Though I do not have the pages to give a thorough explanation of the biblical perspective on abortion, two premises from the Bible are crystal clear:

1. Murdering a human being is clearly wrong (cf. *Exo. 20:13*)
2. An unborn baby is a human being (*Job 31:13-15; Psa. 139:13*)

Though many Christians agree with this reasoning, many fail to act upon it. When the Germans chose not to take a stand against what they knew to be wrong, by their silence they consorted with Himmler and Hess in allowing their plan of mass murder to go

unimpeded. As more and more Christians surrender their swords and accept abortion as a fact of life, our nation is becoming more like these Germans. When Christians choose not to speak out and oppose abortion, we allow the moral consciousness of our country to be further deadened, and allow the slaughtering of babies to be met with little resistance. As the salt and light of the world, we must indict our countrymen of their sin. Let us prick our nation's conscience with the sword of the Spirit, hold out the promise of forgiveness in Jesus Christ, and pray that, Lord willing, they will repent, turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, and stop killing the unborn.