

PART III

HUMAN LIFE

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CHAPTER 10

HUMAN LIFE

Except for the pro-choice argument, there are only two basic questions to be answered when one considers the abortion controversy.

THE FIRST QUESTION IS:

When does human life begin?

The controversy swirling about the first question can be explained by the fact that different people use different standards of measurement by which to define “human life.” Some would define it through a theological or religious faith belief. Some would define “human life” using certain philosophic theories and beliefs. Others define “human life” by using biologic, scientific facts. Let us briefly explore the three methods of measurement.

THEOLOGIC
OR RELIGIOUS
FAITH BELIEF



This is best explained by considering three people who might state their respective beliefs as follows:

a) I believe in God. I believe He creates a soul. I believe the soul is created at fertilization. Therefore, I believe that human life begins at fertilization.

b) I also believe in God and a soul, but I don't believe the soul is created until birth (or some other time). Therefore, I believe that human life begins at birth (or some other time).

c) I don't believe in God or a soul.

Comment

- The above are statements of religious faith or its absence.
- None of the above religious faith beliefs can be factually proven.
- Each individual has a right to his or her own religious beliefs.

PHILOSOPHIC THEORIES



Human life can be defined by using a wide variety of philosophic beliefs and theories. These use social or psychological rationale which can involve biologic mileposts.

Examples of philosophic definitions of when human life begins include the following: When there is consciousness; when there is movement; when there is brain function, or a heartbeat; when viable; at birth; when wanted; when there has been an exchange of love; when "humanized"; when this is a person (however "person" is defined); if mentally or physically normal, etc.

Comment

While admittedly arrived at through a certain reasoning process, all of the above remain theories.

None can be proven factually by science.

Each individual has a right to hold his own philosophic beliefs.

People of good will can and do differ completely on the correctness of any or all of the philosophic beliefs and theories mentioned.

**BIOLOGIC
FACTS**



Biologic human life is defined by examining the scientific facts of human development. This is a field where there is no controversy, no disagreement. There is only one set of facts, only one embryology book is studied in medical school. The more scientific knowledge of fetal development that has been learned, the more science has confirmed that the beginning of any one human individual's life, biologically speaking, begins at the completion of the union of his father's sperm and his mother's ovum, a process called "conception," "fertilization" or "fecundation." This is so because this being, from fertilization, is alive, human, sexed, complete and growing.

Comment

- The above is not a religious faith belief.
- The above is not a philosophic theory.
- The above is not debatable, not questioned. It is a universally accepted scientific fact.

Note: Detailed biologic facts are in Chapters 11 and 12. Also see *Everyone Must Answer 2 Basic Questions*, J. Willke, Hayes Publishing

Must the question, “when does human life begin?” be answered?

If there is one absolutely essential function of a nation or state, it is to protect the lives of those who live within its boundaries. In order to carry out this solemn duty, it must first ask and answer when the life of its people begins.

What simple measure would you use to define Human Life?

We would ask:

Is this being alive?

Yes. He has the characteristics of life. That is, he can reproduce his own cells and develop them into a specific pattern of maturity and function. Or, more simply, he is not dead.

Is this being human?

Yes. This is a unique being, distinguishable totally from any other living organism, completely human in all of his or her characteristics, including the 46 human chromosomes, and can develop only into a fully mature human.

Is this being complete?

Yes. Nothing new will be added from the time of union of sperm and egg until the death of the old man or woman. The only changes are growth and development of what is already there at the beginning. All he needs is time to develop and mature.

But what if a person would still sincerely doubt that this is human life in the womb?

Even if a person did doubt the presence of actual

human life in the uterus at a particular time, what would be the fully human way to go? Perhaps a guide would be how we have always treated other human life when there has been a doubt that it exists. Would we not resolve a doubt in favor of life? We do not bury those who are doubtfully dead. We work frantically to help rescue entombed miners, a child lost in the mountains, or a person under a collapsed building. Doesn't a hunter withhold his shot until he knows that it is a deer and not another man? We suggest that the truly human way of thinking would be to give life the benefit of the doubt.

But isn't "conception" different from "fertilization?"

Ever since its discovery 150 years ago, both words were used to mean the union of sperm and ovum. In the 1960s, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the American College of OB & GYN agreed to attempt to redefine "conception" to mean implantation.

"Conception is the implantation of the blastocyst. It is not synonymous with fertilization."

E. Hughes, ed., *"OB & GYN Terminology,"*
Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1972

This made it possible to call an intrauterine device a "contraceptive" even though it was an abortifacient.

But in 1982, lengthy hearings in the U.S. Senate and the two-volume report of the Human Life Bill defined "conception" and used it exclusively to mean the time of union of sperm and ovum.

"Human Life Bill," U.S. Senate Common
Judiciary, Subcommittee of Separation
of Powers, 97th Congress, S-158,
April-June 1982, Serial No. J-97-16

This "American" semantic distortion is not accepted in many other nations where "conception," "fertilization," and "fecundation" are all used interchangeably.

But when is it a person?

“Person” is defined in our dictionary in 14 different ways. Yellowstone Park is a person. So is General Motors. So are you. But the Supreme Court of the U.S. in 1857 ruled that black people were not persons, and in 1973 that unborn people were not persons. You answer this question by first inquiring what the questioner means by “a person.”

Did Dr. Liley, the “Father of Fetology,” think the tiny being was human?

Dr. Liley, who did the first fetal blood transfusion in the womb, said that seven days after fertilization:

“. . . the young individual, in command of his environment and destiny, with a tenacious purpose, implants in the spongy lining and, with a display of physiological power, suppresses his mother’s menstrual period. This is his home for the next 270 days, and to make it habitable, the embryo develops a placenta and a protective capsule of fluid for himself. He also solves, single-handed, the homograft problem, that dazzling feat by which foetus and mother, although immunological foreigners who could not exchange skin grafts nor safely receive blood from each other, nevertheless tolerate each other in parabiosis for nine months.

“We know that he moves with a delightful, easy grace in his buoyant world, that foetal comfort determines foetal position. He is responsive to pain and touch and cold and sound and light. He drinks his amniotic fluid, more if it is artificially sweetened, less if it is given an unpleasant taste. He gets hiccups and sucks his thumb. He wakes and sleeps. He gets bored with repetitive signals but can be taught to be alerted by a first signal for a second different one. And, finally, he determines his birthday, for, unquestionably, the onset of labour is a unilateral decision of the foetus.

“This, then, is the foetus we know and, indeed, we

each once were. This is the foetus we look after in modern obstetrics, the same baby we are caring for before and after birth, who, before birth, can be ill and need diagnosis and treatment just like any other patient.”

A. Liley, “A Case Against Abortion,” *Liberal Studies*,
Whitcombe & Tombs, Ltd., 1971

THE SECOND QUESTION IS:

Having answered the first question, we now must ask the second one. The first was a question of scientific facts. The second is one of values. It is:

Should all human life be given equal protection under the law, or can certain human lives be discriminated against, and, if so, on what basis?

The charter of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, is guiding here. “All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

The first right is “life,” for, without it, there are no other rights.

But there are conflicting rights; who is to judge?

The ethical principle is that there is a hierarchy of rights, but that the right to life itself is supreme. There is a right to free speech, but not to shout “fire” in a theater. A man has a right to swing his fist, but that right stops at your nose. We all have the right to the pursuit of happiness, but we cannot achieve it by discriminating against, stealing from, injuring or killing others. Laws enforcing civil rights are of this nature. **Abortion is a civil rights, a human rights issue, and the basic right to life of all humans must be protected.**

But equal protection?

Every government has the right and duty to protect the lives of all living humans in that nation regardless of degree of dependency, degree of perfection, age, sex, or place of residence (living in or out of the womb). This protection should be guaranteed by its Constitution and should be enforced through due process of law.

The alternative to this is to allow, legislate or adjudicate a system in which there is discrimination against certain classes of living humans. In the case of abortion, there is discrimination against an entire class of living humans, on the basis of age (too young) and place of residence (still living in the womb). Such laws created by the U.S. Supreme Court and by other nations' Parliaments have granted to one living human (the woman) the legal right to kill another (her developing baby) in order to solve her own personal social problem. Should this fatal discrimination against an entire class of living humans continue? That is a question still before each nation, and one that will simply not go away.

A civilization will ultimately be judged by how it treats the smallest, the most dependent, the most innocent among its members. Did that nation cherish, protect, love and nourish them — or kill them?

But what of the pregnant woman?

It should be obvious to everyone that there are two living humans involved: the unborn child and his mother. For this nation to once again protect its unborn babies, but not to do everything humanly possible to help the mother, would be immoral. The woman with a problem pregnancy must, at the same time, be offered aid in solving her problems, to help her through that distressing time.

If, in fact, her very life is threatened physically, then the ideal is to save both. But if, in treating her, the fetal

baby is lost, such may be an unfortunate result. Your authors have traveled nationally and internationally for over 3 decades lecturing on this subject, and we have yet to hear of a directly induced abortion needed to prevent her death. There are, of course, good reasons to deliver the baby and end her pregnancy in its late months, but here, hopefully the baby is saved. Never in late pregnancy is it necessary to directly kill the baby by abortion.

If her problem is something less than a threat to her life itself, then we cannot solve it by the ghastly violence of killing another innocent human life. The solutions for helping any individual woman are often many and complex, but they must be found and they must be used.

Why can't we love them both?

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