

Are we breaking the 6th commandment?

Let's get the facts straight

If you are wondering what the 6th commandment is you can either look in the book of Exodus Chapter 20:13, look on the marble sculpture in the Supreme Court foyer or you can deduct what it might refer to since we are going to discuss the issue of abortion. Yes it is the Jewish / Christian law given to the chosen people commanding them not to kill. The elections have come and gone and we have a new elected president but that does not take away our responsibility of being well informed citizens of this great country. President-elect Barack Obama will have to work through the mess of our ailing economy and the complexities of being at war, and we will have the responsibility to participate in our democratic system with the goal of maintaining our country's leadership economically, militarily and most importantly morally. This article is not an exposition of Christian beliefs on the issue of abortion, I have already done that in my article titled "When does life begin?" My main intention here is to use easily attained facts in order to discern through common sense what the right thing it is to do. In doing this I hope it will become acutely obvious that as a nation we are making assumptions of truths of which scientific evidence lacks substantial proof.

13,000 Children?

One of the largest debates is how to discern if a child in a mother's womb actually has rights. One way to look at this is by reflecting on the earliest that a child is able to live outside the womb. It is documented that majority of infants can survive after 7 months after conception outside the womb.¹ With modern medicine we now have children surviving even as young as 5 months of age.² In America there are approximately 1.2 million abortions a year and about 13,000 are performed after 21 months of pregnancy.³ Therefore if these 13,000 children, could have been born naturally or caesarian, then why weren't they? Would any of us ever say if a new born baby was in the ICU and the mother had second thoughts of having the child, "well lets take the baby's life." Of course not, that is ridiculous. What is the difference then of a few seconds from being in the womb to delivering the baby. Let the child take it's first breath and then it will have rights. Or does the child already have rights even though it is not breathing on it's own? Of course it does, as was seen when David Miller was sentenced to life in prison earlier this year for killing not only the woman in the fatal shooting in Towson, Maryland but also for taking the life of the unborn child in her womb.⁴

¹ "When does the fetus become a viable baby?", <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/314/7074/0/c>, British Medical Journal, Jan. 11, 1997.

² "Youngest Premature Baby's Survival Called a Miracle", <http://www.nysun.com/national/youngest-premature-babys-survival-called-a-miracle/49036/>, The New York Sun, Feb. 21, 2007.

³ "Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States" Guttmacher Institute, http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html, July 2008.

⁴ "Man Gets Life For Killing Girlfriend & Fetus", <http://wjz.com/local/David.Miller.2.812428.html>, WJZ-TV Channel 13, Baltimore, MD, Sep 8, 2008.

How about the other million!

You might think “well father it is only 1.1% of abortions why be so concerned” or possibly you would say, “I am sure the majority of those 13,000 abortions were done because the woman’s life was a risk”. To put things into perspective 1.1 % of 1,200,000 is triple the number of US service people who have died in the Iraq war.⁵ That is considerable loses to incur year after year. In addition it is statistically documented that only 2.8% of all abortions occur because of risk to the mother’s health⁶, and even if that percentage is a little higher for later stage pregnancies, we are still only projecting number that does not reach a 1,000. In conclusion we are left with approximately 12,000 infants who in some states would have been defended in the court of law if someone tried to take their lives. In addition, if we are concerned with the life of the mother, why not just have laws to allow women to receive abortions in case of emergencies? In response to this question we can look at the fact that previous to 1973 when the federal government mandated the legalization of abortion on demand, every state in the union had laws allowing women to receive abortions if their lives were at risk. It does not make sense that those 12,000 infants would have been defended if they had been shot with a fire arm but not when their life is taken in an abortion clinic. I understand this issue of abortion if extremely sensitive for people who have had abortions, for people who have had children, and for people who have worked with individuals effected on both sides of the fence but we must get the facts straight and realize it is not about us but about life and to whom does it belong.

Does DNA have a soul?

The next issue we should look at is the additional 1,180,000 abortions that take place every year. Do those pre-natal children have rights? It seems clear that a child does not have to be outside the womb in order to have rights but rather only if they have the ability to survive outside the womb. But let us imagine other factors such as the child’s ability to hear, which occurs at 18 weeks, or it’s ability to make facial expressions at 16 weeks,⁷ or at 8 weeks when it possess all the neuro-anatomic structure in order to experience pain.⁸ From a



Child at 14 weeks.

Christian perspective we hold the biblical belief that the value of an individual begins at conception because it is as full human being with a soul. Much modern day literature often

⁵ “U.S. Casualties in Iraq”, Global Security.ORG, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_casualties.htm , Dec. 4, 2008.

⁶ “Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspective”, Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 37(3): 110-118, September 2005.

⁷ “Fetal development: What happens during the second trimester?”, Mayo Clinic, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fetal-development/PR00113>, July 25, 2007

⁸ “Why can’t we love them both”, Dr. & Mrs. J.C. Willke, Chp. 14, http://www.abortionfacts.com/online_books/love_them_both/why_cant_we_love_them_both_14.asp

dismisses that a soul is created at the moment of conception. They claim that the DNA, the unique molecular building blocks of each human being, of a one celled fertilized egg has not been stabilized. This is because before the fertilized egg attaches to the uterine wall it can divide itself into two separate cells resulting in identical twins with two separate sets of DNA. In some rare occasions those two separate cells unite back together to form one egg with one unique set of DNA. Therefore the fertilized egg does not have uniqueness because it's DNA can vary. This understanding of DNA has been significantly challenged because of case of Karen Keegan, of Boston, Massachusetts, who was documented of have two different sets of DNA in her body. It is the theory that when she was conceived her mother's fertilized egg separated then rejoined but kept the two distinct sets of DNA.⁹ Even though this phenomenon is very uncommon, it does affirm that we cannot use the creation of one's DNA as the indicator for when a person receives a soul. We need to realize there is much more going on than we understand, and to proclaim that group of cells in a mother's womb is nothing but a blob of organic matter or a 16 week fetus who can make facial expressions does not have a soul is extremely presumptuous and from a Christian perspective, morally irresponsible. We all have the duty to educate ourselves and prevent injustices from occurring.

Father are you nuts?

Therefore what is the path that we take as members of this great democratic system? Firstly, we must not allow partial birth abortions! They are extremely dangerous to the mother and barbarically cruel to the child. As stated by Dr. Pamela Smith, Director of Medical Education, Dept. of Ob-Gyn at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Chicago, "there are in fact absolutely no obstetrical situations encountered in this country which require a partially delivered human fetus to be destroyed to preserve the life or health of the mother."¹⁰ Secondly, we must work to reversing Roe vs. Wade. You might say "Father you are nuts!" "It will never happen! You want to go back to the blood bath of the days when abortion was illegal?" I might be nuts but the facts make it very clear that we are definitely killing 1,000's of infants and possibly turning a blind eye to millions of children who are feeling the physical pain of death. It does need to be mention that there have been many women who felt the physical pain of the mal-practice of illegal abortion clinics but the number of death's incurring from these tragedies are significantly lower than one might think. The National Center of Health Statistics states that in the 1940's the number of fatalities from illegal abortions ranged form 1,300 to 1,400 deaths. This number decreased by more than a 1,000 deaths with the discovery of penicillin. In 1972 on the eve of Roe vs. Wade that number was less that 100 deaths a year. The estimated number of

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Keegan

¹⁰ Dr. Pamela Smith, 1992 Senate Hearing Record, p.82: Partial Birth Abortion Ban Medical Testimony

illegal abortions probably ranged around 100,000 a year, though it is difficult to pin point an exact number since they were illegal therefore not recorded with any consistency. It is true that one fatality from butcher like medical practices is an injustice but I would not consider less than 1% of the entire female participants in illegal abortions a substantial enough number to qualify illegalization of abortion as an invitation to return to the “blood bath of yesterday”. It also needs to be remember that abortion should remain legal in case of a mother’s life is as risk, as it was in all states before 1972.

The next four years.

In the upcoming next 4 years we need to be extremely involved in the governmental process. President elect Barak Obama has verbally been very non-committal on issues related to abortion. He stated, “This (*when life begins*) is something that I have not come to a firm resolution on ... What I know is that there is something extraordinarily powerful about potential life and that has a moral weight to it.”¹¹ He also did not vote against partial birth abortions as senator of Illinois in the 1997 bill (*SB 230*) that would have banned the practice in that state, unless the mothers life was at risk. This gives a clear



U.S Supreme Court.

indicator how he might influence the momentum of our country that is reflected in the decisions of the Supreme Court Justice. This momentum is seen by President Bush’s signing into law the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. This law was challenged on the Federal Court level as being unconstitutional but in April of 2007 the Supreme Court

announced its decision to uphold the ban on partial-birth abortion. It seems this was accomplished because of the moderate group of Judges on the Supreme Court who allowed themselves to be influenced by shear science rather political pressures. Three out of nine of those judges will most likely be retiring in the next several years¹² and I pray that our newly elected president will appoint candidates who represent the desire of the people and uphold the un-negotiable truths that govern our country. One truth is respecting the rights of every human being even though he or she has not left their mother’s womb. I know each and every one of you will practice your freedom of speech in order that justice prevails so that not just our right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness will be maintained but also the right of life for every human being.

¹¹ 2008 Democratic Compassion Forum at Messiah College, April 3, 2008.

¹² “Election could decide fate of Roe, other big court issues”, USA Today, October 06, 2008