



STATEMENT DA-375

PRACTICAL APOLOGETICS

Annihilating Abortion Arguments

by Hank Hanegraaff

For hundreds of years the Lord had warned the Israelites through His prophets. Now it was too late! Darkness had descended upon the Promised Land. The people of Israel had become the slaves of the mighty Assyrians. Although the tribe of Judah to the south had miraculously survived the initial onslaught, they somehow blithely managed to ignore the lesson of history.

2 Kings tells us that Ahaz, king of Judah, "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites" (16:3).

The nation of Israel had indeed become a mirror reflection of the pagan culture by which they found themselves surrounded. True prophets continued to warn God's people that their wickedness would inexorably lead to destruction, but their words fell on deaf ears. The rulers of the land had become so corrupt that they even hired false prophets to tell them what their itching ears wanted to hear.

Finally, the inevitable occurred. The ax of God's judgment fell. Babylon leveled Jerusalem, and the people of Judah were driven from their land of promise.

Today America, like ancient Israel, is turning a deaf ear to the lesson of history. We have repeatedly violated God's commands, as if we could do so with impunity. We have failed to heed the warnings of His prophets and have embraced the new paganism of our times. Indeed, our ways have become detestable to the Lord; we have forgotten His command: "When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. *Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God*" (Deut. 18:9-12; emphasis added).

Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer warned us that abortion would be the watershed issue of our era. He said, "Of all the subjects relating to the erosion of the sanctity of human life, abortion is the keystone. It is the first and crucial issue that has been overwhelming in changing attitudes toward the value of life in general."¹

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Schaeffer's warning has tragically fallen on deaf ears. For more than two decades we have sacrificed our children on the altars of hedonism. And even now, the ax of God's judgment has been laid to the root.

Two thousand years ago Christ warned us that "the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed!'" (Luke 23:29). The present day abortion holocaust has driven those words home in dramatic fashion. Consider the statements of some of the spiritual and secular leaders of our age:

- Beverly Harrison (professor of Christian ethics at Union Theological Seminary) — "*Infanticide is not a great wrong*. I do not want to be construed as condemning women who, under certain circumstances, quietly put their infants to death" (emphasis in original).²
- Esther Langston (professor of social work at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas): "What we are saying is that abortion becomes one of the choices and the person has the right to choose whatever it is that is...best for them in the situation in which they find themselves, be it abortion, to keep the baby, to adopt it, to sell it, to leave it in a dumpster, to put it on your porch, whatever; it's the person's right to choose."³
- Mary S. Calderone, M.D. (head of SIECUS — Sex Information and Education Council of the United States): "We have yet to beat our drums for birth control in the way we beat them for polio vaccine, we are still unable to put babies in the class of dangerous epidemics, even though this is the exact truth."⁴
- Margaret Sanger (the late founder of Planned Parenthood): "The most merciful thing a large family can do for one of its infant members is to kill it."⁵
- Nobel Prize laureate James Watson (co-discoverer of DNA) — "Because of the limitations of present detection methods, most birth defects are not discovered until birth. . . . However if a child was not declared alive until 3 days after birth . . . the doctor could allow the child to die if the parents so choose and save a lot of misery and suffering."⁶

Perhaps most frightening of all, President Clinton signed into law the *National Institute of Health Revitalization Act*. As a direct result it is now legal not only to kill but also to carve up murdered babies and use them for fetal tissue research.⁷

While pondering this horrifying reality, remember that the present-day holocaust is government-funded. It means that you and I are footing the bill!⁸

Make no mistake: "Choice" advocates like Clinton, Congress, and the Courts are not the friends of children. America's unthinking submission to their twisted arguments is moving us progressively toward social genocide of a magnitude eclipsing that of Hitler, Stalin, Somalia, and the Serb-Croate conflict.

The movement's own label — "pro-choice" — is a twisted deception, covering up a nationally sanctioned holocaust in which the "right" to choose to kill a child reigns supreme over:

- the baby's human rights;
- the rights of the parents of a pregnant minor;
- the rights of the preborn's father;
- the mother's right to accurate information about fetal development and the negative consequences of abortion;

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- the rights of society to protect *all* its members — no matter what their social status, economic situation, or physical limitations.

WHAT IS ABORTION?

Those who continue to fight legislation restricting abortion are in reality *not* "pro-choice." Rather, they are singularly "pro-murder." While the rhetoric has served to camouflage the carnage, *abortion* is really nothing more than the *painful killing of an innocent human being*.

Painful

It is *painful* because the methods employed to kill a preborn child involve burning, smothering, dismembering, and crushing. Dr. James Dobson offers a terrifying description of one method of abortion called *Dilation and Extraction (D & X)*:

Over two days the cervix is dilated. Then an ultrasound device and forceps are used to reach in and grab the baby's feet. The little body is pulled downward until just the head remains in the cervix. Next the abortionist grasps the nape of the neck and cuts open the back of the skull with blunt scissors. A device called a cannula is then inserted into the wound and the brain material is sucked out. If kidneys or other organs are desired, they are removed while the child is still partially in the vagina. Initially at least, these surgical procedures are performed on a live baby who has not specifically been anesthetized (although the mother's medication may reduce some of the pain).⁹

Abortion is also performed by a procedure called *Dilation and Curettage (D & C)*, in which a tiny hoe is used to chop the baby's body to pieces. The body is then scraped off the wall of the uterus and subsequently reassembled to ensure that no remaining parts have been left behind. Other methods include:

- *Saline Solution* — a salt solution is injected into the amniotic fluid, burning the skin off the baby who, after thrashing in the uterus for a number of hours, is reduced to a shriveled corpse;
- *Suction* — presently two-thirds of all abortions in the United States and Canada are carried out using a suction tube, which tears the child apart and deposit the pieces into a jar;
- *Hysterotomy* — similar to a Caesarean section, except it is designed for the express purpose of killing rather than saving the baby;
- *Prostaglandin* — the injection of a chemical into the uterine muscle, causing it to react violently, thus expelling the preborn child (the few children who survive decapitation resulting from the violent contractions are exterminated after delivery).

Killing

Abortion involves *killing* because the *zygote*, which fulfills the criteria needed to establish the existence of biological life (including metabolism, development, the ability to react to stimuli, and cell reproduction), is indeed terminated.

Innocent

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While it is true that everyone is conceived and born in sin, preborn children are *innocent* because they have done nothing wrong. They deserve protection, not capital punishment.

Human Being

The living baby in the mother's womb is a *human being* because he or she is the product of human parents and has a totally distinct human genetic code. This truth that abortion terminates the life of a human being is substantiated by science:

- As Dr. Micheline Matthew-Roth, a principal research associate at Harvard Medical School's Department of Medicine, puts it, "It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception, when egg and sperm join to form the zygote, and this developing human always is a member of our species in all stages of its life."¹⁰
- French geneticist Jerome L. LeJeune bore eloquent testimony to the truth of Dr. Matthew-Roth's remarks when he gave the following testimony to a United States Senate sub-committee: "To accept the fact that after fertilization has taken place a new human has come into being is no longer a matter of taste or opinion. The human nature of the human being from conception to old age is not a metaphysical contention, it is plain experimental evidence."¹¹
- Perhaps Dr. Hymie Gordon, professor of medical genetics and a physician at the prestigious Mayo Clinic, best summarized the perspective of science when he said, "I think we can now also say that the question of the beginning of life — when life begins — is no longer a question for theological or philosophical dispute. It is an established scientific fact. Theologians and philosophers may go on to debate the meaning of life or purpose of life, but it is an established fact that all life, including human life, begins at the moment of conception."¹²

Long before science substantiated the truth that abortion is the painful killing of an innocent human being, the psalmist summarized the view of sacred Scripture with these words:

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Psalm 139:13-16

In light of the fact that both science and Scripture corroborate the view that abortion is the painful killing of an innocent human being, it is incumbent upon Christians to do everything in their power to halt the spread of this enormous evil. There are indeed many fronts on which our battle must be waged. Ultimately, however, lasting change only comes when the hearts of people are transformed. For when the heart is transformed, a person's behavior is revolutionized as well. Because of the transcendent importance of this issue, I've developed the acronym A-B-O-R-T-I-O-N as a memorable tool to help believers *annihilate abortion arguments*.

Remember, however, the goal is not to win an argument but rather to use well-reasoned answers to the arguments of abortion advocates as springboards or opportunities to share a message of life and light.

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A = AD HOMINEM

Attacking *people* rather than arguing *principles*, *ad hominem* arguments are a trick designed to distract attention from the *real* issue — namely, that abortion is the killing of an innocent human being. Comedienne Whoopi Goldberg used this tactic when she suggested that abortion rights advocates would take pro-lifers more seriously if they were willing to adopt babies slated for abortion.¹³

What this ad hominem argument is really saying is, "If you won't adopt my babies, don't tell me I can't kill them!" That, of course, makes as much sense as forbidding me from intervening when I see my neighbor physically abusing a child unless I am willing to adopt that child.

The "adoption argument" completely evades the basic morality or immorality of abortion. Instead, it is an attempt to attack *character* in order to avoid the *case* against abortion.

Another common ad hominem attack involves the media portrayal of pro-lifers as wild-eyed fanatics. For instance, the death of abortionist Dr. David Gunn has been widely-used to stereotype those who believe in the sanctity of life as "social terrorists." Senator Edward M. Kennedy has gone so far as to say, "Attacks on clinics are not isolated incidents and health care providers are living in fear for their lives...No doctors should be forced to go to work in a bullet-proof vest."¹⁴ Senator Barbara Boxer exudes, "American women have seen their doctors' offices transformed from safety zones into war zones."¹⁵

A final ad hominem attack worth mentioning is the fallacy that pro-lifers are inconsistent because they denounce abortion while supporting capital punishment. In fact, many pro-lifers do *not* support capital punishment. But for the many others that do, this argument still falls on many counts. The most obvious rebuttal is that abortion involves the killing of an *innocent* human being while capital punishment involves the killing of someone who has been found *guilty* of a capital crime.

B = BIBLICAL PRETEXTS

Using biblical texts out of context as a pretext for abortion, pro-abortionists seek to retain some semblance of religiosity while at the same time espousing the radical planks of the pro-abortion movement. The most common argument in this area is that Scripture nowhere specifically condemns abortion or identifies it as the killing of an innocent human being. Such an argument, however, obscures the fact that the Bible depicts preborn children as living beings who are fully human (see, e.g., Ps. 139:13-16). Furthermore, Scripture clearly denounces the killing of an innocent human being as murder. Thus, abortion is a violation of the Sixth Commandment (Exod. 20:13).

Ironically, one of the most commonly used biblical pretexts for abortion is found only one chapter after God's explicit command, "Thou shall not murder": "If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined...But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." (Exod. 21:22-25; NASB). The argument goes something like this: If a man strikes a pregnant woman and causes her to have a spontaneous abortion, the penalty is merely a fine. However, if the woman dies, the penalty is death. Thus, no life was taken, according to Exodus 21, unless the woman died.

Thus interpreted, this passage is not being *used* but *abused* to support abortion. Let's take a closer look at what the Hebrew text (as correctly translated by the NIV) really says: "If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury [the implication here is that *no* death is involved], the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life [in other words, if the woman *or* child should die, the appropriate punishment is death]."

Another biblical pretext, typically referred to as the "argument from breath," involves Genesis 2:7: "The Lord God formed man from dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being."

The "argument from breath" is frequently presented in the following manner: God did not consider Adam to be a "living soul" until He had breathed the "breath of life" into him. Thus a child does not become a human being until he or she begins to breathe.

Dispensing with this argument is a simple matter. Adam was inanimate before God breathed the breath of life into him. Conversely, as science demonstrates, the conceptus or preborn child is alive from the very moment of conception. It is important to note that the breath of life exists in the preborn child from the moment of conception. In reality, it is the *form*, not the *fact*, of oxygen transfer (breath) that changes at birth.

O = OPIUM

As opium dulls the senses chemically, so the term-twisting tactics of pro-abortionists deaden the perception of the human carnage caused by abortion. In 1844, Karl Marx wrote, "Religion ... is the opium of the people."¹⁶ While history has demonstrated that true religion doesn't deaden but rather brings life, it may well be said that the terminology of pro-abortionists is specifically designed to mentally dull the senses of an unquestioning public. For example, pro-abortion is called pro-choice; babies are demoted to the status of POCs or products of conception; killing unwanted children is repositioned as exercising freedom of choice; and committed pro-lifers are tagged as political extremists or even social terrorists.

The list of camouflaged terms employed by pro-abortionists is seemingly endless. Unless we learn to unmask the language of the pro-abortion lobby, millions will continue to become morally numb on the opium of clever code words.

R = RAPE AND INCEST

An emotional appeal designed to avoid the serious consideration of the pro-life platform, rape and incest are the hard-case "what-ifs" pro-abortionists raise in almost every public forum: "How can you deny a hurting young girl safe medical care and freedom from the terror of rape or incest by forcing her to maintain a pregnancy resulting from the cruel and criminal invasion of her body?" The emotion of this argument often deflects serious examination of its merits and is commonly used as a pretext for abortion on demand.

It is important to note that the incidence of pregnancy as a result of rape is extremely small (one study put it at 0.6 percent).¹⁷ As philosopher Francis Beckwith astutely points out, "To argue for abortion on demand from the hard cases of rape and incest is like trying to argue for the elimination of traffic laws from the fact that one might have to violate some of them in rare instances, such as when one's spouse or child needs to be rushed to the hospital."¹⁸ If we had legislation restricting abortion for all reasons *other than* rape or incest, we would save the vast majority of the 1.8 million preborn babies who die annually in America through abortion.

Furthermore, one does not obviate the real pain of rape or incest by compounding it with the murder of an innocent preborn child; two wrongs obviously do not make a right. The very thing that makes rape evil also makes abortion evil. In both cases, an innocent human being is brutally dehumanized. The real question that must be answered is whether or not preborn children are indeed fully human. As has been already documented, the answer is a resounding *Yes*.

T = TOLERATION

Serving as the "great commandment" of the pro-abortion movement, the argument from toleration is perhaps the most common argument pro-abortionists level against their opponents. For example: "We're not making *you* have an abortion, so why can't you be tolerant of those who choose to?" Translated: "Don't impose your antiquated morals on me!" At first blush this argument may seem reasonable, but on closer examination its inherent weakness becomes readily apparent. Imagine applying this line of reasoning to the issue of rape by saying, "Don't like rape? Don't rape anyone. Just don't impose your morality on me!"

This false standard of tolerance is frequently supported by an appeal to religious pluralism. In this context, pro-abortionists argue that government should not take one theory of life and impose it on others. The obvious problem with this line of argumentation is that not only is the pro-abortion position forced on Christians, but they are required to fund it as well. Incredibly, pro-abortionists fail to perceive their violation of this ridiculous standard: *they're* intolerant of those who think tolerance is less important than preserving innocent human lives!

Yet every society has the obligation to universally impose morals on its citizens. Toleration works in the world of expressing opinions, not in a crowded movie theater when someone chooses to yell "Fire!" We may be tolerant of one's religious views, but not if they include enslaving grandmothers or cannibalizing teenagers.

Separation between church and state does not extend to divorcing all moral values from the state. If this were the case, we would need to eliminate all legislation that has anything in common with a religious point of view — including the very idea of social law itself.

Remember, *tolerance when it comes to personal relationships is a virtue, but tolerance when it comes to truth is a travesty.*

I = INEQUALITY

Inequality between the sexes is one of the most bizarre arguments put forth by the pro-abortion movement. "Women who are forced to be pregnant," it is said, "can't compete in employment with men and so cannot be truly equal unless they have an escape from unwanted pregnancy." Translated, this is like saying, "Women can't be equal to men without reconstructive surgery"! How much more sexist can an argument become?

Imagine, however, applying this standard to children outside the womb. Following this "logic" would mean that women should be permitted to abandon their children whenever they pose a threat to the mother's opportunities for advancement.

Another form of the "inequality argument" is graphically portrayed through the image of a rusty coat hanger. Prior to *Roe v. Wade*, pro-abortionists claimed that because of financial inequality, women who could not afford to fly to another country to get an abortion were condemned to performing abortions on themselves with rusty coat hangers. To add credibility to this assertion, statistics ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 deaths per year due to illegal abortions continue to be widely circulated.¹⁹

Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a former leader of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), had this to say about these preposterous statistics: "I confess I knew the *figures were totally false*, and I suppose the others did too . . . But in the 'morality' of the revolution, it was a useful figure" (emphasis added).²⁰

According to the U. S. Bureau of Vital Statistics, the true figure of the women who died from illegal abortions in 1972 — the year prior to *Roe v. Wade* — is 39. It is also questionable whether any one of these 39 women died as a result of using a coat hanger. As unpleasant as it may be, consider for a moment the dexterity needed to dislodge a conceptus from a uterine wall using a crude tool like a coat hanger. The truth of the matter is that the pro-abortion argument

from inequality is not only illogical, but deliberately deceptive as well.

O = OPERATION RESCUE

The no. 1 straw-man argument of the pro-abortion lobby, Operation Rescue has been unfairly condemned for using the same lines of argumentation and social protest popularized by the civil rights movement — a movement pro-abortion advocates usually extol. Furthermore, Operation Rescue has been grossly misrepresented, presumably to dismiss *all* pro-life activities as "extremist." The truth, however, is that just as abolitionists harbored escaped slaves in defiance of the laws before the Civil War, compassionate Europeans hid Jews from the legally sanctioned extermination of the Nazis, and civil rights marchers violated segregation laws, so Operation Rescue members believe their nonviolent, peaceful interventions to protect preborn children are obeying God rather than man (see Acts 4:19). Nonetheless, it needs to be recognized that many of the mainstream pro-life groups do not approve of using civil disobedience and do not identify with Operation Rescue. Thus pro-abortionists cannot fairly cite Operation Rescue as a reason for rejecting the entire pro-life movement.

While it might be argued that the tactics of Operation Rescue are not the most effective means of stemming the tide of abortion, it is patently false to caricature members of Operation Rescue as social terrorists or worse. Any unbiased evaluation of the principles and procedures employed by the leadership of this organization must conclude that they have consistently advocated *nonviolent civil disobedience*. It is therefore inexcusable when pro-abortionists attempt to tie Operation Rescue and pro-lifers generally to the few tragic instances in which pro-life extremists have resorted to violence and murder.

On a personal note, I am grateful to God for the documented evidence of lives that have been saved through the self-sacrifice of dedicated men, women, and children involved in this movement.

N = NONPERSONHOOD

The emerging embryo may not have a fully developed personality, but it does have complete personhood. Nonpersonhood is perhaps the trickiest of the contemporary pro-abortion arguments. Pro-abortionists once argued that the preborn baby was not fully human. Now, however, advances in science have forced most people to concede that the "product of conception" is truly human. As a result, a new version of this argument goes something like this: "The preborn child may be a human life, but it does *not* possess *personhood*."

Dr. Francis Beckwith exploded the latest version of this myth when he wrote, "From a strictly scientific point of view, there is no doubt that the development of an individual human life begins at conception. Consequently, it is vital that the reader understand that she did not come from a zygote, she once was a zygote; she did not come from an embryo, she once was an embryo; she did not come from a fetus, she once was a fetus; she did not come from an adolescent, she once was an adolescent."²¹

The abortion epidemic ravaging America today is the tragic consequence of a decadent society that no longer values the individual human worth of each member; that worships the idol of "Selfism"; and that replaces the objective Word of God with subjective preferences and social morés.

One-third of the children conceived in America this year will be savagely slaughtered before they are born. Yet this horrifying holocaust can be halted if those who value human life, worship the true God, and obey His Word will become informed, committed, and involved.

NOTES

¹Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, "Whatever Happened to the Human Race?" reprinted in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, 5 vols. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1982), 5:293.

²Quoted in *Policy Review*, Spring 1985, 15. This, along with the following four quotes, can be found in Francis J. Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death: Answering the Arguments for Abortion Rights* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 174.

³Debate with Francis J. Beckwith on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, December 1989.

⁴Quoted in Robert Marshall and Charles Donovan, *Blessed Are the Barren: The Social Policy of Planned Parenthood* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991), 182.

⁵Margaret Sanger, *Women and the New Race* (New York: Brentano's, 1920), 63.

⁶*AMA Prism*, May 1993, 2.

⁷See James C. Dobson, *Focus on the Family* newsletter, July 1993.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰*The Human Life Bill*, S. 158, *Report Together with Additional and Minority Views to the Committee on the Judiciary*, United States Senate, made by its Subcommittee on Separation of Powers, 97th Congress, 1st Session (1981), 11; quoted in Beckwith, 43.

¹¹*The Human Life Bill, Hearings on S. 158 before the Subcommittee on Separation of Powers of the Senate Judiciary Committee*, 97th Congress, 1st Session (1981), as quoted in Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 149; cited in Beckwith, 42.

¹²*The Human Life Bill*, S. 158, Report, 9; quoted in Beckwith, 42.

¹³See Beckwith, 88.

¹⁴Quoted in Michael Ross, "Senate Bans Use of Force against Abortion Clinics," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 November 1993, A1.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, A1, A22.

¹⁶From *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843-44).

¹⁷Charles R. Hayman, M.D., and Charlene Lanza, "Sexual Assault in Women and Girls," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 109 (1971): 480-86; cited in Beckwith, 241 n. 69.

¹⁸Beckwith, 69.

¹⁹Bernard Nathanson, M.D., *Aborting America* (New York: Doubleday, 1979), 193; quoted in Beckwith, 55.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Beckwith, 43.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Beckwith, Francis J. "Answering the Arguments for Abortion Rights, Part One: The Appeal to Pity." *Christian Research Journal*, Fall 1990.
- — — — — — — — — — — "Answering the Arguments for Abortion Rights, Part Two: Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem." *Christian Research Journal*, Winter 1991.
- — — — — — — — — — — . *Politically Correct Death: Answering Arguments for Abortion Rights*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- Cunningham, Greg (narrator). *Hard Truth* (video). Cleveland: American Portrait Films, 1991.
- Kreeft, Peter. *The Unaborted Socrates*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983.