

I. Introduction

A. I'd like to begin with a reading from the Gospel of John, 8th chapter, beginning with verse 2

1. At dawn Jesus appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

2. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

3. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

4. "No one, sir," she said.

5. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

B. This will be the second time in twenty years that I have given a sermon directly on the topic of abortion. A few years ago, under the banner Christ and Culture, I started to comment directly on some of the more vexing topics of our day: divorce, abortion, racism, consumerism, living together, marijuana and the like.

C. These are not topics I want to speak on. I'd rather chew sand than weigh in on some of these issues. And abortion is one of the ones I would particularly like to avoid:¹

1. In part because it feels unfair. I am a wealthy, married male who has never lacked for support. I cannot begin to imagine the fear and confusion that overwhelms many young women who face this choice.

2. And in part because some of what I say my hurt some of you, and I do not want to do that.² I especially do not want to hurt those already hurting or add to the pain felt by those who already feel shame or regret and who feel very judged by the church. If that is you, I apologize for the way you may have been treated by the church and for any failure on my part – or the part of others who have not extended the grace, love and forgiveness of God. Or not been there to support you in some other way.

D. But there are two reasons I am speaking on it. The first is, I think it is the right and loving thing to do.³ A while back I heard from a student who was shocked to learn that I thought abortion was wrong. The second is because, after the last time I spoke on this topic, in addition to having a number of people (men and women) come up to me and give me a date – Nov. 2, 1997 or Aug. 14th 1986 – they would say: biggest regret of my life, or I think about this every day, or he would be 24 today – because in addition to hearing that. In addition to hearing that, I also had two people say, “I wish I had heard about this twenty years ago.”

E. So, I want to look at this issue directly, and my prayer has been not only that I can follow Christ’s brilliant example in John 8 – of graciously calling people to the right path without shaming them – but that those carrying any pain around this topic find peace in the grace of Christ.

II. I believe that we are all in this. Me first. We have all fallen short. We are all sinners. None of us keep God’s standards. None of us are qualified to throw stones at someone else. And any thought that we are suggests that we are playing the part of a pharisee.

III. So, let me lay out a basic overview of the classic Christian position on abortion, make a number of observations about this topic and then end with a few challenges to all of us.

IV. The classic⁴ Christian position rolls out in five points.

A. First: Human life is sacred.

1. The Bible teaches that we were made in the image of God and that implies that we have value independent of who we are or what we do. There is a divine imprint on our souls that gives us value whether we are wanted or not, whether we are adding value to the world or not.

2. Infants, those who are handicapped,⁵ those who suffer from diseases like Alzheimers and are unable to function – people who have no “utilitarian value” – have value because God has given them value. Life is God’s to give and take. Not ours. Our worth does not have to be earned. Our value rests within us because God has given it to us.

B. Secondly: Children are a blessing. They are a gift from God. That is what the Psalmist says.⁶ That is what Jesus said.⁷ And that is what we know every time we hold a baby.

C. Thirdly: We are expected to protect the weak. God has a special place in his heart for the poor and oppressed, for the widow and orphan, for the powerless, for those others are excluding. This certainly includes helpless infants. And He calls on us to give ourselves for them. We are to love them, even when it's not convenient. Indeed, Jesus goes so far as to say, "as we treat them, we treat Him."⁸

D. Fourthly: Abortion is wrong. It is not God's plan.⁹

E. And fifthly: God's grace is available to you. To all of us. Abortion is not an unforgivable sin. It is wrong. But God is bigger than our mistakes. We are not able to exhaust his love and grace. Like all other sin, we bring it to him and confess it and we are forgiven.¹⁰

V. I spent my first eight years of ministry on a college campus – a state school in Washington.

A. When you are around a lot of 20-year-olds, this topic comes up for obvious reasons. There are unplanned pregnancies. So, thirty years ago I was pretty current on the debates around abortion.

B. When I decided to teach on this topic five years ago, I had to catch up on what had gone on. So I did some reading, talked to some doctors and was struck by how much had changed.

1. I was reminded just how common a practice abortion is – though the numbers are dropping, nearly one in four women in the US have had an abortion.¹¹

2. Second, I was reminded how uncivil discussions about abortion tend to be.^{12, 13}

3. Thirdly, I was reminded how tortured the arguments are – and here I am talking about the arguments in favor of abortion.

a) This is certainly true in the legal arena. Today most constitutional scholars – including those who favor legalized abortion – concede that the Roe v Wade decision overreached and was poorly argued.¹⁴

b) But it goes well beyond that. I would contend that the same is true for the moral arguments that are put forward. They do not work. In some cases, they are so unsound and bizarre that they are hard to address.^{15, 16}

4. Finally, I was reminded that God's Law is good and loving and we get hurt when we ignore it.

- a) We act surprised when actions have consequences – when sex leads to babies. This is clearly the intent of God’s design – and that is one of the reasons why we are supposed to be married before we start acting like we are married.
- b) Morally speaking, there are no short cuts. We see this in other ways. Lies lead to more lies. Sin leads to more sin. When we jump the tracks we get in trouble. We end up asking questions like, “How can we get rid of this child we do not want?” and are unable to see that we should be asking, “What is wrong with me for not wanting this child?”

VI. In terms of the way the debate has changed – and these points, along with many others, are developed in greater detail in my notes, which are online – I was surprised by a handful of things:

- A. I was surprised to not run across much debate over when human life begins. This was a staple of the debate years ago. Today it is generally accepted that life begins at conception. The debate now is over when a child – or a fetus – has any rights.¹⁷
- B. I was surprised that I did not hear much about the need to keep abortion legal in order to protect the life of the mother. It comes up occasionally, but it is now generally acknowledged that there are very few cases when a pregnancy has to be terminated to protect the life of the mother.
- C. I was surprised (and pleased) to see how much immediate and long term support is available for women who are pregnant. The pro-life movement has raised its game on this front.¹⁸
- D. I was surprised to learn how much abortions have changed by moving to a pill over a procedure.
- E. I was surprised to see growing support of Peter Singer’s views. Most people think that abortion is a bad thing.¹⁹ That is, even those who want to keep it legal want to see the number of abortions go down. But there are some who express no qualms about it at all. It is like knee surgery. You do not want to have knee surgery because you don’t want to have bad knees. But if there is a problem you have surgery. There is nothing wrong with having knee surgery. It is not a moral issue. For that matter, you can have as many knee surgeries as you need.
 - 1. Those who argue this way, knowingly or otherwise, subscribe to the views put forward by Princeton Ethicist Peter Singer, who was the first prominent person I know of who not only advocated for late term abortions but who also argued for infanticide and euthanasia.

2. Singer occasionally makes the news for saying things like: 1) some animals should have more rights than some people – and that to think otherwise is to be a speciesist¹⁹; 2) it is morally acceptable to kill a child up to a certain number of days after its birth (he has suggested 40)²⁰; *or* that he would have his own parents killed if their quality of life diminished too much.

3. Increasingly the number of people advocating positions like Singers has grown. We see that in the way abortion laws have changed in states like New York and Illinois.²¹

F. Finally, I was a bit surprised to read discussions about the longer-term effects readily-available abortion has had on some countries. As you may know, birth control in general, but abortion in particular, has left much of Europe caving in upon itself. Many European countries have fallen below the sustainability line. (In order for the population to remain stable, married couples need to have 2.11 children. But, there has been a fairly steep decline in the number of people who marry. And the average number of children being born has also dropped).²²

VII. As I said, I was reminded of some things and learned some new things. Let me pivot and stop talking like a cultural observer and more like a pastor. There are a few things I think you need to know.

A. Everyone loses in an abortion: a child dies, a woman is wounded, and a nation is diminished. People try to deny these realities, but those are the realities. This goes back to a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be human and what it means to be free. We would all like to be free from the results of our decisions, but we are not. There is forgiveness. And we will ultimately be transformed and made whole. But decisions have consequences, and when we act against God’s plan – against the grain of the universe – we suffer.

B. It is seldom about a choice. When you read the surveys about why women have abortions, few feel as though they have any other option. They report feeling forced by boyfriends or husbands, by parents or circumstances.

1. Frederica Mathewes-Green traveled the country interviewing women who had had abortions. She wrote, “The core reason I heard was, “I had an abortion because someone I loved told me to.” Again and again, I learned that women had abortions because they felt abandoned, they felt isolated and afraid. As one woman said, “I felt like everyone would support me if I had an abortion, but if I had the baby, I’d be alone...I felt like I didn’t have a choice. If only one person had stood by me, even a stranger, I would have had the baby.”

2. She also said, “No one wants an abortion as she wants an ice-cream cone or a Porsche. She wants an abortion as an animal, caught in a trap, wants to gnaw off its own leg.”²³

C. Thirdly, it’s not always helpful to frame this discussion in terms of rights.

1. It depends on who we are talking to. We need to speak the language of our culture,²⁴ and those who do not believe the Bible are not interested in what it has to say and are certainly not willing to follow it.

2. But, as Christians we need to see that there are problems with discussions about rights.

a) For starters, it pits the rights of the unborn against the rights of women – which is the wrong way to think about this.

b) Secondly, it leads us to focus on legal solutions – which generally means we end up acting like any other self-serving interest group that is using the courts to try to get their way

c) Thirdly, it can imply that what's legal is moral – which is not always the case.²⁵

3. But more significantly, this is not a good way for Christians to think. We don't really have rights. We are disciples. We are called to serve, to love others, to die to self, pick up our cross and follow Christ's example.

4. Jesus doesn't talk about our rights.²⁶ We do not sign up for rights, we sign up for responsibilities. We sign up to care for others.

D. Fourthly, let me note that there are two groups at Christ Church available to help.

1. The first is there to help any who find themselves pregnant and without good options. If this is you, please ask for help. Talk to your small group leader or a campus pastor or text Informed Choices 847.650.5864, which can offer all kinds of medical, emotional, spiritual and financial help - before, during and after your pregnancy.

2. The second is comprised of women - who attend Christ Church – who have had abortions, and who meet to help those who are struggling with regret. And I know this is not a small number.²⁷

VIII. There is much more that could be said. If we had more time, I could:

A. Explore how abortion appears to have a racist angle to it, for while only 13 percent of this country is African American, 39 percent of abortions are performed on African American mothers.²⁸

B. Or discuss the ways in which legalized abortion has been bad for women. It was designed to help them. And it is still promoted that way. But it's been very harmful, in part because it has freed men to put even more responsibility for a child than before – after all, if she decides to keep the baby that is her choice²⁹ -- and in part because of the trauma and regret.³⁰

IX. But let me wrap this up. What do we do?

- A. We – collectively - repent for our actions and inactions. One way or the other we all have some responsibility on this issue. At the very least we have failed to protect the weak or be the kind of safe, gracious person that those in crisis can turn to. That is wrong.³¹
- B. We continue to celebrate adoption, foster care, Safe Families and the women who choose to carry their babies to term and give them up for adoption. We also celebrate those Moms who refuse to end their pregnancy even though they've been told that their baby might not be perfectly healthy.
- C. We continue to lean into the grace of Christ and the mission he calls us to. Our world needs more churches and better churches.
- D. Finally, let me note that if you want to talk more:
1. And that includes those of you who think I am wrong. In a few weeks we will have a Q & A session after the service that is open to questions on anything. We are piloting this idea. We did it a few weeks ago. We will be doing it again on Feb. 21st. You could wait until then or send me an email sooner.
 2. But I am mostly thinking about those who have had an abortion and want to talk with one of the leaders from Surrendering the Secret – which is a confidential Bible Study / support group led by Christ Church women who have had an abortion. There is an email that you can send a note to – sttsbs2020@gmail.com. A new group is starting on Feb. 9, but even that is not going to work or what you are interested in, use that email to . Secrets like this are way too heavy. There is grace and freedom available to you.

X. Closing Prayer

¹ Among the reasons I do not want to directly take on these issues are: 1) I do not want to cause strife in the church; 2) I do not want to hurt people; 3) I do not like /agree with everyone who is on my side of this issue or approve of the way they debate; 4) I would much rather speak about Christ!

² Both Christ Church and Sheri and I have given money to crisis pregnancy centers and to unwed moms who wanted to carry their babies to term. And on one occasion – when a local hospital announced that it was changing its policy and would start to do abortions, I marched in protest. But that was a long time ago. I have not said much about abortion during the time I've been here. There are several reasons: 1) The topic seldom comes up in the text; 2) much of what is written is political and legal not theological; 3) it is difficult for an affluent white male to speak against abortion – which tends to affect poor women (especially minorities) – without appearing sanctimonious; but the key reason I have not said more is 4) as a pastor, I know way too many people who have had abortions, and I do not want to add to their pain and remorse.

³ I recently realized that in my nine years as senior pastor there were a number of topics I had not addressed. I did not want my silence to be misunderstood.

⁴ I use the term “classic” here not only because it’s the view most people associate with the church, but also because it reflects the consistent teaching of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant leaders until the 19th century. The writings of the Early Church were uniform in their opposition to abortion: The Didache (c. 100 A.D.) explicitly condemns abortion (phthora); Clement of Alexandria condemned those who used abortifacient drugs to destroy what God had created; Tertullian, Augustine and Jerome agreed that even though the exact moment that a human acquired a soul was unknown, that abortion was wrong (Jerome called it parricide – the killing of a near relative); St. Basil regarded all abortion as homicide; Calvin called it “unnatural” and “abominable.” In the 1960s Mainline Protestant churches began to call for more liberal abortion laws. In recent years some – the United Methodist and Southern Baptists to name two – have returned to more conservative positions. Note: It is important to note that while the church has been against abortion, it has not been equated with murder. Few have suggested that the mother is guilty of a crime and many are willing to make an exception in cases involving rape and incest. Neither position would hold if an abortion was viewed as murder. In *Head and Heart: American Christianities*, Gary Willis goes one step further and argues that not even Roman Catholics – who have maintained a more consistent anti-abortion position than Protestants – have viewed been consistent in viewing the fetus as a person, for if they had, “late term abortions and miscarriages would have called for treatment of the well-formed fetus as a person – calling for baptism and burial.” (Anthony M. Joseph, *Abortion and America’s Past*, published in *The City*, Winter 2009, Vol. II, Issue 3, Dennis Di Mauro, *Life Sentences, Touchstone*, March 2009, p. 39 and Martin Marty, *Gary Willis On the Abortion Question, Sightings*, 10/08/07.)

⁵ Robin Jones wrote a short story about her interaction with a young woman with Down’s Syndrome that challenges the idea that our value is tied to our rationality or utility. “She stood a short distance from her guardian at the park this afternoon, her distinctive features revealing that although her body blossomed into young adulthood, her mind would always remain a child’s. / My children ran and jumped and sifted sand through perfect, coordinated fingers. Caught up in fighting over a shovel, they didn’t notice when the wind changed. But she did. A wild autumn wind spinning leaves into amber flurries. / I called to my boisterous son and jostled my daughter. Time to go. Mom still has lots to do today. My rosy-cheeked boy stood tall, watching with wide-eyed fascination, the gyrating dance of the Down’s Syndrome girl as she scooped up leaves and showered herself with a twirling rain of autumn jubilation. / With each twist and hop she sang deep, earthly grunts ~ a canticle of praise meant for the One whose breath causes the leaves to tremble from the trees. /Hurry up! Let’s go! Seat belts on? I started the car. In the rearview mirror I studied her one more time through my misty eyes. And then the tears came. Not tears of pity for her ~ the tears are for me. For I am far too sophisticated to publicly shout praises to my Creator. / I am whole and intelligent and normal, and so I weep because I will never know the severe mercy that frees such a child and bids her come dance in the autumn leaves.” (Robin Jones, *Autumn Dance*)

⁶ Psalm 127

⁷ Mark 10; Luke 17, et al.

⁸ See Matthew 25

⁹ There are several passages typically referenced when the case is being made against abortion: Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:22-25, Psalm 139:13-16 and Luke 1:41-42. The Exodus passage is not entirely clear, but it is generally believed that “gives birth prematurely” refers to a live birth. So, if the baby is born alive but prematurely the offender must pay a fine. However, if something worse happens to the baby or the woman then retributive justice applies – life for life, etc. So the baby and the woman are assigned equal

value. In the Luke passage the term that is used to refer to John in the womb (*brephos*) is later used to refer to Jesus in the manger.

¹⁰ In I Timothy 1:15f Paul writes, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. In other words, if Christ would forgive Paul – who hated him and had his followers killed because they were following Christ – then he could forgive anyone. He drives that point home even more when he tells the Romans that, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

¹¹ There were 850K abortions in the US in 2017. Doug Stanglin, “US abortion rate is at its lowest, but restrictive laws aren't the likely cause, study says,” *USA Today*, Sept. 19, 2019.

¹² Those in the middle do not say much. Those who have a microphone tend to have strong views and tend to demonize the other side. As Martin Marty has noted, neither “Abortion is Murder” nor “Keep Your Laws Off My Body,” bumper stickers are an invitation to dialogue. (Note: It is worth pausing to consider the comments of those who argue against civility. In an editorial on President Obama’s speech at Notre Dame, Anthony Esolen had the following to say to Obama’s suggestion that both sides stop “demonizing” each other. “What kind of moral philosophy is this? Courtesy of debate implies nothing about who is right and who is wrong. Worse, what looks like courtesy is sometimes only moral tepidity; and a plea for courtesy is sometimes just an a priori denial of the rights of one side to please its case most truly and forcefully. Should the West in the time of Hitler have treated the madman with more courtesy? Was it not at fault for failing to show him, as soon as possible and as forcefully as possible, for the demon he was? And does this plea not ring hollow, anyway, from someone who has supported using racketeering laws against abortion protesters, and whose allies are attempting to compel their opponents to provide abortion services against the dictates of their conscience?” Anthony Esolen, *Notre Madame et el President, Touchstone*, July/Aug. 2009, p. 4.

¹³ Those in favor of abortion rights – i.e., Pro-Choice, Pro-freedom, advocates of reproductive rights – never refer to a baby, they talk about an embryo or a fetus, which is always an “it,” whereas those against abortion – alternately, Pro-Life or Anti-Abortion – refer to the baby as a he or she. In an interesting discussion of the policies of the New York Times, Kenneth Woodward, noted that in their coverage of the Partial Birth Abortion legislation they seldom referred to partial birth abortions. Instead, they discussed the legislation that was being promoted by “opponents of reproductive rights.” (*First Things*, Jan. 2006, p. 73).

¹⁴ It is generally agreed that Roe was “a bad constitutional decision.” That is, even those who appreciate the outcome agree that it was a bad decision because: 1) The court overreached; 2) the line or argument was “misty.” Stephen Carter writes, “Thirty years later, it is more apparent than ever that the real trouble with Roe v Wade is what constitutional scholar John Hart Ely recognized the summer after the decision was handed down: the problem, wrote Professor Ely, is not that the case is bad constitutional law but that ‘it is not constitutional law at all and gives almost no sense of an obligation to try to be.’” Joseph Bottum concurs, noting, “Here’s one simple and interesting measure: There is hardly a single law professor of real weight or seriousness who will claim anymore that Roe v. Wade was good constitutional reasoning. Oh, they’ll suggest that it’s settled doctrine, made weighty by the generations of women that have placed reliance on it, and they’ll argue tha the rest of case law has bent itself so far to accommodate Roe and its progeny that we cannot undo it without major damage to the legal system. But as late as 1990 the law schools were filled with senior academics ready to defend the legal reasoning of Roe purely on its own terms. And today, twenty years later, there are next to none. (Stephen L. Carter, *Roe v. Judicial Sense, Christianity Today*, July 2003, p. 64.; Joseph Bottum, *The Public Square, First Things*, Aug/Sept 2010, p. 5).

¹⁵ In a tongue-in-cheek effort to point out the curious logic of the prochoice position, Robert P. George writes, “I am personally opposed to killing abortionists. However, inasmuch as my personal opposition to this practice is rooted in a sectarian (Catholic) religious belief in the sanctity of human life, I am unwilling to impose it on others who may, as a matter of conscience, take a different view. Of course, I am entirely in favor of policies aimed at removing the root causes of violence against abortionists. Indeed, I would go so far as to support mandatory one-week waiting periods, and even nonjudgmental counseling, for people who are contemplating the choice of killing an abortionist. I believe in policies that reduce the urgent need some people feel to kill abortionists while, at the same time, respecting the rights of conscience of my fellow citizens who believe that the killing of abortionists is sometimes a tragic necessity – not a good, but a lesser evil. In short, I am moderately pro-choice. (*Killing Abortionists: A Symposium*, Dec. 1994) More generally I find it telling that: 1) the pro-choice side works diligently to keep people from knowing exactly what an abortion is. (Babies are not referred to as babies, but as: tissue, the product of conception, a mass of cells, etc.; and 2) that they work to suppress studies on the long-term effects of abortion. I also find it odd that: 1) there are laws protecting a baby outside the womb but not inside it – that is, the very same baby – at exactly the same stage of gestation – is protected if born but unprotected if inside its mother’s womb; 2) an unborn child has certain legal rights (e.g., the right to inherit property) but not the right to be born; 3) that pro-choice champions name their highest honor after Margaret Sanger – a celebrated racist. To quote Patrick Reardon, “there is something delirious about the pro-choice position, something downright pathological, and it is very important that we do not mistake that nightmarish context for normalcy. I am serious. Contending with pro-choice arguments is like entering a haunted house, like being trapped in a scene from Kafka or Poe...Afterwards, a bit of downtime may be required, to allow one to recover equilibrium, rationality and bright good sense.” (Reardon, *The Not-So-Good Samaritans: Aristotle, the Preservation of Families and Duties of the State, Touchstone*, April 2003, p. 38). Finally, it is worth noting the limits of logic in this debate. Many will concede that the arguments for abortion are very thin. In *Dispelling the Myths of Abortion History* (Carolina Academic Press), Joseph W. Dellapenna – who favors “unlimited choice early in pregnancy” and “carefully tailored” restrictions thereafter, spends 1,300 pages showing that much of the current liberal orthodoxy on abortion is “a philosophical and historical house of cards.” He goes on to argue that the liberalization of abortion grew out of three trends: 1) the gradual economic and social independence of women; 2) developments in medical technology that made abortion less dangerous to the pregnant woman; and 3) the abandonment of legal safeguards that had protected the unborn child for centuries. (See Michael M. Uhlmann, *Supreme Confusion, First Things*, June/July 2007, p. 45f).

¹⁶ And in some cases, they fabricate evidence to support their views. Prior to Roe v Wade one of the arguments used in favor of legalizing abortion was that thousands of women were dying from back-alley abortions. Indeed, the head of one of the major pro-abortion organizations in the US claims that in 1972 there were one million illegal abortions and that 5,000 – 10,000 women died. We do not have accurate records for any one of a number of reasons, however, it’s worth noting that: 1) the National Center for Health Statistics (a government agency) presented numbers that suggest that the number of women who died during from illegal abortions from 1940 forward. A significant drop occurred in 1950s when Penicillin became available to control infections. At that point 250 women died from illegal abortions. By 1972 the number was down to 39, and it did not decrease after Roe v Wade made abortion legal; 2) In *Aborting America*, Dr. Bernard Nathanson, who testified on behalf of legalizing abortion, wrote that they used the number of 5,000 – 10, 000 even though they knew it was totally false. (B. Nathanson, *Aborting America*, Doubleday, 1979, p. 193); other countries also claim high number of deaths from illegal abortions, but these numbers do not stand up to review – e.g., on June 18, 1989 CNN reported that there were 6 million illegal abortions each year in Brazil and that 400,000 women die. But the UN Demographic Yearbook for 1988 lists only 40,000 deaths for women between the ages of 15 and 44 – and this is for all causes of death! (Dr. J.C. Willkie, *Why Can’t We Love them Both?* Chapter 27).

¹⁷ Those who wish to keep abortion legal used to argue that it's not human life until some point. And they still do. Papers like the New York Times are careful to never refer to a baby as a baby until it's born. It is a fetus, or tissue. It makes me aware that in certain papers you read about heroic efforts to keep an unborn Panda "baby" alive in one article, and in the very next you read about the unborn "fetus" living in a woman.

¹⁸ Today professionalized services exist to care for women who agree to carry their baby to term. (It's worth noting that free care centers designed to support pregnant women were established eight years before the Roe ruling).

¹⁹ I should note that there is a radical fringe that seems to actually view abortion as a good thing. Katherine Ragsdale, the president of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge and an active participant in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, gave a speech in which she celebrated the "blessings of abortion" and compared medical personnel who refused to perform abortions with pacifists entering the military or animal rights activists who conduct medical research. And British writer Virginia Ironside, who said that she would be the first to smother a child who was suffering, "any good mother would," called abortion a "moral and unselfish act." (*First Things*, Jan. 2011, p. 67).

²⁰ H. Tristram Englehart, a prominent philosopher whose book, *Foundations of Bioethics*, is widely used in Universities today, suggests that there is no reason why we should not kill children up to a year and a half since they are not yet persons.

²¹ Those who are familiar with his views – which argue that "the capacity to suffer is the vital characteristic" that gives a being rights – note that he is ruthlessly consistent where others are not. Indeed, Singer expresses confusion when abortion advocates disagree with his views, because, "there is no sharp distinction between the fetus and the newborn baby. / It is worth noting that many who favor abortion are "gradualists" – that is, they believe that the further along the path towards being born a fetus has progressed, the more protection from being destroyed it should receive." Christopher Raczor and others point out the challenges of this view, noting that while late term abortions may be worse than early term abortions, early term abortions are also wrong. (Mary Eberstadt, *Pro-Animal, Pro-Life, First Things*, June/July 2009, p. 15ff, and "Peter Singer: OK to Kill Disabled Babies," Sept. 22, 2006, Christopher Kaczor, *Equal Rights, Equal Wrongs, First Things*, Aug/Sept. 2011, p. 21f." /

²² In fact, many countries have not only fallen below 2.11, they have fallen below 1.9 – from which no country has ever reversed itself. And some have fallen below the 1.3 number, which demographers call the "death spiral." / Putin has said that the number one threat facing Russia in the future will be their inability to defend their borders because they will not have enough soldiers to staff the military. And China's one child policy has led to selective abortions (girls are aborted because the couple wants a son) that has led to dangerous imbalances. The ratio of boys to girls is normally 105 to 100. The ratio in India is 112 to 100. In China it's 121 to 100, with some Chinese cities at 150 to 100. Thanks to India and China the world's ratios are now off – they are 107 to 100. And, because women have a "civilizing effect" on men, this imbalance is more troubling than you might imagine. A report prepared by the Institute of Child Health at University College in London and Zhejiang Normal University, noted that "the large cohorts of surplus males in China presently reaching adulthood are predominantly of low socioeconomic class, and concerns have been expressed that their lack of marriageability, and consequent marginalization in society, may lead to anti-social behavior and violence, threatening societal stability and security." The study noted that 94% of unmarried Chinese between the ages of 28 and 49 are male, and 97% of them have not graduated from high school. (See: Mara Hvistendahl, *Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls*, and *Consequences of a World Full of Men, and People and Population, Touchstone*, Nov. 2006, p. 59).

²³ Terrell Clemmons, *Roe v Women: Pro Choice Clearly Harms Those It Claims to Help*, Salvo, Autumn, 2009, p. 21.

²⁴ In today's pluralistic culture we cannot expect others – nor our government – to accept the authority of the Bible. Our rationale must make sense to others.

²⁵ We need to contend that the State cannot decriminalize abortion because the act is criminal by its very nature.

²⁶ The discussion of rights is explored a bit in Reardon's article, *The Not-So-Good Samaritans*. There he writes: Truth to tell, the very notion of rights within a family strikes me as rather cumbersome, obtrusive, and distracting. I wonder, do any of us, within the family, even have rights? Well, I suppose we do, but not, I think, in a sense immediately significant. Families are constituted and held together, rather, by needs, affections, and responsibilities, not rights. I cannot picture what rights are involved when meals are cooked and floors mopped and garbage taken out to the curb. These are simply things that need to be done, and we do them out of love, and the business of the family is to decide who will be responsible for doing them. Families, that is to say, have needs, affections, and responsibilities. // A number of years ago Dr. Will Willimon – who was then the Chaplain at Duke University (he is now the Methodist Bishop in Alabama) – made a comment that has stuck with me. He was on a panel discussion about Academic Freedom and whether or not professors needed tenure. And Willimon said that after listening to all the arguments he didn't find any of them very compelling, so when he was called on he announced that he didn't believe in academic freedom at all. Because, he said, "I'm a Christian. A disciple. A bond servant. My master made himself a slave. I'm supposed to do the same. I have no rights. And I'm just selfish enough to not want anyone else to have them either." If you know Willimon, you'll recognize his very provocative approach to things. When the President of the University asked for his help in promoting a new alcohol policy for the students, Willimon told her he thought it was a bad plan. In fact, he said, he thought the goal was to keep the students drunk so they didn't realize that they were not getting much for the \$40K it cost to go there each year. You can never be entirely sure whether he's just yanking your chain.

²⁷ A while ago I just read an article on Stevie Nicks (of Fleetwood Mac fame. She is now 72 years old. And it went into her longing to be a mother after having four abortions earlier in her career.

²⁸ Several different data points are worth noting here: 1) Dr. Martin Luther King's niece refers to abortion as "Black Genocide;" 2) Michael Novak has argued that the black population would be 35% larger than it is without abortion; 3) Terrell Clemmons notes that Margaret Sanger was an "open racist and eugenicist" who wanted to use abortion to rid the world of "human weeds," starting with "the Negro population." (Terrell Clemmons, *Wages for Sin*, Salvo, Winter 2010, p. 60); 4) Lila Rose notes that 80 percent of Planned Parenthood's abortion clinics are in minority neighborhoods. (Lila Rose, *Fight for Life*, *First Things*, Oct. 2010, Vol. 54, No. 206, p. 15f.); and 5) Clenard H. Childress states that "the most dangerous place for an African American to be is in the womb of his or her African American mother." (Clenard H. Childress Jr., *ProLife's Next Movement*, *Christianity Today*, Oct. 2009, p. 56.

²⁹ In *Her Choice, Her Problem*, Richard Stith writes, "Easy access to abortion has increased expectation and frequency of sexual intercourse (including unprotected intercourse) among young people, making it more difficult for a woman to deny herself to a man without losing him, thus increasing pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. (See, for instance, Jonathan Klick and Thomas Stratmann's 2003 study, "*The Effect of Abortion Legalization on Sexual Behavior*" in the *Journal of Legal Studies*). Furthermore, if a woman attempts to choose birth instead of abortion, she may well find the child's father pushing the other way, and refusing to take any responsibility for the child if she chooses to keep it." Stith argues that others – family, friends, employers, etc – may also less help for a young woman who chooses to keep the child because if she chose to go through with the pregnancy then she must have reasoned that she could

take care of the child on her own. (Richard Stith, *Her Choice, Her Problem: How Abortion Empowers Men, First Things*, Aug/Sept 2009, p. 7f).

³⁰ There are several different ways to argue that abortion is harmful to women. 1) There is clear evidence that many women regret the procedure. Dr. Theresa Burke, the founder of Rachel's Vineyard – a care program for women suffering from post abortion depression – and the author of *Forbidden Grief*, notes that sixty to seventy percent of women who undergo abortion have a negative opinion of the procedure. Burke believes that increased levels of depression, eating disorders, suicide and self-destructive behaviors among women in the last thirty years, are at least partly linked to this. In August of 2008, the Justice Foundation released a statement by 100 scientists, physicians and mental health professionals stating that “Significant numbers of women suffer serious physical, mental and psychological trauma as a result of an abortion.” The US Supreme Court cited the Justice Foundation's Amicus Brief when upholding the ban on Partial Birth Abortions. Likewise, a 2008 article in the *Journal of Psychiatric Research* noted that, “Abortion was found to be related to an increased risk for a variety of mental health problems (panic attacks, panic disorder, agoraphobia, PTSD, bipolar disorder, major depression with and without hierarchy), and substance abuse disorders after statistical controls were instituted for a wide range of personal, situational and demographic variables.” And a 2006 report in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* reports that teens who abort were five times more likely to seek subsequent help for psychological and emotional problems than teens who carried their pregnancies to term. (Terrell Clemmons, *Roe v. Wade: Pro Choice Clearly Harms Those It Claims to Help*, *Salvo*, Issue 10, Autumn 2009, p. 18ff. As an aside, it's interesting to note how Lorena Bobbitt's defense was covered by the media years ago. Bobbitt was found not guilty as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder, incurred because John Wayne Bobbitt had forced her to have an abortion. The attack on her husband occurred nearly three years to the date of her abortion. (Mary Walsh, *Healing Pain*, A Book Review of *Forbidden Grief*, by Theresa Burke, Ph.D., *Touchstone*, Jan/Feb 2003, p. 53.)

³¹ The minimum purpose of the law is to protect the weak from violence. “To our great grandchildren it will be obvious that this was the civil-rights challenge of our time, and we will be judged for our response. If we are not moved when people kill children, nothing will ever move us.” Frederica Mathews-Green, *The Abortion Debate is Over*, *Christianity Today*, Dec. 1999, p. 86.