
Abortion: Some Questionable Arguments

by Timothy Crosby

It would be wonderful if Scripture provided answers to all social, ethical, and philosophical questions. But how should the church make ethical decisions in areas where the Bible gives no explicit counsel? Does the church have the right to forbid certain things that are not forbidden in Scripture? The earliest noncanonical Christian documents take a firm stand against abortion. Didache 2:2 forbids abortion, along with murder, adultery, pederasty, fornication, theft, magic, witchcraft. It is also forbidden in the epistle of Barnabas, Clement of Alexandria, Athenagoras, and Tertullian. It would be hazardous to speculate why the Bible is silent on an issue that occupied other religious writers of the times.¹ Whatever the reason, this silence has not deterred proponents on both sides of the debate from finding support for their position in Scripture.

When Does Human Life Begin?

Modern debates about abortion often center around the question of exactly when human life begins. Appeal is made to scriptural texts that indicate that God forms the fetus in the womb as proof that life begins at conception and that termination of the conceptus for any reason thereafter is murder. An examination of some of the passages most frequently cited

to pinpoint the beginning of life suggests the hazards of using a passage to prove a point that was not under consideration in the mind of the original writer.

Texts such as Job 10:8-12, 31:15, Psalm 139:13-17, and Isaiah 49:5, describe God as forming the fetus in the womb, but they do not allow us to define the moment of personhood. Psalm 139 is particularly interesting. This text seems to teach a rigid predestination; it says that the days of our lives are planned in advance, and written down in some heavenly book before we are ever born. Is this literal truth, or is it a poetic way of saying that God knows all about us and cares for us? The passage also asserts that we were formed “in the depths of the earth.”* Is this literal or metaphorical?

It is dangerous to take scriptural assertions—particularly when they occur in biblical poetry—and use them to prove a point that is different from the point that the writer was trying to make. For example, when Job wrote “Did not he who made me in the womb make them [Job’s slaves]? Did not the same One form us both within our mothers?” (31:15) his point was that all men are brothers, equal before God. He was not addressing the modern question of precisely when life begins. Similarly, Psalm 51:5, “‘Surely I have been a sinner from birth; sinful from the time my mother conceived me’ ” teaches the sinfulness of human beings, not their exact moment of origin.

The problem with such texts is that they prove too much, for there are passages that seem to indicate that personhood exists *before* conception. For example, Job 10:10 says “‘Did you not

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pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese’ ”? This is probably an allusion to the seminal fluid. The fact that it is called “me” might seem to imply life before conception. An even clearer passage is Hebrews 7:9, 10, which states that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek long before Levi was conceived, because he was in the body of Abraham when Abraham paid tithes. Jeremiah 1:5 says “ ‘Before [not “when”] I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations’ ”; and God outlined the career of Cyrus

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long before he was conceived in Isaiah 44:28-45:5. These passages could be taken to imply that personhood exists before conception—a ridiculous concept.

None of these passages is helpful in deciding when life begins; they are probably examples of biblical prolepsis; a principle stated in Romans 4:17, “God . . . calls things that are not [yet] as though they were.”

But what about texts such as Isaiah 49:1, “The Lord called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother he named Me” (NASB) (cf. “from birth” Galatians 1:15, Luke 1:15)? If God lays plans for a person before he is born, then isn’t abortion frustrating the will of God? But in the Bible it is only living people who are said to have been foreknown by God. God is not foolish; he would not have preordained Isaiah or Jeremiah to be a prophet if he had known they were not going to survive.

One text that explicitly mentions conception is Matthew 1:20, “what is conceived in her [Mary] is from the Holy Spirit.” But this says nothing about the status of the conceptus except to reveal who the “father” was. Even if it did, Christ might be considered a special case. Other passages indicate that life begins at birth. Genesis 2:7 says that

“man became a living being” at the moment he began to breathe.

Other texts such as Job 27:3, 33:4, Ezekiel 37:5, and Psalm 104:29, 30 explicitly equate life with breath; these passages weaken the objection that Adam is a special case, and might be understood as paradigmatic for all human life.

Yet the concept that the “soul” or “life” is in the blood (Deuteronomy 12:23, Leviticus 17:10-14) might imply that personhood begins as soon as there is heartbeat and circulation.

Although many of these passages confirm the worth of the fetus, they cannot be used to pinpoint the beginning of personhood. Using these texts to resolve the abortion debate is like using Psalm 96:10, “The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved,” to resolve the 15th-century debate over whether the Earth goes around the sun or not. The pro-life proof texts simply do not speak to the modern issue of exactly when life begins.

The pro-life position that life begins at conception is untenable. Clearly, life begins *before* conception. The unfertilized egg is alive, and has the capability to become a human being if it is fertilized by the sperm, just as the fertilized ovum has that capability if it is nurtured by the womb. An egg is a potential human being, and will become one, given the right conditions. An unfertilized female egg is just as “human” as a fertilized egg—it certainly isn’t reptilian. The unfertilized sperm even manifests intelligent, goal-seeking behavior. I do not believe that human life begins at conception. It began in Eden.

It is true that only after fertilization does the cell have a complete complement of genes, giving it the potential to become an adult human being. The status of the embryo, then, boils down to its *potential*; that which it may become, given time. But, surely, potential things are less valuable than actual things. A potential election winner does not have the same rights as an actual election winner. A potential scholar does not enjoy the same respect as an actual scholar.

If it is true that having a full complement of genes constitutes personhood, then every cell in the adult human body is a “person.” Even the requisite potential for differentiation may be present. If it should become possible to clone a human

being from a single cell (something that has already been done with cattle), then a cell from any part of the human body would be a potential human being (given the right conditions). In that case, should it be considered murder to destroy human cells by scratching oneself?

Since every living cell, fertilized or not, has life, the question is not “When does life begin?” but “When does personhood begin?” This is, to some extent, a legal question. The state is forced to choose some point on the continuum of human growth as the point beyond which termination of life is immoral.

An analogous problem is the speed limit. The 55-mph limit does not correspond to any ontological discontinuity; it is an arbitrary legal decision. One might argue that, as speed is dangerous, and higher speeds are responsible for great loss of life every year in this country, the only logical and safe position is to avoid speed altogether; otherwise we might find ourselves on a slippery slope that leads to greater and greater speed and consequent loss of life. But this slippery-slope argument is hardly convincing. Even though the recent increase in the speed limit from 55 to 65 on some interstate highways will probably result in the loss of thousands of additional lives—self-conscious, intelligent, adult lives—no one is accusing the legislature of legalizing murder.

I would argue that the very earliest the line of personhood could be drawn on the continuum of life would be late in the second month of pregnancy. Shettles, who argues that life begins at conception, writes:

The so-called Harvard Criteria, established by a committee at the Harvard Medical School in 1968 to define death, would, if applied to the fetus, reveal a living human being. The Harvard Criteria, now widely used and accepted in medical schools and hospitals, state that death is determined by four things: lack of response to external stimuli, lack of deep reflex action, lack of spontaneous movement and respiratory effort, and lack of brain activity. . . . Movement of the fetus has been recorded on film as early as day 36, responds to touch in the sixth week and sometimes earlier. . . . EEG tracings have been detected as early as the fifth week.²

But Shettles’ own data indicate that the embryo does not achieve “human life” until sometime in

the second month of pregnancy. During the first month, although the organism is alive in the same sense as an amoeba or a tree, it is nevertheless “dead” according to the Harvard criteria. Surely an organism without breath or brain waves is not a living soul. We would not condemn a doctor for disconnecting a body with no brain from its life-support system; so we should not condemn a doctor for practicing menstrual extraction (the abortive procedure used up to the sixth week of pregnancy) for legitimate reasons, since, according to the Harvard criteria, the conceptus is no more alive than the vegetative, brain-dead body.

There are other indications that the embryo is not a person. According to James J. Diamand,³ in the light of biological evidence, the conceptus cannot possibly be said to be a person before 14 to 22 days after conception, at which time a radical and categorical change in life form occurs. Before this point it is undifferentiated (i.e., it is a collection of homogeneous cells without specialization), and there is a capacity for twinning and there is a likelihood of spontaneous abortion.

The phenomenon of spontaneous abortion raises interesting questions. Henri Leridon finds

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that 56 percent of all embryos spontaneously abort,⁴ while J. Biggers indicates this figure may be as high as two-thirds.⁵ Are these spontaneously aborted embryos persons? Will they be resurrected? If so, they will vastly outnumber the righteous who were born and lived on earth.

Spontaneous abortion often indicates an abnormality in the embryo. This is, of course, a natural process, but nature often works imperfectly. This brings us back to the question of deformity. What if this natural process is not working correctly, and allows grossly deformed children to be born? Should we help it along in the

same way that we would facilitate the process of birth in case of a birthing emergency, or should we allow nature to take its faulty course in both cases (allowing the deformed fetus to be born and allowing one with the cord around its neck to die)?

If it is wrong to imitate nature and abort an embryo, then is it wrong to kill a mature deer who cares for her young and feels pain? The one difference between humans and animals is that

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humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This cannot mean that humans, in contrast to the animals, possess an immortal soul, for in the Creation account both humans (Genesis 2:7) and animals (Genesis 1:24; 2:19) are called “souls” (Hebrew *nephesh*, also translated “living creature” RSV); and both are formed from the dust (Genesis 2:19). In fact, if the embryo did possess an immortal soul, that would weaken the pro-life case, for when we kill a deer we take all it has, but when we terminate a fetus we leave the essential part untouched (Matthew 10:28). To be consistent, pro-lifers should be vegetarians.

The statement that humans are made in the image of God means, at the very least, that men and women are physically more like God than is any other animal on earth.⁶ Ellen G. White defines the image of God as “power to think and to do.”⁷ But regardless of how the image of God is defined, the embryo does not possess it. Even a normal (much less a deformed) embryo does not look human (it has a tail and apparent gills) and does not possess the power to think and to do. The image of God is something we grow into. We cannot leave the image of God undefined and argue that all fetuses possess it simply by virtue of being human. If that is so, then Hitler possessed

just as much of the image of God as the greatest saint—an unacceptable conclusion.

Moreover, a deformed embryo has no hope of ever growing into that image. Anencephalic children, with little or no higher brain, die hours or days after birth. Children with Tay-Sachs disease develop normally at first but then go into prolonged deterioration leading to blindness, paralysis, and early death. There is no cure for these disorders. The argument that abortion is illegitimate in such cases because we do not kill adults who have similar maladies, such as cancer, is valid only on the questionable assumption that the fetus is on the same level as an adult.

Someone looking for a proof text that would settle the matter of deformed babies might seize upon Exodus 4:11, “Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him dumb or deaf? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord?” This would seem to indicate that God causes deformity. But his text proves too much, for if deformity were truly God’s will for a baby, then it would be wrong to frustrate his will by surgically correcting the deformity!

If, as some argue, we have no right to play God, then we should not even perform abortions to save the life of the mother. What right do we have to decide that the mother should live if God/nature chooses to let the fetus live and the mother die? The false premise here is that things that are natural are right. But nature is fallen and sometimes needs our help. The “playing God” argument is an emotional red herring. Every surgeon who lifts the knife is “playing God.” Legislators and judges “play God” every day.

Is Abortion Really Murder?

Finally, it is not helpful to cite the sixth commandment and charge abortionists with murder. First, because the Bible does not precisely define the beginning of life; and second, because the sixth commandment (“Thou shall not murder”) does not forbid the taking of life under all circumstances. This commandment does not use the general-purpose word for killing (Hebrew *mooth*), but the more

precise Hebrew word *ratsach*, which generally means “murder”—i.e., killing that is malicious and unauthorized by higher authority. The sixth commandment was never understood in Bible times to condemn capital punishment or killing in war; i.e., it allows killing as long as the one who takes life is licensed to kill under civil authority. The question to be decided, then, is whether or not abortion fits into the category of murder. This is not a premise that can simply be assumed.

The Bible holds that it is morally justifiable to take human life under certain conditions—such as war—where those whose lives are taken may have no personal culpability. Neither in biblical nor secular philosophy is the preservation of life always an overriding ultimate value.

The most discussed text is Exodus 21:22-24. Since capital punishment is imposed only in the case of the death of the adult, not the fetus, it is alleged that termination of the fetus is not murder. The majority of the rabbis so taught, and held, as in Roman law, that the fetus is a part of the mother⁸; though some said that if the fetus is unformed (under 40 days) only a fine is called for, but if formed (and hence fully human) life for life is demanded.⁹ Josephus gives the typical Jewish understanding of this verse:

He that kicketh a woman with child, if the woman miscarry, shall be fined by the judges for having, by the destruction of the fruit of her womb, diminished the population, and a further sum shall be presented by him to the woman's husband. If she die of the blow, he also shall die, the law claiming as its due the sacrifice of life for life.¹⁰

Bruce Waltke argues that the evidence for this interpretation is strengthened by a comparison of the biblical text with ancient Near Eastern parallels.¹¹ But others, such as Bajema¹² and Geissler¹³ dispute this because the attack on the fetus could be regarded as unintentional, and in cases of accidental death the penalty was not capital punishment but only a fine; or because the passage might refer not to miscarriage but to premature birth, with the penalty applying to the death of either the mother or the baby.

But all of this is beside the point, for Exodus 21:20, 21, when compared with verse 12, clearly implies that the life of a slave is of lesser value

than the life of a free man. Yet we would not accept *this* as normative for us today, would we? Therefore, even if Exodus 21:22f. provided unambiguous evidence that the life of the fetus were regarded as of less value than the life of an adult, it would not settle the question.

Some issues that arise in connection with abortion are simple to solve from a Biblical standpoint. Pro-choice advocates maintain that a woman has the right to control her own body. This argument does not even stand up from a logical standpoint, much less a scriptural one. As far as Scripture is concerned, our bodies are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). From a logical standpoint, the embryo is not a part of the mother's body. Paul Jewett comments:

Of all the tissues in the body, it [the fetal tissue] alone has a fixed genetic make-up different from that of the body in which it is lodged. A woman cannot say of fetal tissue, this is mine, in the sense she can say of her kidney tissue, this is mine. She cannot keep it, any more than she can give it to someone else; she must surrender it at birth—or die.¹⁴

But what about the rights of the fetus? Since

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the fetus cannot choose, the argument goes, we have no right to deprive it of its right to life. But the argument can go either way. Who is qualified to define the rights of the fetus? Why must the fetus be forced to be born? Who will protect the right of the fetus not to be born? Bestowing the “right to life” upon the unborn may under certain circumstances be like forcing “life” upon a terminally ill patient who wishes to be allowed to die, or bestowing the great boon of salvation via forced conversion upon unwilling pagans. There may be times when, if the fetus were able to foresee its fate, it would choose not to be born. Job (3:1-26, 10:18, 19) expressed regret that he had

ever been born, and indicated that death is preferable to certain types of life. Jesus said of Judas that “‘it would be better for him if he had not been born’ ” (Matthew 26:24, Mark 14:21). Thus the proper reply to the argument “What if the mother of Beethoven had had an abortion?” is “What if the mother of Hitler had had one?”

If Scripture Doesn't Prohibit, Does Scripture Permit?

Can we, then, assume that if abortion were wrong, Scripture would have condemned it? Should we conclude that anything that is not explicitly condemned in Scripture is allowed?

The church has not taken this position on other matters. Although slavery and polygamy are not explicitly condemned in Scripture, the church, along with society, has condemned these practices. Other practices, accepted by society, are proscribed by the church.

Another practice that is actually allowed in Scripture (and accepted by society) but that the church has chosen to prohibit is the drinking of alcoholic beverages. The biblical position on alcoholic beverages is moderation, not total abstinence.¹⁵ But the fact that the Bible allows alcohol in moderation does not justify drinking today, anymore than the fact that it allows slavery or polygamy would justify those practices today. In the past God overlooked the times of ignorance (Acts 17:30) and allowed certain practices that should no longer be condoned in the light of advancing revelation (Matthew 19:4-8). Even in the Old Testament wine was forbidden to kings (Proverbs 31:4), Nazarites (Numbers 6:3), and priests (Leviticus 10:9), indicating that, ideally, it was not fit to drink. Today there are good medical arguments that cast doubt on the premise that one can drink “to the glory of God.”

Moreover, it could be argued that Matthew 16:19 gives the church a limited authority to forbid and permit within the guidelines of Scripture. In matters of practice, then, we must, as we have in the past, continue to move beyond the

Bible, rather than attempting to maintain that anything allowed in Scripture is legitimate behavior for the Christian today.

A Gradualist Position

The abortion debate will never be resolved as long as we insist on applying all-or-nothing categories to what is obviously a gradualist situation. There are degrees of wrong. To say that the abortion of a week-old blastocyst is the murder of a person, in the same league with the assassination of a President, is tantamount to saying that swatting a fly is the same as shooting a baboon, or that smashing an acorn underfoot is the same as cutting down a large oak. It is ridiculous to argue that a teenage son who stabs his mother to death and a doctor who does a menstrual extraction of a week-old embryo are equally guilty of the crime of murder. Such overzealous extremism discredits the pro-life cause: the best way to undo is to overdo.

However, there are crimes other than murder. While abortion may be justified in some cases of rape,¹⁶ incest, abnormality, et cetera, such cases account for only one or two percent of all abortions. Rape pregnancy is very rare. The number of pregnancies in any given year in the United States as a result of rape is probably under 100. In Czechoslovakia, a careful study was made of 86,000 consecutive induced abortions, and it was found that only 22 were done for rape.¹⁷ The vast majority of abortions are elective. As to these, I share the feelings of Mary Meehan:

Often, in debates over ethics, people torture themselves with cases that are highly unlikely to occur. We ask, “Would I tell a lie to save the world?” when we are far more likely to face the question, “Will I tell a lie to stay in someone’s good graces?” We ask, “Would I have an abortion to avoid having a severely retarded child?” The question is more likely to be “Will I have an abortion to avoid social embarrassment or interference with my career?”¹⁸

I consider myself to be pro-choice in this sense: a woman may freely choose to have intercourse or not. If intercourse has been forced upon her, she should not be forced to continue a resulting preg-

nancy. However, once human beings have freely chosen to enter into a sexual relationship, they cannot freely choose to reject the responsibilities that come with that privilege.

Even though I find it impossible to accept the idea that the embryo is a person immediately after conception, I oppose all abortions of convenience at any time after conception. Why? For a similar reason that I oppose showing disrespect for the American flag or wearing a swastika. When someone tramples on a flag or wears a swastika, no rule of Scripture is being violated and no individual is being directly injured, but from a symbolic standpoint something important, perhaps even sacred, is being degraded. Again, why do civilized people go to such lengths to dispose of a dead body in an honorable way? Why not toss it out with the garbage? Because there is a symbolic content that goes well beyond the literal content. To treat a corpse—or a fetus—with casual disrespect, is to cheapen and debase humanity. We sink to the level of savages.

Intuitively, mothers know this. In one study of 30 women dealing with the long-term manifestations of abortion, 72 percent did not claim to be particularly religious at the time they had the abortion, but 96 percent afterward felt that abor-

tion was the “taking of a life” or “murder.” Eighty-five percent were surprised at the intensity of their emotional reaction, while 81 percent felt “victimized by the abortion process.”¹⁹

Thus psychic trauma to the mother is probably more likely to result from an abortion than from a birth.²⁰ And other than harm to the mother, I cannot imagine any financial or emotional consideration (embarrassment of mother, resentment of fetus, et cetera) that would be sufficient reason for taking the life of the potential person. In regard to the mother’s feelings toward the fetus, several studies have found that most pregnant women who initially reject their pregnancy end up wanting it.²¹ And even if the parents do not want the child, there are thousands of barren couples who would cherish it. There is no such thing as an unwanted child.

While I am opposed to the black-and-white, all-or-nothing position, I believe that the vast majority of abortions done today are wrong. I do not believe church institutions should have any part in this cheapening of life. I hope that the church will take a stand against elective abortion, as it belatedly did against unequal pay for women, and cease to impair its credibility by ignoring the moral climate regarding such issues.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Michael J. Gorman, *Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish, and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1982), p. 48 suggests that references to *pharmakeia* in Galatians 5:20, Revelation 9:21, 18:23, 21:8, 22:15 may be an implicit reference to abortion. The word may refer to poisons and mind-disturbing drugs, potions supplied by a sorcerer or magician, or abortifacients.

2. Landrum B. Shettles and David Rorvik, *Rites of Life: The Scientific Evidence for Life Before Birth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1983), p. 56.

3. James J. Diamand, “Abortion, Animation, and Biological Hominization,” *Theological Studies*, 36 (1975), pp. 305-324, cited in Carol A. Tauer, “The Tradition of Probabilism and the Moral Status of the Early Embryo,” *Theological Studies*, 45 (March 1984), pp. 3-33.

4. Henri Leridon, *Human Fertility: The Basic Components* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977), p. 81, cited

in Tauer, *op. cit.*

5. J. D. Biggers, “In Vitro Fertilization, Embryo Culture and Embryo Transfer in the Human; Appendix to Report and Conclusions of the Report of the Ethics Advisory Board: HEW Support of Research Involving Human In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer,” *Federal Register*, 44:118:35033-35058 (June 18, 1979).

6. The word *image*, as used in the Old Testament, has to do primarily with physical, not psychological, resemblance (Genesis 5:3; Exodus 20:4; Psalms 106:19; Isaiah 40:19, 20; 44:9, 10, 15, 17).

7. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), p. 17.

8. Gorman, p. 41.

9. Gorman, p. 35ff.

10. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 278. Similar understandings of Exodus 21 are found in TB *Sanhedrin* 74a and 79a and *Baba Kamma* 5:4.

11. Bruce K. Waltke, "The Old Testament and Birth Control," *Christianity Today* (November 8, 1968), p. 3.

12. Bajema, *Abortion and the Meaning of Personhood*. Passim.

13. Norman L. Geissler, "The Bible, Abortion, and Common Sense," *Fundamentalist Journal*, 4:5 (May 1985), p. 25.

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

15. In Deuteronomy 14:26 the Israelites are allowed to drink "wine and strong drink." Strong drink is regarded as undesirable for men in positions of authority, but it has its legitimate uses for the depressed afflicted, according to Proverbs 31:4-7. Indeed, wine that "gladdens the heart of man" is said to be one of the gifts of God (Psalm 104:15). Even Daniel, after refusing the king's wine (Daniel 1), mainly because it had been offered to idols, may have later drunk it (Daniel 10:3), presumably because in his position of authority he could obtain wine that hadn't been offered to idols.

In the New Testament deacons are forbidden to overindulge in wine (1 Timothy 3:8) but total abstinence was not required. It is drinking to the point of intoxication which is forbidden in the Bible (Proverbs 20:1; 21:17; Isaiah 5:11, 22; 28:7, 8; 56:11, 12; Hosea 4:11; Ephesians 5:18). The strongest injunction against drinking, in Proverbs 23:29-35, refers to a particular kind of spiced wine (cf. Canticles 8:2) also called mixed wine (Proverbs 9:2; 23:30) which was prepared with herbs after the manner of the heathen Near Eastern nations and served at a banquet. This wine, being especially intoxicating, was forbidden. Otherwise the principle seems to be one of moderation.

In biblical times it was customary at this time to mix the fermented wine with water, one part wine to two parts water. The resulting beverage was quite weak and relatively innocuous; it would take a lot of it to make a person intoxicated. And when fresh water was not always available, the alcohol in wine served a useful function in purifying the water by killing the germs in it.

16. Judith Jarvis Thompson, "A Defense of Abortion," in Marshall Cohen, Thomas Nagel, and Thomas Scanlon, *The Rights and Wrongs of Abortion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 4, 5, offers the following analogy to refusing a woman an abortion because of rape:

You wake up in the morning and find yourself back to back in bed with an unconscious violinist. A famous unconscious violinist. He has been found to have a fatal kidney ailment, and the Society of Music Lovers has canvassed all the available medical records and found that you alone have the right blood type to help. They have therefore kidnapped you, and last night the violinist's circulatory system was plugged into yours, so that your kidneys can be used to extract poisons from his blood as well as your own. The director of the hospital now tells you, "Look, we're sorry the Society of Music Lovers did this to you—we would never have permit-

ted it if we had known. But still, they did it, and the violinist now is plugged into you. To unplug you would be to kill him. But never mind, it's only for nine months. By then he will have recovered from his ailment, and can safely be unplugged from you." Is it morally incumbent on you to accede to this situation?

17. Vance Farrell, *Pilgrim's Rest*, Waymarks 71 (September 1, 1983).

18. Mary Meehan, "More Trouble Than They're Worth?" cited in Sidney Callahan and Daniel Callahan, *Abortion: Understanding Differences* (New York: Plenum Press, 1984), p. 168.

19. Anne Catherine Speckhard, Ph.D., "The Psycho-Social Aspects of Stress Following Abortion" (Study, University of Minnesota), cited in Ardyce Sweem, "Laura's Question: Three Perspectives on Abortion," *Adventist Review* (September 25, 1986), p. 12.

20. According to Dr. Vincent M. Rue, psychotherapist and executive director of the Sir Thomas More Clinic of Southern California, women who have had abortions are at far greater risk for psychiatric hospitalization than are women who allow their babies to live. Post-Abortion Syndrome (PAS), a stress disorder similar to that suffered by many Vietnam veterans, afflicts up to half of all women who have abortions, often leading to other problems such as substance abuse and suicide. A study cited by Paula Vandergaer, editor of *Living World*, has documented that 60 percent of the 3,000 women calling a suicide hotline service in Milwaukee had undergone abortions (*Signs of the Times* [July 1988], p. 6). On the other hand, the very recent survey by Surgeon General Everett Koop, himself pro-life, finds the evidence on this point ambiguous. Perhaps it is safe to say that a large minority of those who undergo abortion experience very painful emotional reactions.

21. "There is a contention that unwanted conceptions tend to have undesirable effects . . . [but] direct evidence for such a relationship is almost completely lacking . . . It was the hope of the article to find more convincing systematic research evidence and to give some idea of the amount of relationship between unwanted conception and undesired effect on children. This hope has been disappointed." (E. Pohlman, "Unwanted Conception, Research on Undesirable Consequences," *Eugenics Quarterly*, 14 [1967], p. 143.)

"It is clear that mothers who initially believed their pregnancy to be 'the worst thing that ever happened to them' came to feel about the same degree of affection for their children as the mothers who were initially 'ecstatic' about the pregnancy. Most women who were most regretful of the pregnancy now claim they would have the child again if given the opportunity" whereas "one of every six mothers who were initially pleased with pregnancy would choose not to have the child again." (P. Cameron, et al., "How Much Do Mothers Love Their Children?" *Rocky Mountain Psychological Association*, May 12, 1972.)

* All Bible texts in this article are taken from the New International Version, unless otherwise indicated.