

Pro-Choice (Pro-Abortion) Wins — Pro-Life Advocates are Wrong on Abortion **IF**...

Scott Klusendorf's Hume Lake "Pro-Life 101" expanded presentation outline ♦ **Note:** *For a shortened version of this outline that can be used in a youth group or campus club, go to the end of this presentation. For an audio CD of Scott's Hume Lake pro-life seminar, call STR at 1-800-2-REASON or www.str.org*

- I. **Introduction:** After 10 years of debating friends and colleagues that support abortion-on-demand, I'm now ready to make a major concession: I think they are right. We shouldn't deny women the right to choose to kill their unborn offspring. We shouldn't impose our personal views on abortion. We shouldn't take away private decisions. In short, I will concede that we shouldn't restrict abortion at any time and that it should remain legal through all nine months of pregnancy for any reason or no reason **IF** (pause)...**IF** what?¹ If the "choice" they are offering does not result in the death of an innocent human being. All they must do is prove that the unborn are not human and I will surrender my pro-life view. It's that simple.
- II. **Topic:** Tonight, I will discuss why the abortion issue is about one question: What is the unborn? Is the unborn a member of the human family? If so, killing him or her to benefit others is a serious moral wrong. It treats the distinct human being, with his or her own inherent moral worth, as nothing more than a disposable instrument. Conversely, if the unborn are not human, killing them through elective abortion requires no more justification than having your tooth pulled.

For example, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and the *Virginian Pilot* reported last August that two research labs--one in Virginia the other in Massachusetts--were creating human embryos for the express purpose of destroying them so stems cells could be harvested.² At the time, many in the press thought this was terrible. Quite frankly, I'm puzzled by all the fuss. If the embryos in question are not human, why not create them solely for research purposes? Why not decide in advance that their sole purpose is to be created, and then killed, so we can harvest their body parts?

I once heard a story about a woman whose father suffered from Parkinson's Disease. Having heard that brain cells from late-term fetuses could be used to treat the disease, she sought to conceive a child for the express purpose of aborting it at six months so that its cells could be used to treat her father. People were outraged. But again, if the unborn are not human until, say, 25 weeks, why not kill them at 24 weeks if doing so benefits others?

¹ Gregory Koukl originally suggested this approach to the abortion debate.

² Rick Weiss, "Firm Aims to Clone Embryos for Stem Cells," *Washington Post*, July 12, 2001; Tim Friend, "Group Creates Embryos Specifically for Research," *USA Today*, July 11, 2001; Elizabeth Simpson, "Embryos Created Solely for Research," *Virginian-Pilot*, July 10, 2001.

III. **Significance:** The answer to the question, **What is the unborn?** trumps all other considerations in the abortion debate. Here's why.

Imagine you are at the sink washing dishes. As you are scrubbing away, your child walks up behind you and asks, "Daddy (or Mommy), can I kill this?"³ What is the first thing you are going to ask him? You can never answer the question, "Can I kill this?" unless you've answered a prior question: "What is it?"

Now everyone in the abortion debate agrees that abortion kills *something*. But whether it's right to take the life of any living thing depends entirely on the question, "What is it?"

This is not a debate about trusting women to make their own responsible choices, as Planned Parenthood asserts. Does the right to make one's own "responsible choices" include the rights of parents to abuse children in the privacy of the home? Would anyone dare to argue that laws banning child-abuse are unjust because they allow the police power of the state to infringe on personal liberty? Therefore, if the unborn are human like other children, killing them in the name of privacy is a clear moral wrong. As I have shown, this debate is about one question: What is the unborn? Everything comes back to that one question.

Nor is the abortion issue about "choice and who decides." Would anyone you know support mothers killing their toddlers in the name of "choice and who decides?" Therefore, if the unborn are human, like toddlers, we shouldn't kill them in the name of choice anymore than we would a toddler. Again, this debate is about just one question: *What is the unborn? Is the unborn human like the toddler?*

At this point, some may object that my comparisons are not fair—that killing a toddler is not the same as killing a fetus. But that's the issue, isn't it? Are they same? That is the one and only issue before us tonight.

Let me be clear. I am vigorously "pro-choice" when it comes to women choosing a number of moral goods. I support a woman's right to choose her own health care provider, to choose her own school, to choose her own husband, to choose her own job, to choose her own religion, and to choose her own career, to name a few. These are among the many choices that I fully support for the women of our country. But some choices are wrong, like killing innocent human beings simply because they are in the way and cannot defend themselves. No, we shouldn't be allowed to choose that.

To open our discussion of the question, What is the unborn? I brought with me a short videotape. Be advised that this three-minute clip contains graphic pictures of abortion procedures. I'm alerting you up front so no that one feels coerced into watching. As a further courtesy, we have removed all narration from the film so

³ Gregory Koukl, *Precious Unborn Human Persons* (San Pedro, CA: Stand to Reason Press, 1999) p. 4.

that by simply looking away you can avoid its contents entirely. I realize that some may object to these pictures on grounds that they substitute emotion for reason and therefore should not be used in public debate. But this objection misses the point entirely. *The question is not, Are the pictures emotional? They are. The real question is, Are the pictures true?* If so, they ought to be admitted as evidence. We ought to avoid empty appeals to emotion, those offered *in place of* good reasons. If, however, the pictures substantiate the reasons I am offering and do not obscure them, they serve a vital purpose. Truth is the issue.⁴

This is precisely the point feminist (and abortion advocate) Naomi Wolf makes in a 1995 *New Republic* article:

The pro-choice movement often treats with contempt the pro-lifers' practice of holding up to our faces their disturbing graphics....[But] how can we charge that it is vile and repulsive for pro-lifers to brandish vile and repulsive images if the images are real? To insist that truth is in poor taste is the very height of hypocrisy. Besides, if these images are often the facts of the matter, and if we then claim that it is offensive for pro-choice women to be confronted with them, then we are making the judgment that women are too inherently weak to face a truth about which they have to make a grave decision. This view is unworthy of feminism.⁵

A colleague of mine sums it up this way: "If something is so horrifying we can't stand to look at it, perhaps we shouldn't be tolerating it."⁶

[**"Harder Truth"** video presentation—3 minutes]⁷

- IV. **Thesis:** The modest position I will defend tonight is that the unborn are members of the human family and should not be harmed without proper justification.

Make no mistake. Tonight we stand before two possible futures based on two radically different views of humanity. One view says that human beings are intrinsically valuable simply because they are human. According to this view, your rights do not depend on what you can do or your level of achievement. The other view asserts that human beings are merely instrumentally valuable, meaning they are mere carriers of what's truly valuable, most notably consciousness, intelligence, and the like. On this view, you are not fully human until you can perform or function at a certain level. Such a view is elitist and exclusive. It entails the belief that human beings that are in the wrong location or have the

⁴ Gregory Koukl and Scott Klusendorf, "The Vanishing Pro-Life Apologist," *Clear Thinking* (Spring, '98).

⁵ Naomi Wolf, "Our Bodies, Our Souls," *New Republic*, October 16, 1995, p. 32.

⁶ Gregg Cunningham is the Executive Director of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform. 1-562-777-9117.

⁷ Order "Harder Truth" from STR at 1-800-2-REASON or www.str.org. I usually show 3 minutes of this nine-minute film, beginning with the fetoscopy scene that is located about two minutes into the film. You will recognize this scene by the flashing white triangle in the corner of the viewing screen.

wrong level of development do not deserve the protection of law. In short, elective abortion violates the very principle that once made political liberalism great: a basic commitment to defend the small, weak, and defenseless.

In sharp contrast, the modest position I will defend is that no human being regardless of size, level of development, race, gender, or place of residence should be excluded from the community of human persons. In other words, my view of humanity is inclusive, indeed wide-open to all, *especially* those who are small, vulnerable, and defenseless.⁸

I will defend my view that the unborn are members of the human family both scientifically and philosophically.

A. **The stubborn facts of science:**

1. **The unborn are distinct living organisms.** Unlike bodily cells or sperm cells, which are merely parts of a larger human organism, the unborn are distinct, self-integrating, whole (though immature) human beings.⁹ They have the natural, inherent capacity to develop into mature human beings. The difference in kind between each of our cells and a human embryo is clear: An individual cell's functions are subordinated to the survival of the larger organism of which it is merely a part. The human embryo, however, is already a whole human entity.
2. **The unborn come from human parents.** Biogenesis teaches that every living thing reproduces after its own kind. In other words, dogs produce dogs. Cats produce cats. Humans produce humans. This means that human parents can only produce human offspring. If you do not think this is a conclusive argument for the humanity of the unborn, consider this question: How is it possible for two human parents—in clear defiance of the Law of Biogenesis—to create offspring that is not human, but later becomes human? The stubborn facts of science rule this out.

Objection: “Sperm and egg, as well as body cells, contain human DNA and are human life. Do I commit mass murder if I kill cells from my hand?”

Reply: This objection confuses “parts” with “wholes.” Unlike bodily cells and sperm cells, which are merely parts of a larger human organism, the embryo is already a distinct, whole, self-integrating human being. True, it is small and has yet to develop, but it is a whole human being nonetheless. It makes no sense to say that you and I were once a sperm cell. However, the facts of science make clear that you and I were once human embryos.

⁸ Francis J. Beckwith originally came up with the basic wording of this paragraph.

⁹ T.W. Sadler, *Langman's Medical embryology*, 7th edition (London: Williams & Wilkins, 1996) p. 3

In short, somatic cells are not, and embryonic human beings are, distinct, self-integrating human organisms.¹⁰

Objection: “The embryo doesn’t yet have a brain. How can you say it is a living human being?”

Reply: Unlike more mature human organisms, an embryo does not need a brain to integrate its bodily systems so that it can live. Clearly, the embryo is alive. If not, why is it growing? Last time I checked, dead things don’t grow. Again, the facts of science make clear that the embryo is a living, distinct, self-integrating human being. True, one can arbitrarily assert that embryos need a brain to live, but science says otherwise.

B. Philosophic proof:

1. Instead of refuting the scientific case for the humanity of embryo, abortion advocates assert, without justification, that although the unborn are *human beings*, they not *persons*. This is not science, but a highly subjective and arbitrary philosophical assertion. My question is: “What’s the difference? Why should anyone accept the claim that there can be such a thing as a human being that is not a person?” True, my opponents can *assert* their *opinion* that brain development determines personhood, but that won’t help their case. I could just as easily assert that 40 year-old lawyers are not persons. To win, they must explain why we *ought* to accept such a highly subjective and arbitrary standard in deciding who is and is not a member of the human family. They must present logical *reasons* for their conclusion.
2. The embryo differs from a newborn (or, for that matter, each of us) in only four ways, none of which are significant in the way that abortion-advocates need them to be. The acronym SLED is a helpful reminder of these non-essential differences:¹¹
 - **Size:** True, the fetus is smaller than a newborn, but this is hardly relevant. Are large people more human than small people? Men are generally larger than women. Do men deserve more rights? Is Shaquille O’Neal more human than Hillary Clinton simply because he is larger? Surely no one would argue that it is less a crime to beat a small child than it is a large one. Clearly, the size of the fetus is not the issue.

¹⁰ I am indebted here to Robert George and Patrick Lee, “Reason, Science, and Stem Cells, *National Review On-line*, July 20, 2001.

¹¹ Stephen Schwarz first came up with the acronym SLED to illustrate these differences, although the ideas I present under each of the four differences are my own. S. Schwarz, *The Moral Question of Abortion* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990) p. 17.

- **Level of Development:** True, the fetus is less developed than a newborn, but why should anyone accept the claim that this is a relevant factor? Is a four-year old girl who has yet to develop her reproductive system less human than a 17 year-old that has? Is that same four-year old less human because she does not match the intellectual prowess of a teenager? Clearly not. It is one thing to say that critical thinking distinguishes us as human beings. It is quite another to say that your right to live depends on how intelligent you are. Yet if abortion advocates are correct that rational development and self-consciousness define the morally significant person, then why shouldn't greater rationality make you more of a person? Consequently, the intellectually and artistically gifted would be free to maximize their pleasure at the expense of those less intelligent. Furthermore, if this view is correct, personhood could be expressed by a bell curve in which human beings move toward full personhood in their early years, reach full personhood during their middle years (when they reach their intellectual peaks), then gradually lose personhood as they age. Presumably, your rights as a person would increase, stabilize, and then decrease in this process. This is absurd.
- **Environment:** Where you are has no bearing on *who* you are. Did you stop being you when you rolled over in bed last night or when you walked from the car to your den? If not, how does a simple journey of seven inches down the birth canal suddenly transform the essential nature of the fetus from non-human to human? I know, for example, of a baby girl named Rachel who was born at 24 weeks gestation.¹² (That is barely six months into the pregnancy.) At the time of her birth, she weighed less than a pound and could fit into the palm of your hand. The hospital staff worked heroically to save her life and now she is a healthy toddler. But let's assume that instead of saving baby Rachel's life at 24 weeks, the doctor came into her room and killed her while she was resting in her father's hand. We would consider that an outrage, wouldn't we? But do you know that the same baby Rachel, that very same baby girl, can be killed through legalized abortion through all nine months of pregnancy simply because she is located seven inches away in her mother's womb? Ladies and gentlemen, your right to live is not based on your current address.
- **Degree of dependency:** If viability makes us human, all those who depend on insulin or kidney medication are non-human and we may kill them. Or, consider this disturbing example: You are stranded in the woods one freezing night in January, but you have plenty of warm clothing. While searching for help, you encounter a lost toddler wearing shorts and a tee shirt. Scantily dressed, he will freeze to death within the hour if no one helps him. Realizing this child depends

¹² Gregory Koukl, *Precious Unborn Human Persons*, pp. 26-7

totally on you for his survival, you promptly excuse yourself from having any moral obligation to him. In fact, you go one step further. You feed him to the wolves because, after all, he cannot survive without you. Obviously, you wouldn't do that. Neither would any abortion advocate I know. In fact, the most strident defender of abortion would do exactly as you or I would do in that situation: She would pick the child up and wrap him inside her own jacket, using her own body to sustain him. She would remain with him—all night if need be, despite inconvenience or hardship—until he was delivered safely to his parents. She would protect the child precisely because he depends solely on her for survival. It would not matter that he was an unwanted intruder or an uninvited guest. And yet when it comes to the woman's *own unborn offspring*, the moral logic of abortion advocates is that she has no responsibility to her child precisely because it depends on her for protection. In other words, he can be legally killed *because of his need*. This is absurd.

In short, none of these four differences between fetus and newborn—size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency—are morally relevant such that we can say it is ethically justifiable to kill fetuses but not newborns. Therefore, both scientifically and philosophically, the facts show that the unborn are members of the human family. They deserve the same respect we show infants, toddlers, and adults.

V. Summary and Conclusion

- A. To sum up, when abortion advocates assert that they have a right to choose, I ask them to complete their own sentence: “A woman has a right to choose. *Choose what?*” Answer: The so-called “pro-choice” view is that a compassionate and tolerant society should allow us the choice to jam scissors through the head of an infant while it is in the process of being born, as is done in partial-birth abortion.¹³ It offers us the choice to dismember a human fetus limb from limb,¹⁴ causing him or her insufferable pain.¹⁵
- B. The choice being offered by the pro-choice movement is this: Big and strong people should have the choice to exploit the most helpless and vulnerable

¹³ L. Sprang and M. Neerhof, "Rationale for Banning Abortions Late in Pregnancy," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, August 26, 1998.

¹⁴ See Warren Hern, *Abortion Practice* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1990). This book is the standard medical teaching text on abortion techniques.

¹⁵ For fetal pain, see the following: Vincent J. Collins, "Fetal Pain and Abortion: the Medical Evidence," *Studies in Law and Medicine* (Chicago: Americans United for Life, 1984) pp. 6-7; Xenophon Giannakouloupoulos, *et al*, "Fetal plasma Cortisol and β -endorphin Response to Intrauterine Needling," *The Lancet*, July 9, 1994; L. Sprang and M. Neerhof, "Rationale for Banning Abortions Late in Pregnancy," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, August 26, 1998.

members of the human family. It's the belief that strong and independent people deserve the protection of law while small and dependent people do not.

- C. This is wrong. We can do better than that. In the past, we used to discriminate on the basis of skin color and gender, but now, with elective abortion, we discriminate on the basis of size, level of development, location, and degree of dependency. We've simply exchanged one form of bigotry for another, haven't we?

And so, as you listen to my case tonight, ask yourself this question: Which view is more tolerant of the rights of others? Which is more inclusive of those who are small, vulnerable, and defenseless? Is it the so-called pro-choice view that disqualifies those that cannot measure up to its arbitrary standard of developmental achievement, or is it the pro-life view that is wide open to all, especially the defenseless?

You should also ask which view is more extreme. My view is that a decent and civilized society should not kill innocent human beings that are in the way and cannot defend themselves. The opposing view is that we are allowed the choice to kill any unborn baby at any point in the pregnancy for any reason or no reason and that you the tax-payer should pay for that so-called private choice. In other words, there is no abortion that is morally problematic.

Does that trouble you? It shouldn't, if the unborn are *not* human. Again, if my "pro-choice" friends can prove the unborn are not human, I will concede this debate. And so should you. However, take note: They must prove their case conclusively. It is not enough to say that we don't know if the unborn are human. If we don't know, we can't kill the unborn because we may be taking a human life. What would we think of a structural engineer that blew up an old building without first making sure there was no one inside? Yet that is exactly what some abortion advocates suggest we do. They say: "We don't know if the unborn are human, but we insist on the right to kill them anyway." This is not a logical response to my argument, but an assertion of raw power. Why did rescue workers at the site of the World Trade Center remove debris with buckets rather than bulldozers in the three weeks following the events of September 11th? You know why: It was because there was a possibility, however remote, that living human beings were inside. If we are unsure, reason dictates that we err on the side of caution.

Remember: The fact that some people controvert a position does not make that position intrinsically controversial.¹⁶ The absence of consensus does not mean the absence of truth. People once disagreed about slavery, racism and genocide, but that did not make them complex issues. They also disagreed on whether the earth was flat or round, but that did not mean that there were no right answers. Abortion is complex only for those who, because of their own

¹⁶ Peter Kreeft, Human Personhood, *Journal of Biblical Ethics in Medicine*, Winter 1990.

self-interest, want to make it complex. To paraphrase what Abraham Lincoln said to Stephen Douglas, You do not have a right to do what is wrong. Ladies and gentlemen, neither do we.

VI. Handling Objections: Five Bad Ways People Argue about Abortion

[Note: If time permits, continue your presentation by discussing the 5 bad ways people argue about abortion noted below. Otherwise, read this section carefully so you'll be ready for the question period following your talk. For talks of 20 minutes or less, see the abbreviated outline at the conclusion of this text.]

To review, pro-life advocates contend that elective abortion is a serious moral wrong because it takes the life of a defenseless human being. This simplifies the abortion controversy by focusing public attention on just one question: Is the unborn a member of the human family? If so, killing him or her to benefit others is a serious moral wrong. It treats the distinct human being, with his or her own inherent moral worth, as nothing more than a disposable instrument. Conversely, if the unborn are not human, killing them for any reason requires no more justification than having a tooth pulled.

There is nothing overtly religious in framing the debate this way. As we've seen, pro-life advocates defend their position with science and philosophy.

Scientifically, few people dispute that individual human life begins at conception. Unlike sperm and ovum, which merely contain human genetic material, the embryo possesses the active (inherent) capacity to develop itself into a fetus, infant, child, and adult. It is a distinct, unified, self-integrating human organism. Dr. Landrum Shettles, the first scientist to achieve conception in a test tube, writes that conception not only confers life, it "defines" life.¹⁷ That is to say, at no point does the distinct organism that came into being undergo a "substantial change" or change of nature. It is human and will remain so. It is an immature human, as is an infant, but a human being nonetheless.

Philosophically, embryos differ from newborns (or, for that matter, toddlers) in terms of size, location, and development, but these differences are *not* morally significant in the way abortion advocates need them to be.

For example, everyone agrees that embryos are small—perhaps smaller than the dot at the end of this sentence. But since when do rights depend on how large we are? Men are generally larger than women, but that hardly means they deserve more rights.

Development also fails to disqualify the embryo as fully human. A four-year-old girl is less developed than a 14-year-old one, yet no reasonable person would conclude that she is less than fully human because of it.

¹⁷ Landrum Shettles, *Rites of Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) p. 37.

Location fares no better. As Dr. Frank Beckwith points out, *where* you are has no bearing on *who* you are. When you rolled over in bed last night you changed location. Did you stop being you? What about when you moved from the den to the kitchen? When people say that birth makes the unborn human, my question is simply this: How does a simple change of location--from inside the womb to outside the womb--change the essential nature of the unborn? Why should anyone accept the fact that a journey of seven inches down the birth canal changes a non-human tissue mass into a valuable human we ought to protect?

Nonetheless, some people ignore the scientific and philosophic evidence I have presented and argue for abortion based on self-interest. That is the lazy way out. If we care about truth, we will courageously follow the facts wherever they lead. Here are five common mistakes people make arguing for abortion.

A. Mistake #1: confuse objective claims with subjective ones¹⁸

When pro-life advocates say that abortion is morally wrong because it takes the life of a defenseless child, they are making a particular *type* of claim. Specifically, they are making a *moral* claim about the rightness or wrongness of abortion.

Many people, however, misconstrue the kind of claim the pro-lifer is making in order to respond to one they like better. Consider the following responses to the statement, Abortion is morally wrong.

"That's just your view."

As a guest on the television show *Politically Incorrect*, super model Kathy Ireland gave a carefully reasoned scientific and philosophic defense of the pro-life position. The show's host, Bill Maher, shot back with something like, "Kathy, that's just your view."

What's wrong with this response? Maher was confusing a *moral* claim with a *preference* claim. But there is a difference between disliking something (say, for example, a particular flavor of ice cream) and thinking it is morally wrong. Put simply, when pro-life advocates say that abortion is morally wrong, they are not saying they personally *dislike* abortion or would *prefer* that people not have one. Rather, they are saying that elective abortion is *objectively wrong* for everyone, regardless of how one feels about it. This is why the popular bumper sticker "Don't like abortion? Don't have one!" misses the point entirely. It confuses the two types of claims. Try this: "Don't like slavery? Don't own a slave!"

Now it may be the case that pro-life advocates like Kathy Ireland are mistaken about their claim. Perhaps their evidence that abortion unjustly takes the life

¹⁸ Gregory Koukl, *Ten Bad Arguments against Religion* (audio cassette). Order at 1-800-2-REASON.

of a defenseless child is weak and inconclusive. But instead of proving this with facts and arguments, abortion advocates like Bill Maher ignore the evidence altogether. "Well, that's just your view." This not only relativizes the pro-lifers claim, it is intellectually lazy. It attempts to dismiss evidence rather than refute it.

Imagine if I were to say, "There is a pink elephant in the corner of the room just beneath the window."¹⁹ How should you respond to my claim? Perhaps I'm mistaken (and chances are I would be), but it would do no good to say, "That's just your view." The problem is I was not offering an *opinion*, I was claiming to be *right*. To refute me, you must show that my claim is false. The correct response is to say, "Your evidence is lousy. We looked in the corner and there is no elephant."

But again, Maher did not do that. At no point did he challenge her facts and arguments. What he said in effect was "Go away Kathy. You have your views and I have mine." This was very condescending because he did not even entertain the possibility that she had good evidence for her claim. Nor did he acknowledge the type of claim she was making.

To sum up, Maher was confusing a preference claim with a distinctly moral one. Preference claims cannot be evaluated as true or false because they are matters of personal taste. You cannot reasonably argue that vanilla ice cream is objectively better than chocolate.

But moral claims are different. They can be evaluated as true or false based on the evidence. They do not say, "This is better *tasting*," they say, "This is *right*". Kathy Ireland's claim was: "Abortion is wrong because it takes the life of a defenseless child and I think I'm right." Maher's glib response did nothing to refute this.

In fact, one could stop Maher dead in his tracks by saying, "Bill, it's just your view that it's just my view."

"Don't force your morality on me."

A student at a Southern California college said this to me after I made a case for the pro-life position in her sociology class. She was in effect saying, "Morality is relative; it's up to me to decide what is right and wrong." We call this *moral relativism*, the belief that there are no objective standards of right and wrong, only personal preferences. Therefore, we should tolerate other views as being equal to our own.

¹⁹ Illustration is taken from Koukl, *Ten Bad Arguments against Religion*.

Relativism, however, is seriously flawed for at least three reasons.²⁰ First, it is self-refuting. That is to say, it cannot live by its own rules. Second, relativists cannot reasonably say that anything is wrong, including intolerance. Third, it is impossible to live as a relativist.

1) Relativism is self-refuting--it commits intellectual suicide. The student said it was wrong for me to force my views on others, but she could not live with her own rule. Although our dialogue was pleasant, she clearly tried to force her views on me.²¹

Student: You made some good points in your talk, but you shouldn't force your morality on me or anyone else who wants an abortion. It's our choice, isn't it?

Me: Are you saying I'm wrong?

Student: I'm not sure. What do you mean?

Me: Well, you think I'm wrong, don't you? If not, why are you correcting me? And if so, then you're forcing your morality on me, aren't you?

Student: No, I just want to know why you are telling people what they can and cannot do with their lives.

Me: Are you saying I shouldn't do that? That it's wrong? If so, then why are you telling me what I can and cannot do? Why are you forcing your morality on me?

Student (regrouping): I'm confused. Look, the simple fact is that pro-choicers are not forcing women to have abortions, but you want to force women to be mothers. If you don't like abortion, don't have one. But you shouldn't force your beliefs on others. All I am saying is that pro-life people should be tolerant of other views.

Me: Is that your view?

Student: Yes.

Me: Why are you forcing it on me? That's not very tolerant, is it?

Student: What do you mean? I think women should have a choice and you don't. It's your view that's intolerant, wouldn't you say?

²⁰ For a full refutation of relativism, see Gregory Koukl and Francis Beckwith, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).

²¹ The tone you set for these types of exchanges should be polite and calm, never combative.

Me: Okay, so you think I'm wrong. What is it you want pro-lifers like me to do?

Student: You should let women decide for themselves and tolerate other views.

Me: Tell me, what exactly do pro-choicers believe?

Student: We believe everyone should decide for themselves and tolerate other views.

Me: So you are demanding that pro-lifers become pro-choicers.

Student: What?

Me: With all due respect, here's what I hear you saying. Unless I agree with you, you will not tolerate my view. Privately, you'll let me think whatever I want, but you don't want me to *act* as if my view is true. It seems you think tolerance is a virtue *if and only if people agree with you*.

Put succinctly, her argument for tolerance was in fact a patronizing form of intolerance. She spoke of moral neutrality, but tried to force her own views on me.

A recent editorial in the *Toronto Star* was similarly intolerant of pro-life advocates. While decrying the "single-minded moral supremacism" of those who call abortion killing, journalist Michele Landsberg writes:

Will no priest or minister publicly resolve to stop the indoctrination of youth to view abortion as murder? Is none ashamed of the blood-drenched holocaust vocabulary used so cynically (and anti-semitically) to whip up fervor for the crusade? Where are the outspoken cries of conscience by bishops and cardinals who should be appalled by the evidence of links between anti-abortion fanatics and far-right militias, neo Nazis, and white supremacists? Is there no religious leader who regrets his church's role in feeding this blind frenzy? Will none of them repent of their excesses, will none call a halt to their sickeningly manipulative campaigns of "precious little feet," their fake "documentaries" about screaming fetuses? You'd think that the world had enough lessons in the dangers of hate speech.

Like hers? It doesn't seem to trouble Ms. Landsberg that her own vitriolic rhetoric could incite abortion advocates to commit acts of violence against pro-lifers. She continues:

It was the unbridled hate speech of fundamentalist fanatics in Israel who spurred on the "devout" murder of then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin....We've seen how homophobic rantings from right-wing American leaders, notably the Senate Republican leader, led to escalating gay bashings, culminating in the heart- wrenching death of Matthew Shepherd in Wyoming....Denominational schools [should] begin to teach respect for the laws of our pluralistic society, rather than preaching single-minded moral supremacism.²²

Again, like her own?

Notice what is going on here. She decries "moral supremacism," but says that anyone who disagrees with her view on abortion is an indoctrinator of youth, a fanatic, an anti-Semite, a neo-Nazi, a white supremacist, a manipulator of facts, a purveyor of hate speech, homophobic, a gay-basher, a religious bully, responsible for the death of Matthew Shepherd, and finally, a fundamentalist fanatic like those who murdered Yitzhak Rabin.

One can hardly imagine a finer piece of self-refuting rhetoric--all, of course, in the name of tolerance.

While driving my sons to a baseball game at Dodger Stadium, a young woman in a white pickup truck began tailgating me. Visibly angered by a pro-life sticker on my rear window, she stayed on my bumper for a mile or so. Finally, she pulled beside me and extended a certain part of her anatomy skyward as she passed. She then cut in front of me.

At that moment, I noticed a bumper sticker on her truck. It said, "Celebrate Diversity." The message was clear: In a pluralistic society, we should tolerate the views of others. Ironically, the driver saw no contradiction between her unwillingness to tolerate (or celebrate) *my* point of view and her bumper sticker that said we should tolerate *all* points of view. That is what I mean when I say that relativism is self-refuting.

2) It is impossible for a moral relativist to say that anything is wrong, including intolerance. If morals are relative, then who are you to say that I should be tolerant? Perhaps my individual morality says intolerance is just fine. Why, then, should I allow anyone to force tolerance on me as a virtue if my preference is intolerance?

The truth is, a moral relativist cannot legitimately say that anything is wrong or truly evil. My colleague Greg Koukl once challenged a relativist with this question. "Do you think it is wrong to torture babies for fun?" She paused, then replied, "Well, I wouldn't want to do that to my baby." Greg responded,

²² Michele Landsberg, "Words, Actions Can Fight Anti-Choice Violence," *Toronto Star*, October 31, 1998.

“That's not what I asked you. I didn't ask if you *liked* torturing babies for fun, I asked if it was *wrong* to torture babies for fun.” The relativist was caught and she knew it. She chuckled and went on to another subject.

If it is up to us to decide (rather than discover) right and wrong, then there is no difference between Mother Theresa's morality and Hitler's morality. Hitler was not evil; he just had preferences different from our own.

3) It is impossible to live as a moral relativist. As C.S. Lewis points out, a person who claims there is no objective morality will complain if you break a promise or cut in line.²³ And if you steal his stereo, he will protest loudly. If I were a crook, I would reply to the relativist, “Do you think stealing stereos is wrong? Well, that's just your view. My morality says it's perfectly acceptable. Who are you to force your views on me?” Simply put, moral relativists espouse a view they cannot live with.

I think you are starting to get the picture. **Relativism is not tolerant** of other views. In fact, it tries to suppress them. Here is another example of what I mean.

During the 2001 winter semester, pro-life students at the University of North Carolina displayed 20 large panels (each 6 feet by 13 feet) depicting the grisly reality of abortion. Known as the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP—see www.abortionno.org), these pictures have been displayed at over 100 universities nationwide. In response, pro-abortion students at UNC refused to participate in a structured, public debate on the issue, but demanded instead that campus police forcibly remove the display. One pro-abortion student, Marcus Harvey, insisted the display was intolerant, ignorant, and must be removed.

I wrote a reply to Mr. Harvey that was published in *The Daily Tar Heel* on-line:²⁴

Marcus Harvey's comments about the Genocide Awareness Project are typical of today's so-called pro-choicers. Instead of refuting the pro-life argument that it's wrong to kill innocent human beings simply because they are in the way and cannot defend themselves, he chastises the campus police for not suppressing ideas that he personally disagrees with.

This is very intolerant of him. His message couldn't be clearer: Agree with me or else.

Unfortunately, Mr. Harvey has no clue about the true meaning of tolerance. Classical tolerance means that I defend your right to

²³ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1996) p.19.

²⁴ *Daily Tar Heel on-line*, March 8, 2001.

Speak even if I disagree with your argument. In fact, the very concept of tolerance presupposes that I think you are wrong. Otherwise, I am not tolerating you; I am agreeing with you!

For Mr. Harvey, tolerance means something very different. It means this: Agree with me or I will call upon the police power of the state to suppress your ideas. *There is a name for this and it's not tolerance. It's called fascism. Thankfully, the university knew better and the GAP display went forward despite attempts to censor it.*

Mr. Harvey, if you personally dislike pro-life advocates, don't join them. But please don't force your morality on the rest of us by censoring those you disagree with.

Moral relativism is expressed one other way: "I'm personally opposed to abortion, but I still think it should be legal."

When people say this, I ask a simple question to clarify things. I ask *why* they personally oppose abortion. Invariably they reply, "We oppose it because it kills a human baby." At that point, I merely repeat back their words. "Let me see if I got this straight. You oppose abortion because it kills babies, but you think it should be legal to kill babies?"

Would these same people argue that while they personally opposed slavery, they would not protest if a neighbor wanted to own one? This was precisely what Stephen Douglas did during his debates with Abraham Lincoln.²⁵ That argument did not work with slavery and it will not work with abortion. Either elective abortion kills a defenseless child or not. If it does, we should not tolerate it. Period.

B. Mistake #2: Attack the person rather than refute the argument

Instead of defending the abortion act itself, some "pro-choice" advocates personally attack those who do not share their views. At a 1995 "Rock for Choice" concert in Pensacola Florida, vocalist Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam shrieked from the stage:

I'm usually good about my temper, but all these men trying to control women's bodies really piss me off. They're talking from a bubble. They're not talking from the street, and they're not in touch with

²⁵ *The Lincoln Douglas Debates*, ed. R.W. Johannsen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965) p. 27. See also *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), vol. III, pp. 256-7. Cited in Hadley Arkes, *First Things: An Inquiry Into the First Principles of Morals and Justice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) p. 24.

what's real. Well, I'm f---ing mean, and I'm ugly, and my name is reality.²⁶

He later said that unlike pro-life advocates, he would never force his beliefs on anyone.

During an HBO special, comedian Rosanne Barr told the audience:

You know who else I can't stand is them people that are antiabortion. I hate them. They're ugly, old, geeky, hideous men. They just don't want nobody to have an abortion, cause they want you to keep spitting out kids so they can molest them.²⁷

Do you see what is happening here? Instead of defending their views with facts and arguments, Rosanne Barr and Eddie Vedder are attacking the character of pro-lifers. We call this the *ad hominem* fallacy. It is fallacious reasoning because even if the personal attack is true, it does nothing to refute the pro-lifer's argument that the unborn are members of the human community.

Let's grant, for the sake of discussion, that pro-life advocates are hideous old men who molest children, as Roseanne Barr contends is true. How does this in any way refute the pro-life claim that abortion takes the life of a defenseless child? Clearly, it does not. The attack is therefore irrelevant to the *argument* the pro-life advocate is making.

Unfair chastisement

Sometimes the personal attack comes from within the pro-life movement. Speaking at a recent pro-life convention in Alberta, a local cleric chastised right to lifers for being "the rudest people I have to deal with, and I don't like it."²⁸

Why are pro-lifers rude? Apparently they focus too narrowly on abortion when they ought to consider the broader "life issues" such as occupational safety, AIDS, poverty, and capital punishment. The result, the cleric said, is a "fractured Christian witness that hurts the cause."

The cleric is typical of many on the political left who insist that because pro-life advocates oppose the willful destruction of an innocent human being, they must therefore assume responsibility for all of society's ills. In other words, you are not truly pro-life unless you treat the deforestation of the Amazon

²⁶ Cited in Kim Neely, "Where Angels Fear to Tread," *Rolling Stone*, May 5, 1994.

²⁷ Cited in Paul Duncan, "The Perils of Abortion," *Evangel*, January, 1995.

²⁸ The material in this section adapted from my article, "Pro-Life Groups Would Make Fatal Mistake Heeding Advice," *The Report Magazine*, June 19, 2000. (www.report.ca)

with the same moral intensity that you do the unjust killing of a human fetus. This is careless thinking and highly unfair to those who take abortion seriously.

Imagine the gall of saying to the Canadian Cancer Society, "You have no right to focus on curing cancer unless you also work to cure AIDS, heart disease, and diabetes." Or, try telling the Canadian Heart and Lung Association, "You cannot reasonably oppose cardiac arrest unless you fund research aimed at stopping all loss of life." Ridiculous indeed, but how is this any different from what the cleric told pro-life advocates?

Consider what he is demanding. Local pro-life groups must take their already scarce resources and spread them even thinner fighting every social injustice imaginable. This would be suicide for those opposed to abortion. As Frederick the Great once said, "He who attacks everywhere attacks nowhere."

Contrary to what some think, the abortion debate is not about poverty, capital punishment, the redistribution of wealth, or protection of the environment. It's about one issue: What is the unborn? The answer to that question trumps all other considerations. This is why secular objections to the pro-life view based on choice or privacy also miss the point entirely. Do we allow parents the choice to abuse children as long as they do so in the privacy of the home? Clearly, we don't. If the fetus is human, we should not harm it in the name of privacy anymore than we would a toddler.

In the final analysis, the cleric's remarks are not an outrage but a distraction. He sounds too much like secular critics who argue that right-to-lifers are hypocritical to oppose abortion unless they also adopt unwanted babies. Well, maybe we are and maybe we aren't, but how does my alleged unwillingness to adopt a child justify an abortionist killing one? Imagine how bizarre it would sound if I were to say, "Unless you agree to marry my wife, you have no right to oppose me mistreating her." Or, "Unless you agree to adopt my toddler by noon tomorrow, I shall execute him." Either way, if you reject my ultimatum, it does nothing to justify my evil treatment of innocent human beings.²⁹

Attacking pro-lifers for their speech

On July 11, 2000, a knife-wielding man attacked Vancouver (BC) abortionist Garson Romalis in a downtown clinic. Abortion advocacy groups seized on his brush with death to score cheap political points against their opponents,

²⁹ For the moment, we will assume there are not two million American families who want to adopt unwanted infants, as is the case. See "Adoption Group Sets Record Straight About Abortion Film," National Committee for Adoption press release, December 5, 1990.

notably Canadian Alliance Party leader Stockwell Day, who opposes abortion.³⁰

Day was quick to condemn the attack against Romalis as “outrageous and untenable,” but that did not satisfy local abortion advocates. Marilyn Wilson, president of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, said Day had “indirectly sanctioned” the violence against Romalis with his extremist rhetoric.

Why was Mr. Day responsible for the attack? It’s really quite simple: He disagrees with Ms. Wilson on abortion and has said publicly that elective abortion is the unjust killing of an innocent human being. “Day is going to try and deny that he would support any violence,” she said in a press release, “but his rhetoric does incite other people who share his beliefs against abortion to violence.” She then called Day a “fanatic” for “the amount of anti-choice, extremist rhetoric that’s out there.”

Bear in mind that to Ms. Wilson, “fanatic” and “extremist” mean anyone who deviates in the slightest from her own position, which is that abortion should be legal for any reason whatsoever during all nine months of pregnancy. If you say that elective abortion takes the life of a defenseless child, as Day believes it does, your irresponsible rhetoric will cost an abortionist his life.

Ms. Wilson is using scaremongering tactics to poison the public debate over abortion. Her statements are intellectually dishonest for at least four reasons. First, let’s assume that pro-life rhetoric does in fact lead to acts of violence against abortionists (though there is no good reason to suppose that this is so). Would this in any way refute the pro-life argument that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of an innocent human being? Keep in mind that pro-life advocates do not merely state their case, they buttress it with scientific and philosophic reasoning. If Ms. Wilson thinks we are wrong about fetal humanity, she should patiently explain why our arguments are mistaken and why fetuses should be disqualified from membership in the human community. But instead of refuting the pro-life view, she attempts to silence it with personal attacks.

Second, it is blatantly unfair of Ms. Wilson to demonize pro-life advocates for espousing their sincerely held beliefs. Let’s assume that I’m an animal rights activist opposed to the sale of fur. If a deranged environmentalist firebombs a local clothing store, am I responsible? More to the point, is Ms. Wilson responsible if, upon reading her press release, a pro-abortion activist shoots Stockwell Day for the purpose of saving the community from such an awful extremist? (In a press release one day prior to the stabbing, Wilson accused Mr. Day of favoring “state-sanctioned violence against women by forcing

³⁰ The facts from this story, as well as some of the analysis, come from Andrew Coyne, “Opinions are not Crimes,” *The National Post*, July 14, 2000.

them to bear children they may not want.”³¹) If she is serious that merely disagreeing with her on abortion is itself an incitement to violence, then let’s not fool around: Ms. Wilson should lead the charge to ban all pro-life speech. (Actually, she would like that, but lacks the courage to say so publicly.)

Third, it does not follow that because a lone extremist stabs an abortionist, the pro-life cause *itself* is unjust. Dr. Martin Luther King, for example, used strong language to condemn the evil of racism during the 1960s. In response to his peaceful but confrontational tactics, racists unjustly blamed him for the violent unrest that sometimes followed his public demonstrations. Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago argued that if Dr. King would stop exposing racial injustice, black people would be less likely to riot. The Mayor’s remarks, like those of Ms. Wilson, were an outrage. Are we to believe that a handful of rioters made Dr. King’s crusade for civil rights entirely unjust? In his *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, King rebuts this dishonest attempt to change the subject:

In your statement you asserted that our actions, though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence....[I]t is immoral to urge an individual to withdraw his efforts to gain...basic constitutional rights because the quest precipitates violence....Non-violent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such a creative tension that a community...is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to dramatize the issue so it can be no longer ignored.³²

Fourth, if it is extreme to call elective abortion killing, then abortion advocates bear partial responsibility for the stabbing of Dr. Romalis. The fact is that pro-lifers aren’t the only ones who call abortion killing. Consider these candid statements by abortion providers:

1. **Warren Hern**, late-term abortionist:³³ *We have reached a point in this particular technology [D&E abortion] where there is no possibility of denial of an act of destruction by the operator. It is before one’s eyes. The sensations of dismemberment flow through the forceps like an electric current.*
2. **Anthony Kennedy**, pro-abortion Supreme Court Associate Justice, describing common abortion techniques:³⁴ *The fetus, in many cases, dies just as a human adult or child would: it bleeds to death as it is*

³¹ Canadian Abortion Rights Action League press release, July 10, 2000.

³² Cited in Gregg Cunningham, *Why Abortion is Genocide*. Order from www.abortionno.org

³³ Warren Hern & Billie Corrigan, “What About Us? Staff Reactions to D&E,” paper presented at the annual meeting of Planned Parenthood Physicians, San Diego, CA, 1978.

³⁴ *Stenberg v. Carhart*, 2000. Cited in David Smolin, *et al*, “The Supreme Court 2000: A Symposium,” *First Things*, October 2000. Kennedy voted to uphold *Roe v. Wade* in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) and in various other Supreme Court decisions.

torn from limb to limb. . . . The fetus can be alive at the beginning of the dismemberment process and can survive for a time while its limbs are being torn off. . . . Dr. [Leroy] Carhart [the abortionist who challenged Nebraska's partial-birth ban] has observed fetal heartbeat . . . with "extensive parts of the fetus removed," . . . and testified that mere dismemberment of a limb does not always cause death because he knows of a physician who removed the arm of a fetus only to have the fetus go on to be born "as a living child with one arm." . . . At the conclusion of a D&E abortion . . . the abortionist is left with "a tray full of pieces.

3. **Planned Parenthood**, 1963 brochure: *Abortion kills the life of a baby after it has begun. It is dangerous to your life and health.*³⁵
4. **New Mexico abortionist**, 1993:³⁶ *Paradoxically, I have angry feelings at myself for feeling good about doing a technically good procedure which destroys a fetus, kills a baby.*
5. **Abortionist Dr. Crist**, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 2000:³⁷ *In testimony Wednesday in St. Louis Circuit Court, [abortionist] Crist said that it is not uncommon for second-trimester fetuses to leave the womb feet-first, intact and with their hearts still beating. He sometimes crushes their skulls to get the fetuses out. Other times, he dismembers them.*

My question for Ms. Wilson and every other abortion advocate is this: If calling abortion killing makes one responsible for acts of violence against doctors, are pro-abortionists like Warren Hern and Anthony Kennedy guilty of inciting violence against their own people? Like pro-life advocates, they candidly admit that abortion is brutal killing. Therefore, when Dr. Hern complains about threats to abortion doctors, is he partially to blame for his own insecurity? Put simply, pro-abortion advocates like Ms. Wilson lack the courage to defend their views publicly. Instead of refuting the scientific and philosophic case for the pro-life view, they call names from a distance in hopes of silencing their critics. There is a name for this—fascism. Pro-lifers take heart: our critics have truly run out of ideas.

To sum up, pro-abortion advocates like Ms. Wilson lack the courage to defend their views publicly. Instead of tolerating those she disagrees with, she attacks them personally. Her hateful rhetoric may score points in the press, but it's a sorry substitute for a well-reasoned argument.

³⁵ "Plan Your Children for Health and Happiness," Planned Parenthood brochure, 1963.

³⁶ New Mexico abortionist cited in Diane Gianelli, "Abortion Providers Share Inner Conflicts," *American Medical News*, July 12, 1993

³⁷ Jo Mannies, "Abortion Doctor Gives Graphic Testimony Describing Abortion Procedure," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 25, 2000.

A crass form of reverse sexism

Finally, some pro-life advocates are attacked for their gender. Men are told, "You can't get pregnant, so leave the abortion issue to women." Besides its obvious sexism, the statement is seriously flawed for several reasons.

First, arguments do not have genders, people do.³⁸ Since many pro-life women use the same arguments offered by pro-life men, it behooves the abortion advocate to answer these arguments without fallaciously attacking a person's gender.

Second, to be consistent with their own reasoning, abortion advocates would have to concede that *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court case legalizing abortion, was bad law. After all, nine men decided it. They must also call for the dismissal of all male lawyers working for Planned Parenthood and the ACLU on abortion related issues. Since abortion advocates are unwilling to do this, we can restate their argument as follows: "No man can speak on abortion--unless he agrees with us." Once again, this is a classic case of intolerance.

Third, lesbians and post-menopausal women cannot naturally get pregnant; must they be silent on the issue? Think of the bizarre rules we could derive from this argument: "Since only generals understand battle, only they should discuss the morality of war." Or, "Because female sportscasters have never experienced a groin injury, they have no right to broadcast football games on national television."

Again, abortion advocates must offer facts and arguments to support their position. Attacking people personally, even if those attacks are true, will not make their case or refute ours.

C. Mistake #3: Assume what you are trying to prove

Advocates of elective abortion must show that the unborn are not fully human or their case crumbles. But instead of proving this conclusion with facts and arguments, many people simply assume it within the course of their rhetoric. We call this "begging the question" and it's a logical fallacy that lurks behind many arguments for abortion.

A person begs the question when he assumes what he is trying to prove. Suppose federal prosecutors confronted you with this question: "Have you stopped cheating on your taxes?" Obviously, the question is unfair. It assumes that you have broken the law, which is in fact the very point prosecutors are trying to prove. Your defense attorney would be outraged, insisting that they prove guilt with facts and evidence, rather than assume it with rhetoric.

³⁸ Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death*, p. 90.

Arguing that abortion is justified because a woman has a right to control her own body assumes there is only one body involved--that of the woman. But this is precisely the point abortion advocates try to prove. Hence, they beg the question.

Or, take the claim that no one knows when life begins, therefore abortion should remain legal. But to argue that no one knows when life begins, and that abortion must remain legal through all nine months of pregnancy, assumes that life does not begin until birth--the exact point abortion advocates try to prove. This is hardly a neutral position. It is a clear case of begging the question.

So is the coat hanger argument, which states that women will die from illegal abortions if laws are passed protecting the unborn. But unless you begin with the assumption that the unborn are not human, you are making the highly questionable claim that because some people die attempting to kill others, the state should make it safe and legal for them to do so. Should we legalize bank robbery so it is safer for felons?

If you think a particular argument begs the question regarding the status of the unborn, simply ask if this justification for abortion also works as a justification for killing toddlers or other humans. If not, the argument assumes the unborn are not fully human.

Again, it may be the case that the unborn are not fully human and abortion is therefore justified. But this must be proven with facts and evidence, not merely assumed by one's rhetoric.

D. Mistake #4: Confuse *functioning* as a person with *being* a person

Abortion advocates like Mary Anne Warren claim that a "person" is a living entity with feelings, self-awareness, consciousness, and the ability to interact with his or her environment. Because a human fetus has none of these capabilities, it cannot be a person.³⁹ Warren makes two assumptions here, neither of which she defends. First, she doesn't say *why* anyone should accept the idea that there can be such a thing as a human being that is not a human person. What's the difference? Personally, I've never met a human that wasn't a person, have you? What does such an entity look like? Second, even if Warren is correct about the distinction between human being and human person, she fails to tell us *why* a person must possess self-awareness and consciousness in order to qualify as fully human. In other words, she merely *asserts* that these traits are necessary for personhood. In so doing, she espouses a doctrine known as *functionalism*: the belief that what defines

³⁹ Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," in *The Problem of Abortion*, Joel Feinberg, ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1984) p.102-119.

human persons is what they can and cannot do. For the sake of argument, we will accept Warren's distinction between human being and human person (though there is no good reason why we should) and will use the term "person" to describe those who are fully human. Even with that concession, Warren's functionalism is seriously flawed because it fails to make a number of critical distinctions.

1) **One can fail to function as a person and yet still be a person.** People under anesthesia or in a deep sleep cannot feel pain, are not self-aware, and cannot reason. Neither can those in reversible comas. But we do not call into question their humanity because we recognize that although they cannot *function* as persons, they still have the *being* of persons, which is essential.

Here is the key question: How many functions can I lose and still be myself?⁴⁰ If I lose my sight, am I still me? If my legs and arms are lost, am I still me? If I cannot speak or hear, am I still me? What if I can no longer play chess or think critically? What if my IQ is less than 50? Wouldn't I still be a person with value?

Do I lose my personal identity simply because I cannot do everything you can? Do I lose the right to live because I am helpless and dependent? Do stronger, more capable people have more rights than others?

The answer is obviously no. No physical change or loss of function will cause you to cease being you *unless that change ends your life*. When a living thing like the unborn human comes into being, it remains what it is regardless of the shape of its body or present capabilities.

2) **One must be a person in order to function as one.** Non-sentient frogs do not become persons simply by acquiring sentience (the ability to feel pain, etc.). Nor do robots become persons by assembling cars or loading freight. Rather, a person is one with the natural, inherent capacity to perform personal acts, even if that capacity is currently unrealized. One grows in the ability to perform personal acts only because one already is the kind of thing that grows into the ability to perform personal acts, i.e., a person.⁴¹ My thoughts and my feelings, indeed all of my functional abilities, cannot exist unless I first exist. I can exist without them, but they cannot exist without me.

3) **The rights of individuals in our society are not based on their current (actual) capacities, but on their inherent capacities.** This sounds complex, but we make this distinction all the time. For example, no one doubts that newborn humans have fewer actual capacities than do day-old calves.⁴² Baby humans are rather unimpressive in terms of environmental awareness,

⁴⁰ The material in these three paragraphs is adapted from Koukl, *Precious Unborn Human Persons*, p. 23.

⁴¹ Peter Kreeft, "Human Personhood," *ALL About Issues*, January-February, 1992, p. 29.

⁴² Example provided by Beckwith, in *Politically Correct Death*, p. 110.

mobility, etc. Yet this does not lead us to believe that the calf belongs in the nursery while the infant can be left in the barn. To the contrary, we understand that although the infant currently lacks many functional abilities, it nonetheless has the inherent capacity to function as a person. But if individual rights are grounded in one's current capacities, calves should enjoy a greater moral status than do newborns.

People who are temporarily unconscious cannot presently function as persons, but they still have the inherent capacity to perform personal acts. That is why we do not kill them. From the moment of conception, the unborn human has the natural, inherent capacity to function as a person. What he lacks is the current capacity to do so. That he cannot yet speak, reason, or perform personal acts means only that he cannot yet function as a person, not that he lacks the essential being of a person.

This same emphasis on inherent (as opposed to actual) capacity is underscored in the accepted bio-ethical criteria for brain death. Say, for example, you have an automobile accident that leaves you in a coma. Some of your friends think your quality of life is gone and want to unplug life support. Others, like your parents, rally to stop them. What should be done?

The law in this case is very specific. According to the Uniform Determination of Death Act written into the health and safety codes of each state, the deciding factor is not your current state of brain function, but your inherent state of brain function. For death to occur, there must be an "*irreversible* cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem."⁴³ Hence, the reversibly comatose are never classified as "non-persons" under our existing legal system despite their current lack of brain function.

Again, from the moment of conception the unborn entity has the inherent capacity to have a functioning brain. What it lacks is the current capacity. Hence, there is no ethical difference between it and the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, etc., who enjoy the protection of law despite their current inability to function as persons.

4) **Functionalism results in savage inequality.** It is one thing to say that critical thinking distinguishes us as human beings. It is quite another to say that your right to live depends on how intelligent you are. Yet, if rationality and self-consciousness define the morally significant person, then why shouldn't greater rationality make you more of a person? Consequently, the intellectually and artistically gifted would be free to maximize their pleasure at the expense of those less intelligent. Furthermore, if the functionalist view is correct, personhood could be expressed by a bell curve in which human beings move toward full personhood in their early years, reach full personhood during their middle years (when they reach their intellectual

⁴³ *California Health and Safety Code*, sec. 7180, Uniform Determination of Death Act. Emphasis added.

peaks), then gradually lose personhood as they age. Presumably your rights as a person would increase, stabilize, and then decrease in the process. But then we are not far from that now. Last year, an attorney I debated at a secular university argued that until the 32nd week of pregnancy, the unborn's brain resembles a fish or amphibian in its evolutionary development. Therefore, the unborn are not fully human until the final stages of pregnancy.⁴⁴

In one sense, his argument was nothing new. Darwin and his followers used it a century ago to dehumanize women. Their contention was that women were biologically and intellectually inferior because their brains were less developed than a man's. In *The Descent of Man in Relation to Sex*, Darwin wrote:

[Man] attains a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than can women--whether requiring deep thought, reason, or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and hands. If two lists were made of the most eminent men and women in poetry, history, painting, sculpture, music (inclusive of both composition and performance), history, science, and philosophy, the two lists would not bear comparison. We may also infer, from the law of the deviation from averages... [that] the average mental power in man must be above that of women.⁴⁵

If that weren't bad enough, Darwin disciple and father of social psychology Gustave Le Bon uses pejorative language to compare women to apes:

[Even in] the most intelligent races [there] are large numbers of women whose brains are closer in size to those of gorillas than to the most developed male brains. This inferiority is so obvious that no one can contest it for a moment; only its degree is worth discussion....Women represent the most inferior forms of human evolution and...are closer to children and savages than to an adult, civilized man. They excel in fickleness, inconstancy, absence of thought and logic, and incapacity to reason. Without a doubt, there exists some distinguished women, very superior to the average man, but they are as exceptional as the birth of any monstrosity, as for example, of a gorilla with two heads. Consequently, we may neglect them entirely.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Arthur Ide makes essentially this same argument in *Abortion Handbook: the History, Legal Progress, Practice and Psychology of Abortion* (Las Colinas: The Liberal Press, 1986) pp. 21-26. See also, Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan, "Is it Possible to be Pro-Life and Pro-Choice?" *Parade Magazine*, April 12, 1990.

⁴⁵ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man in Relation to Sex* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1896) p. 564.

⁴⁶ Cited in Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981) pp. 104-105.

Put simply, we used to discriminate on the basis of skin color and gender, but now we discriminate on the basis of brain development and intelligence. We've simply swapped one form of bigotry for another.

5) Those who espouse functionalism equivocate on the question of personal identity.

Is Scott Klusendorf the fetus or newborn identical to Scott Klusendorf the adult pro-life apologist? Is he the same person though his body has changed over time? According to Peter Singer, philosophy professor at Princeton University and outspoken defender of infanticide, the answer is no. "When we kill a newborn, there is no person whose life has begun. When I think of myself as the person I am now, I realize that I did not come into existence until sometime after my birth."⁴⁷ But as Paul Cox and Scott Rae point out, "If *I* do not exist until sometime after *my* birth, in what sense is the birth *mine*? The only way for 'my birth' to be more than a linguistic convention is to admit that '*I*' existed before I was born, or at least at the time of my birth."⁴⁸ But if this is true, Singer's attempt to define personhood in functional terms not only fails, it disqualifies many human beings as persons. Consider the person under general anesthesia. Like the early fetus, he currently is not conscious and has no concept of himself existing over time. According to the functionalist view, he is not a person. But this is absurd.

One might object that unlike the fetus and the newborn, the person under anesthesia *once did* function as a self-aware entity. Therefore, he is still a person (i.e. retains his identity) though he currently cannot function as one. But this objection is flawed, for it admits that something other than self-awareness defines personhood. For to claim that a human being can be functionally self-aware, become non-self aware, and then return to a state of self-awareness assumes there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that allows him to maintain his identity while unconscious (i.e. while he is unable to function as a person). If not, then we must make the bizarre claim that a new person pops into existence once the anesthesia wears off.

As Cox and Rae explain, the reason Scott Klusendorf the embryo/fetus is identical to Scott Klusendorf the adult is that I possess a human nature (or essence) that not only makes certain functions (abilities) possible, it allows me to retain my personal identity through change.⁴⁹ For example, I may lose the ability to think critically, but as long as I am still alive, I remain myself because I have a human nature. Hence, it is the underlying essence of a thing, not its functional abilities, that determines what it is.

⁴⁷ H. Kuhse and Peter Singer, *Should the Baby Live?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) p. 133

⁴⁸ Scott Rae and Paul Cox, *Bio-Ethics: A Christian Perspective in a Pluralistic Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) p.169.

⁴⁹ Rae and Cox, pp. 159-169.

Consider an illustration provided by Francis Beckwith.⁵⁰ Suppose your Uncle Jed is in a coma after a terrible car accident. Imagine that he remains in that state (where he cannot function as a self-aware person) for two years and then awakens. Is Uncle Jed before the coma identical to Uncle Jed after? Is he the same person? Could doctors have killed him during his extended sleep because he was not functioning as a person? If Singer holds to the functional views, it would be difficult to say why it would be wrong to kill Uncle Jed while he is comatose. Yet clearly, it would be morally wrong to kill him while in that state because although he cannot currently function as a person, he still has the inherent capacity to do so.

Suppose you were to conclude that Uncle Jed is a person during the coma because, unlike the fetus, he *once* functioned as one and probably will again after he wakes up. But this objection fails, as Beckwith explains:

We can change the story a bit and say that when Uncle Jed awakens from the coma he loses nearly all his memories and knowledge including his ability to speak a language, engage in rational thought, and have a self-concept. He would then be in the exact same state as the standard fetus, for he would have the same capacities as the fetus. He would still literally be the same person he was before the coma, but would be more like he was before he had a “past.” He would have the natural inherent capacity to speak a language, engage in rational thought, and have a self-concept, but he would have to develop and learn them all over again in order for these capacities to result, as they did before, in actual abilities.⁵¹

Perhaps the abortion advocate would bite the bullet and say that there is no human nature that allows me to maintain my identity through bodily change and that personal identity is nothing more than a string of psychological experiences connected by memory. Hence, Uncle Jed before the coma is not identical to Uncle Jed after, but is a new person with new memories that we will call Uncle Jed(b). But this denial of human nature will not do. What if five years later Uncle Jed(b) suddenly regains his lost memories? Is there now an Uncle Jed(c) or are we back to Uncle Jed(a)?

Put simply, Uncle Jed before the coma is identical to Uncle Jed after. He is the same person. The only difference is one of *function* (ability), not *essence* or nature. The same is true of Scott Klusendorf the fetus and Scott Klusendorf the adult. My abilities and my body have changed as I’ve developed, but I am identical to the fetus I once was because I have a human nature that allows me to maintain my identity through time and change. That human nature is present from the moment I begin to exist. If I am wrong about this, then you

⁵⁰ Francis Beckwith, *Abortion and the Sanctity of Human Life* (Joplin: MO: College Press, 2000) p. 73

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 74.

are literally not the same person you were five years ago when your body was made up of different physical stuff. Sure, you have changed, but it is *you* who changed. Your thoughts and memories cannot exist unless *you* first exist. Logic tells us that you can exist without them (as in the case of Uncle Jed), but they cannot exist without you. Consequently, you are a human person because you possess a human nature, not because you functioned a certain way in the past. From conception, the unborn possess a human nature regardless of their current functional abilities.

Imagine the case of newborn twins named John and Jane, each born unconscious.⁵² One month after birth, Jane briefly attains self-awareness, but then lapses back into a coma from which she will emerge nine months later. John, meanwhile, doesn't gain consciousness, though he too will emerge from the coma at the same moment as Jane. Suppose it is one day before both will wake up. Would anyone in his right mind say it is morally permissible to kill John but not Jane? The only difference between the two is functional: Jane briefly attained self-awareness in the past, John did not. It doesn't follow from this, however, that they have different *natures* or that Jane is fully human while John is not.

The fact is that we *function* as persons because we *are* persons. Scott Klusendorf the fetus is identical to Scott Klusendorf the adult pro-life apologist because I have a non-material human nature that grounds my personal identity through time and change. If not, then I am literally a different person than I was 20 minutes ago, since my physical body is always changing. Likewise, a fetus that lacks current functional ability is nonetheless human because it has a human nature from the moment it begins to exist.

6) **Functionalism assumes a “parts” view of human persons.** In his quest to dehumanize fetuses and newborns, ethicist Peter Singer ignores the all-important distinction between *substance* things and *property* things.⁵³ Living things are substances that maintain their identities through time while property things, such as cars and machinery, do not. A property thing, like my car, is nothing more than the sum total of its parts. Change the motor or replace a tire, you technically have a different vehicle. There is no internal nature (or essence) that orders its development and grounds its identity through change. Instead, it's a loose unity of parts designed externally to function in a certain way.

By contrast, a substance maintains its identity over time and change. What moves a puppy to maturity or fetus to an adult is not an external collection of parts, but an internal, defining nature or essence. As a substance develops, it does not become more of its kind, but matures according to its kind.⁵⁴ It

⁵² Ibid, p. 74

⁵³ The material in this section adapted from Rae and Cox, *Bio-Ethics*, pp. 159-163.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 161.

remains what it is from the moment it begins to exist. A puppy does not become more of a dog as it matures. Consequently, a substance functions in light of what it is and maintains its identity even if its ultimate capacities (for example, the ability to bark) are never realized.

Put differently, a substance is an entity in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and the whole contains the internal nature that gives it unity and cohesiveness. Substances maintain their identity through change, while property things do not. A substance will develop *accidental* properties (such as self-awareness, size, and physical structure) as it matures, but these properties are non-essential and can be changed without altering the nature of the thing itself. This is why a human being can lose a body part and yet retain his personal identity.

When Singer disqualifies a fetus from membership in the human community because it is not self-aware, he treats it as a property thing that changes its identity over time instead of substance thing that does not. True, there are functional differences between Peter Singer the fetus and Peter Singer the adult philosopher, but it does not follow from this that they are separate entities. Singer the fetus must first exist as a person in order to function as one. To sum up, we cannot say that the fetus becomes a person as it develops since it must first exist as a substance in order to do the developing.

That brings us to the crux of the matter, a decision we must make. Will we acknowledge the truth found in *The Declaration of Independence* that human beings have value simply because they have human natures? Or will we join Darwin in saying only the achievers, intelligent, and powerful count as full human persons? Be careful how you decide. The results could disqualify you as human.

E. Mistake #5: Disguise your true position by appealing to the hard cases

Some people argue that legal abortion protects rape victims from compulsory motherhood. They castigate pro-lifers as cruel and insensitive toward women suffering assault.

This seems like a powerful objection, as nearly everyone agrees that rape is profoundly evil. Victims of this heinous crime deserve our best care. But there's a moral consideration as well. Does rape that results in pregnancy involve two victims or just one? And if the unborn entity involved is human, why should she be forced to give up her life so that her mother can feel better?

Put differently, can you think of any other case where, having been victimized yourself, you can justly turn around and victimize another completely innocent person? Say, for example, a drunk driver plows into your parked car, destroying it. To ease the pain of your loss, you take a sledgehammer to your

neighbor's sedan, even though he has done you no wrong. Is this morally permissible? If a friend protests your actions, is he insensitive? Hardly. So again, the issue is not, Are pro-lifers cruel? but, What is the unborn? If the unborn is human, she should not be killed to benefit her mother. Do parents have the right to kill toddlers that remind them of a painful experience?

But the appeal to hard cases is flawed in another way that has nothing to do with one's attitude toward women or the morality of abortion. It is flawed because it is not entirely truthful.

Here's why. The "pro-choice" position is not that abortion should be legal only when a woman is raped, but that abortion is a fundamental right she can exercise for any reason she wants during all nine months of pregnancy. Instead of defending this position with facts and arguments, many disguise it with an emotional appeal to rape. But this will not make their case. The argument from rape, if successful at all, would only justify abortion in cases of sexual assault, not for any reason the woman deems fit. In fact, arguing for abortion-on-demand from the hard case of rape is like trying to argue for the elimination of all traffic laws because a person might have to break one rushing a loved one to the hospital.⁵⁵

To expose their smokescreen, I ask abortion advocates the following: "Okay, I'm going to grant for the sake of discussion that we keep abortion legal in cases of rape. Will you join me in supporting legal restrictions on those abortions done for convenience which, as your own studies show, make up the overwhelming percentage of abortions?"⁵⁶

The answer is almost always no, to which I reply, "Then why did you bring rape up except to mislead us into thinking you support abortion only in the hard cases?" Again, if abortion-advocates think that abortion should be a legal choice for all nine months of pregnancy for any reason whatsoever, including sex-selection and convenience, they should defend that view with facts and arguments. Exploiting the tragedy of rape victims is intellectually dishonest.

VII. Final Summary and Conclusion:

To review, I've argued that there is only one question to resolve, What is the unborn? The answer to that question trumps all other considerations based on choice, privacy, trusting women, and the like. We've also seen that the pro-life position can be reasonably defended using science and philosophy. Scientifically, human parents produce human offspring. Philosophically, the four differences

⁵⁵ Beckwith uses this example in *Politically Correct Death*, p. 69.

⁵⁶ Warren Hern, *Abortion Practice*, pp. 10, 39. Dr. Hern is America's leading abortionist and he writes, "The impression of clinical staff is that all but a few women seek abortions for reasons that can broadly be defined as socioeconomic, and many cite strictly economic reasons." (*Abortion Practice*, p.10)

between the unborn and any child outside the womb—size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency—are not relevant in the way abortion advocates need them to be. Finally, we looked at five bad ways people argue against the pro-life position. Taken together, these five ways are flawed for two reasons. First, many ignore the essential issue, What is the unborn? They assert rather than argue, attack the person rather than refute the pro-life argument. Second, they fail to explain why we should dismiss the scientific and philosophic evidence for the humanity of the unborn. Just because abortion advocates arbitrarily assert that the unborn are less than fully human does not mean we should accept their subjective opinions. If we care about truth, we will insist on something more: Evidence.

For an abbreviated outline of this presentation that can be used at school or youth group, see page 34.

Suggested Reading (Order from www.str.org)

1. Scott Klusendorf, *Pro-Life 101* (Signal Hill: Stand to Reason Press, 2002)
2. Gregory Koukl, *Precious Unborn Human Persons* (Signal Hill, STR Press, 1998)
3. Francis Beckwith and Gregory Koukl, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998)

Articles by Scott Klusendorf (Go to <http://www.str.org/free/bioethics/index.htm>)

1. “Death with a Happy Face: Peter Singer’s Bold Defense of Infanticide,” *Christian Research Journal*, Vol. 23, #3, 2001.
2. “Harvesting the Unborn: The Ethics of Embryo Stem Cell Research,” *Christian Research Journal*, Vol. 24, #1, 2001.
3. “The Vanishing Pro-Life Apologist,” *Christian Research Journal*, Vol.22, #1, 1998.
4. “Why Pro-Life Advocates (and those in ministry) Should Use Graphic Visual Aids”.
5. “Five Bad Ways to Argue About Abortion” –If you advocate legal abortion, be sure to avoid these bad arguments.
6. “Speak Confidently! No More Rambling Monologues.”
7. Letter to President Bush Opposing Embryo Stem Cell Research (7-2001)

Don't Take a Beating the Next Time You Mention Abortion!



EQUIP YOURSELF! Do you have pro-life beliefs, but feel tongue-tied when talking to friends, co-workers, and classmates? Then this seminar is just for you! Bring Scott's "Pro-life 101" seminar to your area and train your students to persuasively defend their pro-life views on hostile turf. You'll learn to simplify the abortion issue, defend the pro-life view scientifically and philosophically, and answer the tough questions.

Half or full-day formats available. Call Scott at **1-800-2-REASON** or check out the seminar on-line at <http://www.str.org/free/bioethics/PL101.pdf>

Scott Klusendorf is the best public advocate of the pro-life position I have ever seen. He masterfully combines accessibility, clarity of language, razor-sharp logic, and practical application. No pro-life student should be without his "pro-Life 101" training.

Francis J. Beckwith, Trinity International University

Abortion advocates will talk about rape and incest, overpopulation and unwanted children—they'll even attack you personally. So what is a young pro-life to do? Just watch Scott Klusendorf.

Scott DeNicola, Focus on the Family *Citizen Magazine*, January 2000

Scott's tasteful and logical presentation prepared our students to relevantly present the pro-life position to any kind of secular audience. I am so impressed with the communication tools he used to equip our students.

Brian Wall, High School Principal, Faith Christian Academy, Denver, Colorado

I have studied Scott's material and I can assert with full confidence that he is among the best pro-life presenters. I wholeheartedly recommend Pro-Life 101.

Fr. Frank Pavone, Priests for Life

YOU TOTALLY made an astounding difference to my life and my ability to argue so persuasively against abortion. And as a result of the amazing training you provide, I have been able to share the pro-life message numerous times over to other people, young and old! I will never forget Pro-Life 101.

Stephanie Gray, student, University of British Columbia

Scott's presentation is articulate, professional, thought provoking, and yet on a level our students can digest. His material equips them to persuasively defend their views in the marketplace of ideas. I give his training the highest recommendation possible.

Chris Sherrod, Senior Youth Pastor, Edgewood Baptist Church, Columbus, GA

1-800-2-REASON ♦ 1-562-595-7333 ♦ www.str.org

Pro-Choice Wins **If**...Abbreviated Outline

Scott Klusendorf, Stand to Reason

Overview:

*The abortion issue is not morally complex. It comes down to just one question: **What is the unborn?** The answer to that question trumps all other considerations including choice, illegal abortions, and privacy to name a few. Furthermore, pro-life advocates believe that their message can compete in the marketplace of ideas if properly understood and properly articulated. The purpose of this presentation is to show why.*

- I. **Introduction:** I concede. There should be no restrictions on abortion **If**. **If what?**
- II. **Topic:** Abortion and Intellectual Honesty. Why the abortion issue is about one question, not many, and why public confusion is unwarranted. We will also look at five bad ways people argue about abortion.
- III. **Significance:** Many people think that because people disagree on abortion, there are no right answers. However, the absence of consensus does not mean an absence of truth. People once disagreed on whether the earth was flat or round. They also disagreed on slavery. Did that mean there were no right answers? We can clarify confusion by asking just one question:
 - A. **Example:** “Daddy, can I kill this?”--That depends. What is it? With abortion, the answer to that question trumps all other considerations:
 1. “We should trust women to make their own responsible choices.” (Should we trust Andrea Yates to make her own “responsible choices” about her dead kids?)
 2. “Women have a right to privacy.” (Does the right to privacy include the right of parents to abuse toddlers in private?)
 3. “Many women cannot afford another child.” (When human beings get expensive, may we kill them?)
 4. “No woman should be forced to bring an unwanted child into the world.” (The homeless are unwanted. May we kill them?)

Objection: “Those are unfair comparisons—abortion is not like killing toddlers.”
Reply: That’s the issue, isn’t it? Are they the same?
 - B. **“Harder Truth” video:** Helps answer the question, What is the unborn? The images are graphic, but true. (Naomi Wolf quote)
- IV. **Thesis:** Pro-life advocates believe that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a defenseless human being. That position is both scientifically and philosophically sound.
 - A. **Scientifically sound:** The Law of Biogenesis--Every living thing reproduces after it’s own kind. Human parents can only produce human offspring.
 - B. **Philosophically sound:** The SLED test-- The unborn differs from a newborn in only four ways, none of which are morally relevant:

1. **Size:** Large people are not more human than small ones. Is Shaquille O’Neal more of a person than Hillary Clinton simply because he is larger?
 2. **Level of Development:** Is a four-year old girl who has yet to develop her reproductive system less human than a 17 year-old?
 3. **Environment:** Where you are has no bearing on who you are. Did you stop being you when you rolled over in bed last night?
 4. **Degree of dependency:** If viability makes us human, what about all those who depend on insulin?
- C. **In short**, we used to discriminate on the basis of skin color and gender. Now, with elective abortion, we discriminate on the basis of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency. We’ve simply swapped one form of discrimination for another. In sharp contrast, pro-life advocates believe that no human being, regardless of size, level of development, race, gender, or place of residence should be excluded from the moral community of human persons. In other words, our view of humanity is inclusive, indeed wide open to all, especially to those that are small, vulnerable, and defenseless.

Note: If you only have 20 minutes or so for your presentation, stop here. Focus on the “Harder Truth” video, biogenesis, and SLED. To save even more time, show only the first 4 minutes of the video (after the scripted introduction).

V. **Five Bad Ways to Argue About Abortion:**

- A. Confuse moral claims with preference claims
 1. There’s a difference between disliking something and saying that it’s wrong
 2. Relativism’s three fatal flaws
 3. Objection: “You shouldn’t force your morality on me!” Reply: “Why not?”
- B. Assert rather than argue
 1. Assertions provide no evidence for a claim.
 2. Learn to ask: “Why would anyone believe a thing like that? (raising the roof)”
- C. Attack the person rather than refute the argument—Examples:
 1. “You’re a man. You can’t get pregnant, so shut up on abortion!” (Reply: So what? Can the fetus still be human even if I am a man?)
 2. “You have no right to oppose abortion unless you adopt all these unwanted babies.” (Reply: How does my alleged unwillingness to adopt a child justify an abortionist killing one?)
- D. Confuse *functioning* as a person with *being* one
 1. My thoughts and my memories cannot exist unless I first exist
 2. Why should anyone accept the claim that self-consciousness makes one human?
- E. Hide behind the hard cases (rape, fetal deformity, etc.)