

ABORTION:
PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS
by Allan R. Bevere

Introduction

The motivation of this paper is the appearance of two rather recent books on the issue of abortion, both written by Christians who disagree on the subject. The first, edited by Anne Eggebroten,¹ takes a pro-abortion² position. The second text, edited by Paul Stallsworth,³ takes an anti-abortion position. Both have something important to say. In the final analysis I believe that the Stallsworth text says it better. Indeed, Stallsworth provides something that the abortion argument has lacked on both sides--theological reflection.⁵ This paper represents philosophical and theological reflections on abortion, enlivened by these two Christian and yet very different sources.

One prior note is important. I am rather uncomfortable with the philosophy/theology distinction as finally it is disastrous to draw too fine a differentiation between the two disciplines, just as it is disastrous to draw one between an argument as theological or biblical. Any good theology will employ sound philosophical reasoning and any competent philosophy will be theological in nature.⁶ Therefore I will proceed with several affirmations which are one and the same time philosophical and theological, without drawing any sharp line. Instead I will let philosophical reasoning and theological affirmation stand together as partners in the dialogue. I do not deny that the two disciplines should be differentiated, but in the final analysis I don't know how such a separation would look in the midst of an argument.

Decision is Not the Basis of Morality

It seems to me that one of the many flaws in the pro-abortion argument is that choice is the foundation of morality. Eggebroten affirms this when she states, "By the term procreative choice we mean the full range of conditions necessary to insure that a couple will have a child only when they decide to do so."⁷ Now at this point she is willing to include the father in on the decision, but of course, he is only in on it when he agrees with the mother. She notes, "Ideally procreative choice means both the father and the mother want the child. Should the two disagree on this decision the woman's choice must take precedence."⁸

We will return to the matter of giving the woman the sole choice in abortion in a little bit, but these statements reflect what is central to the pro-abortion argument-- "...the fundamental decision is whether women will be allowed to bear children by choice."⁹

The idea that decision is primary, indeed that freedom of decision is pri-

mary, reflects the modern doctrine of emotivism. MacIntyre defines emotivism as the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and specifically all moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character.¹⁰

What this means is that the philosophy of choice is in reality a kind of relativism that places the moral emphasis not on *what* choice is made, but rather on simply *having* the choice. So whether or not one has an abortion is an amoral matter. The morality of the issue rests on whether or not one has the choice in the first place. This makes the question of abortion or no abortion simply a matter of one's personal preference.¹¹

I submit that emotivism is false simply because no one can possibly live this way. Parents who raise children do not teach them simply to make decisions. They try to instill in them convictions that will assist them in making good decisions. A mother does not say to her five-year-old son, "Johnny, you have a choice. You may play in the yard or you may play in the street." Indeed, most of us would make the judgment that any parent who would give her/his child such a choice must be immoral, or at the least, quite ignorant to do so. What is at issue here is not the decision itself, but which decision is a good one. The weakness of the pro-abortion argument at this point is that it is not concerned primarily with whether or not abortion is good or bad. It is concerned primarily with whether or not one has the decision. It is the freedom to have the decision that the pro-abortion argument claims is good. In this respect the pro-abortion argument is at a disadvantage; for most who take this position want to argue that one should have freedom of choice even though abortion is not a good thing. One only need take note of the many statements in the Eggebroten text which confirm the view that abortion is not good.¹²

Now it is undoubtedly true that most pro-abortionists would object. They would counter that the woman should have the freedom to choose because abortion can be a good decision. I have yet to read, however, any pro-abortion argument that has ever claimed a particular abortion to be a bad decision, unless, of course, it was forced upon the woman by the father. Indeed, given the fact that the central issue is one of having choice, how can anyone criticize a woman who chooses to abort. Moreover, if anyone is to make the claim that abortion can be a good thing, then it stands to reason that there are abortions which must be judged as bad. But in the pro-abortion framework of argument this is nonsense, for the pro-abortion argument continually wants to lead us back, not to abortion itself as a good or bad thing, but the free decision itself. Thus, it must be concluded that the pro-abortion argument is one that is based on the issue of choice itself, not the issue of abortion. Abortion thus becomes a matter of personal preference. This is emotivism.

The Individual Does Not Reign Supreme

It is the emotivist orientation of the pro-abortion argument which leads to the conclusion that it is each individual woman who decides whether abortion is good or bad for her. Thus the pro-abortionist must reject the communal (ecclesiological) character of the New Testament which insists, first and foremost, that the community of the *ecclesia* is primary, and the individual who is part of the *ecclesia* is secondary. St. Paul writes,

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

The pro-abortion argument rejects Paul's communitarian perspective in favor of the anti-communitarian viewpoint embodied in Enlightenment philosophy. Contrary to what modernity may profess, we simply do not have a right over our own bodies, and there is something clearly amiss with the argument that such autonomy is biblical. It's almost incredible, therefore, that Eggebroten would state that the Bible "places full responsibility for creative choice in the hands of the parents" (though she really means only the mother).¹³

Yet the Bible, and then the church (rightly so) can tell us what do to with our bodies. It is not acceptable to commit adultery (Ex 5:18), it is not acceptable to have sexual intercourse with a prostitute (1 Cor. 6:15). God has a claim on our bodies. We are stewards of them. Just as we are stewards of this world and, therefore, not able to do whatever we want with it, so we are stewards of our bodies, and God expects us to treat them as God wants. It is acceptable for the church to tell us what to do with our genitals.¹⁴ Indeed, it is ultimately impossible to argue biologically that the unborn child is simply part of the woman's body. It is no more a part of the woman's body before birth than it is just after birth, as has been demonstrated in studies done in reference to neonates unable to bond physically with their mothers because of necessary medical treatment.

The "pro-choice" argument is simply an extension of the current radical privatization of American life. This kind of privatization is destroying the church in America as more and more Christians in America accept the false Lockean presumptions which makes the "pro-choice" position possible. It is no accident that the more and more Christians in America become more American, the more persuasive the pro-abortion argument appears to be (just as the early church became a little more lenient on abortion as it accommodated itself more and more to Caesar).¹⁵ A big part of this Americanization and modernization has been the

church's uncritical acceptance of the notion of rights. It is to this we now turn.

Inalienable Rights Is A False Notion

No doubt the heading of this section comes as quite a shock to most reading this. But the whole idea of rights is embedded in the Enlightenment individualism so critical to the pro-abortion position. The Eggebroten text simply assumes the existence of rights throughout. Of course, the dilemma for the anti-abortion view is that it operates with the same assumptions. The "right to choose" is pitted against the "right to life," and both sides then are locked in a vicious circle of never-ending debate. The primacy of the individual along with the related notion of rights has led to fragmented moral discourse framed in the context of disagreement. Indeed, because it is discussion based on individualism and individual rights the disagreements are very much incessant, not only in that the discussion never ends, but the arguments themselves are construed in such a way that there can finally be no agreement whatsoever. We live in a culture in which there is no rational way of securing moral agreement.¹⁶ The abortion argument is the epitome of this disagreement.¹⁷

Thus Hauerwas is correct to insist that the church must move beyond rights in its moral discussion.¹⁸ Rights language is completely unhelpful in securing any kind of moral consensus; for it is intrinsically designed this way. It is critical to note that there is no way in our culture to decide what is a right and what is not a right. There are no criteria. We simply pit rights against rights-- the right to life against the right to choose, the right to smoke against the right to breathe clean air, the rights of employers against the rights of employees, the rights of animals against the rights of people to survive and flourish. What this has created is a selfish people who get exactly what they want-- freedom. It is a freedom, however, that costs us much; for in our autonomy not only do we discover that we are enslaved to our whims and desires, but we also see that in order to secure our freedom we must by necessity coerce others. Eggebroten fails to realize this when she argues,

We need to emphasize the sacredness of life in our society, but trying to establish laws and punishments in this area is likely to set up a negative reaction that will actually inhibit learning about the sanctity of human life. The Bible presents the high value of human life, but an environment of freedom will teach that value better than an environment of coercion.

I find this to be odd claim. There has been more violence (the severest form of coercion) in the twentieth century than in all the previous centuries combined; most of it in the name of freedom. My right to happiness is simply incommensurate with someone else's right to happiness, and so it means that the one with the most

power is the one who ends up the most happy. This brings me to the next and most important consideration thus far-- the pro-abortion position is ultimately not a desire for choice, it is a desire for power.

Power Politics All in the Name of Choice

Let us return once again to Eggebroten's claim that the decision to abort or not to abort should always be the decision of the parents. Again, let us not forget the qualifier in conjunction with this comment-- "Should the two disagree on this decision, the woman's choice must take precedence."¹⁹ The problem with this claim is that it ultimately makes the father's desires irrelevant. If he does not want the mother to have an abortion and the mother does not want the abortion either, both agree, but his view is irrelevant. If he doesn't want the abortion and she does, it's her decision. His view is still irrelevant. If he wants her to have an abortion and she doesn't, then the baby lives. His desires are of no consequence in the decision. Her view is the only one that counts. She has the power.

Moreover, one needs to notice the subtle power-play going on when Eggebroten states that men should take their share of the responsibility "for their children in everything from child care to financial support."²⁰ Surely I agree with this, but note that what we have here is a deceptive form of the kind of coercion Eggebroten so abhors. If the mother decides to abort, the father simply has to accept it. If she decides not to then he shares responsibility for the child's care. Thus not only does the woman have the awesome power to decide whether or not to bring her child into the world, she also has power over the father. He has no say in the child's birth or abortion, but he must live up to his obligation should she decide not to abort. He cannot coerce her into having the baby but she can coerce him into taking care of it. In reference to ancient power systems this is often called patriarchy. What Eggebroten is thus affirming is matriarchal patriarchy.²¹

Of course, the fact of the matter is most women do not have abortions because they are in control, because they have a choice. Most women have abortions because they feel they have no choice. The father refuses to support the child or the woman's parents encourage the abortion out of embarrassment that their daughter is pregnant, and a whole host of other reasons. Indeed, it seems to me that the current debate over assisted suicide and the so-called "right to die" proceeds on a very similar and mistaken presumption-- that we should have a choice in order to be in control of a situation in which we have very little control.

Moreover, B. Riedel²² seems to think that the church would be more open to abortion if there were less men in charge. She writes in the foreword of the book:

As long as there are no women priests, bishops, archbishops or popes, we can expect opposition to both contraception and

abortion to continue.... Predominately male leadership in these churches is certainly a factor in the oversimplification of this approach.²³

Surely Riedel is guilty of the same kind of oversimplification she accuses Catholics and evangelicals of in reference to abortion. Indeed, it has never been shown that there is a significant difference between the sexes in reference to approval of abortion. Riedel has failed to explain the many woman who are actively involved in such anti-abortion organizations as *Right to Life*, *Birthingright*, and *Operation Rescue* just to name a few. Of course, one would expect that she would not mention this. It is of critical importance that she continue to portray the abortion debate as a struggle between the sexes; between men who want to rule women, and women who simply want to choose their own destinies. On the contrary, from my own personal experience I have had in my ministry with men who find themselves faced with unexpected fatherhood, many of them find abortion as an easy answer to their problem. Moreover, I have also discovered that abortion has actually been a godsend for men who want to be, and are sexually promiscuous. It becomes an easy answer to a big, "Oops," which is what the aborted child simply becomes.

But the answers are not that easy as Riedel²⁴ herself states (and what she oversimplistically accuses anti-abortionists of believing). R. Brown, who directs a crisis pregnancy center, states often the easy answers are not presented by anti-abortion groups, but the abortion clinics who provide very little post-abortion counseling for those women who can't deal with what they have done, and what's been done to them and their babies.

[S]ome of the women who had abortions did return to our center. They came to share their grief and seek healing. This, in and of itself, is quite amazing, for one would expect these women to fear condemnation from a pro-life center. Yet they returned to the place where they experienced unconditional love and the true concern of their counselors. The abortion clinics, which so readily took their money and the lives of their children, were not so ready to hear their problems. In fact, one young lady related her personal experience in seeking post-abortion help from the clinic that had willingly provided her abortion. The response of the clinic staff was, "You came here for an abortion. We did what you wanted done. Now, if you are having problems with your decision, it is your problem, not ours."²⁵

I have no wish to defend the lack of compassion often exhibited on the anti-abortion side when it comes to women in crisis pregnancies, but those on the pro-abortion side cannot necessarily claim to be more compassionate when

arguing for a position that is ultimately tied up with power and big money. Indeed, abortion is the only "medical" procedure in the United States not regulated by the medical community. Those who seek the power and wealth of performing abortions definitely have it. For a movement that claims to be on the side of the marginalized, it is in reality quite bourgeois and status-quo.

Life Is A Gift

Whereas the pro-abortion position errs in reference to the notion of choice as a right, the anti-abortion movement has erred in its affirmation of life as a right. Indeed, as Guroian has argued, the "right to life" argument has been ineffective because the opponents realized how shallow the argument was in the first place.²⁶ There is no such right, nor is such a right ever affirmed in the Bible. The Biblical view is clearly one of life as a gift. Life comes to us from a gracious God who does not owe us anything, but gives life to us simply because God wills to do so. While this may at first glance seem to undercut the anti-abortion position, in actuality it strengthens it from a theological vantage. If indeed life is a gift from God, what human being has the authority to refuse that gift? To acknowledge the giftedness of life is to continue to acknowledge, unlike those who want to argue for one's personal autonomy over one's body, that our continued existence, and the continued existence of the world is in God's hands, not ours. To accept the gift of life is to accept God's sovereignty.

Certainly for Christians who have worked diligently to outlaw abortion, this affirmation is tough to accept. The reason quite clearly is that to reject the notion of "right to life" is to argue right out of the judicial process. How can a court recognize life as a gift when the Declaration of Independence clearly affirms life as a right? Of course, anti-abortion Christians have not had much luck arguing successfully before the courts anyway. Indeed, the Republican party, the former champion of the right-to-life movement, is clearly backing away from the abortion issue in favor of a "There's room for all of us," position. Moreover, I would contend that to argue untruthfully in order to win an argument is also to argue unfaithfully. Christians cannot be content to argue with ideas known to be false even if the outcome might be good. This is utilitarianism. This does not mean that we would have nothing to say to the state. We could argue to the powers that be that they would be a better state if they didn't kill their children. My hunch, however, is that the church will not be able to be that prophetic witness to the state on abortion until its members no longer kill their own children. I find this to be quite sad.

When Does Life Begin?

This is not the most significant question in the abortion argument.²⁷ Those who would argue that life doesn't begin in the womb certainly bear the burden of proof,²⁸ since the long-standing assumptions of human history and biology²⁹ clearly state otherwise. Nevertheless, I am not sure this is a helpful question; for it fails to ask previous questions as to what we Christians believe about life and what life is for. As Hauerwas notes,

...the Christian approach is not one of deciding when has life begun, but hoping that it has. We hope that human life has begun! We are not the kind of people who ask, Does human life start at the blastocyst stage, or at implantation? Instead, we are the kind of people who hope life has started, *because we are ready to believe that this new life will enrich our community.*³⁰

Moreover, the question of personhood is completely irrelevant. First, the notion of person is as false as the notion of rights. Second, even if there were such a thing as a human "person" as opposed to a human "nonperson" there is no consensus on how to define what a person is.

Very much related to this is the casual acceptance of abortion of severely handicapped children.³¹ How is it that Christians can argue that abortion is acceptable for those unborn children who are not "normal?" How do we reconcile the idea that all human beings are made in the image of God and yet some can be aborted because they don't live up to our expectations? How can we reconcile the abortions of physically and mentally defective children with the ministry of Jesus who welcomed even those whom society had rejected? How can we tell our children in the same breath that a mother can choose to reject her unborn child who may have Down's Syndrome but they must accept such children on the playground at school? The Bible commands us to welcome strangers who come into our midst (Heb. 13:2). What about the strangers who come in the form of our children? Why should unborn children have to pay for not being wanted? What does it say about us morally when we don't want children, even when they come in less than desirable circumstances.³²

The Historic Consensus of the Church

Eschwege makes the quite astounding and erroneous claim that the early church was not opposed to abortion in the earliest stages.³³ While it is true that there was some difference of opinion in reference to when abortion might be a tragically acceptable possibility, up until the defection of many in mainline Protestantism the past twenty years, the church has always been very much opposed to abortion, certainly abortion on demand. M. Gorman has shown that the

early church's discussion on abortion centered around three themes: 1) the fetus is a creation of God, 2) abortion is murder, and 3) the judgment of God falls upon those guilty of abortion.³⁴ It is historically clear that the early church viewed abortion in the same way as it viewed violence toward all persons.³⁵ The casual acceptance of abortion by many Christians is simply the continued acceptance of a death-dealing society that gives coherence to the incoherent claims of a Jack Kevorkian. Those who would argue for abortion are out of step with the church, both historically and ecumenically.

Through the ages the Church has consistently resisted abortion and offered ministry to those tempted by abortion. Also, the vast majority of the churches today-- from evangelical Protestant to Roman Catholic to Orthodox-- are, more or less, in line with classical Christian teaching on abortion. For some reason (namely, the power of philosophical liberalism, which has been turned into an ideology of choice and applied to all spheres of life), oldline American Protestantism... has insisted on a more "open" attitude toward abortion. Therefore, on the matter of abortion, this church has broken, and continues to break, ranks with the catholic, or universal church.³⁶

Thus those Christians who would argue for abortion have to demonstrate their case. They are in the minority of the world's Christians and out of step with the historic consensus of the church.³⁷

Some Concluding Comments

By way of conclusion I need to summarize some of the more significant observations of this paper as well as suggest the place of the church in the midst of a society that has legalized the killing of children.

First, abortion is wrong and the necessity of confession of those involved in abortion in one way or another is indispensable. In addition, confession of sins is necessary for all those who profess opposition to abortion, and yet are willing to do no more than tell the government it should be illegal. Those of us in the church who would stand with the church's historic position on abortion must put our money where our mouths are; that is, we must sacrifice some of the American lifestyle to make it possible to save some babies from abortion. What if every Christian home took in a pregnant mother, paid her medical bills, saw the pregnancy to term, and then helped the mother get on her feet, or assisted in putting the baby up for adoption? Or what if a group of, say, five Christian families pooled their resources to help one pregnant mother?³⁸ Likely there would be fewer vacations to Disney World and one less car payment, but a baby would have been saved. If all Christians do is insist that the government outlaw abortion without

dealing with the aftermath of such an action, then our insistence and our integrity will ring hollow. Whereas the pro-abortionists have ignored the unborn child, the anti-abortionists have on more than a few occasions, ignored their pregnant mothers. This ought not to be.

Second, abortion is almost always a difficult decision, as Riedel rightly observes. If this is the case, then choice must not be at the heart of the matter. If abortion is almost always difficult, then it must not be a good thing. If it's not a good thing then why focus on it as a matter of choice? If choice is really what it's about, then abortion must be a neutral category. If abortion is a neutral category, then why is it almost always a difficult decision? It seems to me that here the pro-abortion argument faces a very difficult contradiction. Riedel takes the "pro-lifers" to task for thinking that all "pro-choicers" are flippant over the issue of abortion. She wants us to know that it is seldom an easy decision. But the reality is that the moral emphasis on choice, instead of abortion itself, cannot help but lead to a superficial attitude toward abortion. If no one can judge a woman's abortion as a mistake, then all abortions must ultimately be viewed as frivolous, which is precisely what they are not.

Third, the church must expunge rights language from its midst. Rights arguments are nothing more than acts of desperation employed by people with no common moral tradition, who want to use some secular and vague notion of natural law as universal justification for their selfishness. This means that as the church disputes the notion of the "right to choose" it must also attack the idea of "right to life." Life is a gift. Of course, this makes the anti-abortion argument even stronger, but we likely will have argued ourselves right out of the constitutional debate. But our task is to be faithful to the truth. In the midst of our discussion we who reject abortion must also spend some time outlining why certain aspects of the "pro-life" argument won't work. In so doing we can make the argument even stronger.

Fourth, "there should be no unwanted children" should not be a justification for abortion, but rather a disposition that makes all of us willing to welcome all children into our midst. What kind of people are we when we don't want children? This is, of course, not to say that there are no difficult pregnancies, but what does it say about us morally that we don't want children; and what in the world does it mean to want a child in the first place?³⁹

Fifth, Christians must unequivocally reject abortion for reasons of physical and mental infirmities. If we accept abortion for these reasons, then it is not inconsistent to reject such children and adults who were unlucky enough to be born. It is here, in this position, that shadows of Hitler and the Nazis can be seen, despite the protests to the analogy by pro-abortionists. The equivalent to "If you are Jewish, you will not live," is now "If you have Down's Syndrome, you will not live." Jesus would clearly reject such a philosophy. Rather he would likely endorse

something like the following:

Do you believe in love? I don't mean simple lip service to love. I am talking about life service. So you really believe that we are here to love one another. If you do, then you don't say, "I will love you because you have your mental faculties, and you because you are healthy, but *not you* because you have only one arm." True love does not discriminate in this way.

If we really believe in love, and find that a baby will be born having no arms, we would say, "Baby, we are going to love you. We will make arms for you. We have many new skills now for doing this. And, Baby, if these arms don't work, we will *be* your arms. We will take care of you. You can be sure of that. You are one of us, a member of human family, and we will always love you."⁴⁰

Sixth, the heart of the abortion discussion is not choice or life, it is power. One thing that is clear when one reads the Eggebroten text is that the language of power permeates every chapter. History has demonstrated that men not only want power, but have had it for most of history. This has been wrong and the church has sinned in fostering it. But recent history has demonstrated that women are into power as much as men. The lust for power is a human problem not a gender problem. Neither men nor women have a monopoly on the power game. Those who argue from the pro-abortion position are pro-power. They want to have power over themselves, their unborn children, and men, particularly the fathers of their children. Abortion is the fulfillment of their dreams of power.

Yet, the gospel is not about having power, being in control; rather it is about losing it. This is the example of Jesus

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross (Phil. 2:6-8).

It is impossible for me to imagine Jesus performing an abortion or abandoning a mother in a crisis pregnancy. I can't possibly conceive of Jesus ever administering a partial birth abortion or shooting a doctor who performs abortions. Instead, Jesus would be in service to all these individuals, and he demands no less of his followers. Christian men and women must dispel the desire to lord it over each other, whether it comes in the form of autonomous male chauvinism, or an idolatrous notion of reproductive freedom. We have no authority to lord it over each other because there is only one Lord. Christian men and women must be in

service to one another, and also we must be in service to our children, whether we are expecting them or not. Christians are not afraid of the unexpected; for who could have ever anticipated the wonderful surprise of the resurrection. It is a surprise which has shaken the very foundations of the universe all the way into the life of the young woman in a crisis pregnancy, and the child who is nurtured in her womb.

ENDNOTES

¹ Abortion: My Choice, God's Grace (Pasadena: New Paradigm Books, 1994).

² I refuse to call the pro-abortion movement, "pro-choice" because as I will argue, choice ultimately has little to do with the position.

³ The Church and Abortion: In Search of New Ground for Response (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

⁴ I do not refer to the anti-abortion movement as "pro-life" simply because I find that many "pro-lifers" are really only "pro-birth." They are very concerned about children while in the womb, but once they are outside the womb they support political positions and policies which are quite oppressive to children already born.

⁵ Eggebrotten attempts to give a theological account of her position on pages 209-233, but in reality she is simply reading her modern Liberal philosophical assumptions into the biblical text. So her account does not in reality give the biblical perspective; rather in light of her own presumptions she gives an account of what she wants the Bible to say.

⁶ More theologians than philosophers would likely agree with this claim.

⁷ Abortion, p. 213.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 213-214.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹⁰ A. MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), pp. 1-12.

¹¹Which is why it strikes me as odd that many who support a woman's right to choose, also state that they do not believe abortion is a morally good thing. The fact of the matter is that the pro-abortion emotivist claims of choice must also mean that one cannot judge whether abortion in general, or this or that particular abortion, is good or bad. Emotivism precludes such a judgment.

¹²E.g., pp. 10-11, 71.

¹³Abortion, p. 213.

¹⁴S. Hauerwas, "Abortion, Theologically Understood." The Church and Abortion, p. 51.

¹⁵M. Gorman, Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1982), pp. 59-62.

¹⁶MacIntyre, After Virtue, p. 6.

¹⁷Of course, our culture doesn't call this kind of debate disagreement; rather it is referred to as pluralism. But pluralism is much different from what we see in contemporary moral debate in America. Pluralism is disagreement around a central core of beliefs. But the very heart of modern individualism is that since the individual reigns supreme there can be no central core (except that the individual is primary and this is no help in securing moral consensus). This is not pluralism but fragmentation. On the problematic nature of the notion of pluralism see J. Walls, The Problem of Pluralism (Wilmore: Bristol, 1988).

¹⁸Hauerwas, "Abortion," pp. 50-52.

¹⁹See endnote 3.

²⁰Abortion, p. 213.

²¹I would almost guarantee that Eggebroten supports laws making fathers responsible to their children, even while she rejects laws that would make mothers responsible in giving birth to their children. Of course, the latter for her would be coercive.

²²Riedel is the founding director for the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights.

²³B. Riedel, "Forward." Abortion, p. xii.

²⁴Ibid., p. xi.

²⁵R. Brown, "The Ministry of a Crisis Pregnancy Center." The Church and Abortion, p. 81.

²⁶V. Guroian, Ethics After Christendom: Toward an Ecclesial Christian Ethics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 19.

²⁷D. Campbell, Doctors, Lawyers, Ministers: Christian Ethics in Professional Practice (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), p. 128.

²⁸Ibid., notes, "Christians need to recognize clearly that abortion is by any theologically meaningful definition, termination of life."

²⁹ See particularly the testimony of internationally known geneticists, biologists and physicians at the Congressional Hearings of April 23 and 24, 1981. Those on the pro-abortion side were unable to produce any witnesses to confirm their position genetically or biologically. See J. Powell, Abortion: The Silent Holo caust (Allen: Argus, 1981), pp. 68-74.

³⁰Hauerwas, "Abortion," p. 57.

³¹See Ibid.

³²My problem with the idea of "planned parenthood" is simply that when parenthood is planned, it's never planned. Who in the world knows what to expect with the arrival of a baby, even subsequent children. They are all different.

³³Abortion p. 4. She refers to D. Jones, Brave New People: Ethical Issues at the Commencement of Life (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 173 and J. Hurst, The History of Abortion in the Catholic Church: The Untold Story (Washington: Catholics for a Free Choice, 1989).

³⁴M. Gorman, Abortion and the Early Church, p. 47ff. See also Idem., "Ahead to Our Past." The Church and Abortion, pp. 32-34.

³⁵Campbell, Doctors, Lawyers, Ministers, p. 128, states, "The issue is not when life begins, but whether life should ever be taken. I do not think it is helpful to debate the question of the initiation of life. The idea that before a certain point

'life' has not begun and, therefore, abortion is justified strikes me as unconvincing."

³⁶The Church and Abortion, p. 7.

³⁷Which is why I find the argument of A. Lindemann, "Do Not Let a Woman Destroy the Unborn Babe in her Belly." Abortion in Ancient Judaism and Christianity." Studia Theologica 49 (1995), pp. 253-271, to be so baffling. After demonstrating that the biblical text and the history of Judaism and Christianity in general opposed abortion, he nullifies the importance of this argument by stating, "...we have to take into account the fundamental change of situation" (p. 265). If the biblical and historical material is so irrelevant one wonders why he even bothered to discuss it in the first place.

³⁸One thing that would happen is the church would call the bluff of the pro-abortionists who continue to challenge the anti-abortion crowd to do something to lessen the need for abortion. My hunch is that they would not be happy about this. If we could cut the number of abortions in the U.S.A. by 25%, those who are securing their financial futures through abortions would be quite upset. No doubt the church would then be accused of coercing women to have their babies.

³⁹For a wonderful account of the place of children in Christian marriage see W. Willimon, The Service of God: How Worship and Ethics Are Related (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), pp. 170-186.

⁴⁰V. Rosenblum, in Abortion: The Silent Holocaust, p. 8.