

# Abortion—Logic and the Bible

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These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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**Introduction:** What I rarely find is a combination of logic and the Bible used to make sense of the abortion issue. By far, the majority of Christians groups are against abortion, although some of their uses of Scripture are suspect. On the other side of the issue is R. B. Thieme, Jr., who teaches that abortion is an issue for the woman and her doctor. Siding with him is almost the entirety of the liberal political movement, even those who claim not to believe in God. However, as you will see, one can make an argument in favor of abortion on religious or philosophical grounds, but not upon biological grounds. So the left, which often rejects religion in favor of science, must abandon science entirely to take the position which they have taken. In any case, I hope to approach this subject using Bible doctrine, logic and a little biology.

There are some points I should make from the outset.

## Introductory Points to Abortion

1. I do not dispute R. B. Thieme, Jr.’s position that ensoulment occurs at first breath. This has been a fundamental position of Christian and even Judæan thought for

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- most of history.
2. Giving up that point, it should also be clear that there is some form of life in the womb. We may disagree *theologically* as to the value of that life.
  3. Biologically, life in the womb is of a different quality than our hair, teeth, finger nails, moles, etc. No believer or unbeliever thinks that cutting one's finger nails, losing one's teeth, or lasering off a mole has any sort of moral consequence or importance.
  4. Few would dispute that being born into a home of two loving parents is ideal. Yet, once a child is born, *no one* would argue that killing the child is preferred over that child living under whatever circumstances they are born into. Once a child is born, there are few who would argue that killing such a child is inconsequential. Most, if they hear a child has been harmed and has died at the hands of their parents, would like to see harsh punishment inflicted upon the parent or parents responsible. My point here is, arguing for abortion because a child might be born into bad circumstances is a moot argument, if arguing in favor of killing a child already born under the same circumstances seems an extreme position to take.
  5. Biologically speaking, there is no difference between a child two minutes from birth and a child two minutes after birth—apart from the second uses his lungs to breathe with.
  6. Arguing in favor of abortion based upon rape or incest misses the entire point—these circumstances account for about **1% of the abortions** which are performed.
  7. Theologically, there is certainly a difference as to how people perceive life in the womb. Some believe that the life in the womb is no different from the life outside the womb; and others believe that there is a profound difference that occurs with the first breath a baby takes. But, you need to bear in mind, *this is a theological difference*. Babies (or fetuses) in the womb have electrical signals going off in their brains. There is no dispute about this. Furthermore, they can feel pain. There seems to be some **consensus** in science that **fetuses dream**. Babies in the womb can be **startled** when you sneeze, they suck their thumbs, they **hiccup**, they can **smell** things outside of the womb, and they **yawn**.
  8. My point is, although I have no problems with some laws being based upon the Bible and the Ten Commandments; I do have a problem when laws are derived from strong theological positions.
    - 1) Since wars will not end, do we make peace marches illegal?
    - 2) Do we outlaw statues of Mary or jewelry in the shape of a cross because they are idolatrous?
    - 3) Do we require socialism as the practice of our economy because the early Jerusalem church shared all things in common?
  9. One more point: it is the far, far left that believes in killing fetuses right into the 3<sup>rd</sup> term. If you have the theological position that killing a fetus in the womb is not really killing you are logically asserting two things:
    - 1) There is no negative moral value in the destruction of a fetus, even if it takes place a few seconds before the fetus is born;

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- 2) and killing a fetus is no different from burning a mole from your skin.
10. In taking such a position, you are aligned with the most liberal wing of the Democratic party. If I find myself theologically aligned with a far left liberal position, then that sends off buzzers in my head.
- 11.

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Taken From **Psalm 51** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

I rarely disagree with the teaching of R. B. Thieme, Jr., but I do depart from it in this instance. He teaches that man becomes fully human at birth (at the first gulp of air, when God breathes into us life) and that abortion is a decision which ought to be left to the mother and the doctor (he supported the Supreme Court Decision Row v. Wade). This is covered in his book, *The Origin of the Human Life*. I could not tell you if he supported the millions of fetuses (babies?) destroyed because of Row v. Wade. It is my understanding that he did not believe in that, although I do not have any supporting evidence one way or the other.

Let me add, I do not have a dog in this fight. I do not have a need to agree with everything that Bob Thieme taught, nor do I have a need to find doctrinal differences with him. Furthermore, I have not dealt intimately with the act of abortion with anyone I know. I am sure women I know have had abortions. Whether liberal or conservative, women do not tend to want to brag about having an abortion.

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1. The biological approach: biologically speaking, what begins at conception and continues until birth is completely and fully human. That which is in the womb has a fully human cell structure as well as a unique design different from that of the mother or the father.
2. You can make a philosophical or a religious argument which favors or allows for abortion, but you cannot make a biological argument which favors or allows for abortion. .
  - 1) You can believe that ensoulment (when the soul enters the body) occurs when we are born, and therefore believe that which is in the womb is not fully human—but that is based upon a religious or philosophical belief.
  - 2) You can make the philosophical argument that, this fetus in the womb is going to be born into a bad life and therefore should be killed in the womb; but the same argument is valid for any child which is already born. A child can be born into poverty and you can similarly argue, that child's life will suck, so we ought to kill it. This particular argument is not based upon when a child is born or where the child is, with regards to the

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- conception/birth process. This argument is based solely upon the environment the child is born into. One could take this exact same argument, and believe that it is most humane to go to parts of Africa and begin slaughtering children and forcing abortions upon the women there.
- 3) A person who comes at this problem from a scientific view—from a biological point of view—cannot make this argument that what is in the womb is not human. There is no biologist who can, on the basis of biology, argue that there is something other than a human being in the womb.
  3. Similarly, a woman cannot argue that, it is her body and that she can do what she wants with it. She may argue this philosophically or she may argue this from a religious point of view, but she cannot make this argument from a scientific/biological point of view. Biologically, that which is in the womb is a human being who is different from the mother. It may be a different gender, and it have a different blood type or different eye color than the mother. No one can make the biological argument that what is in the womb is the mother, and therefore she can determine what ought to be done with it. What is in the womb is dependent upon the mother, just as a recently-born baby is dependent upon his mother; but biologically, this is a different human being than the mother.
  4. One can certainly make the philosophical argument that, an abortion would be better for the mother, say, in the instance of rape. However, no one can really argue that this is better for the child, as the child has no say in this matter. The child is unable to express his opinion on this matter until he is at least 5 years old.
  5. Although, it ought to be obvious that God has some part in the process of conception and the forming of the child in the womb, the Bible affirms this as well. Speaking of Jeremiah, God said, “**Before I formed you in the belly I knew you, and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.**” (Jer. 1:5). Job 31:15 is a similar approach. It seems reasonable and logical to me that we respect this process with which God has chosen to work.
  6. God has chosen this entire process of being formed in the womb for the least and for the greatest. Our Lord’s humanity was clearly developed in the womb.
  7. Our bodies are made and fashioned in the womb of the mother. Job 31:15
  8. God uses the womb of the mother to protect the child. Psalm 139:13b reads: **You have covered [and protected] me in my mother’s womb.** The verb here is *çâkak*<sup>e</sup> (çâk) [pronounced *saw-KAHK*<sup>e</sup>], which means *to weave [together], to make [a fence, hedge]; to protect, to guard; to cover over*. Strong’s #5526 BDB #692, 696, 697. The sense of this verb seems to be more *to cover and protect* (Ex. 37:9 1Chron. 28:18 Psalm 140:7).
  9. The Bible uses the same designation for a child in the womb as a child outside of the womb.
    - 1) The Greek noun *brephos* (βρέφος) [pronounced *BREHF-oss*], which means, 1) an unborn child, embryo, a foetus; 2) a new-born child, an infant, a babe. Thayer definitions only. Strong’s #1025. This is used in

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- Luke 1:41, 44 for a child in the womb. It is used in Luke 2:12, 16 for a child in a manger. The emphasis seems to be upon not yet being grown or fully developed. 1Peter 2:2 2Tim. 3:15
- 2) The same is true of the Hebrew word *geber* (גִּבּוֹר) [pronounced *ge<sup>b</sup>-VAIR*], which means *men*, as separate from women and children. Strong's #1397 #1399 BDB #149. This word is used of Job in the womb in Job 3:3, although this word is generally used of an adult male (Num. 24:3, 15).
10. I would have a difficult time arguing for or against a fetus going to heaven as David's young infant child (2Sam. 12:15–23). However, logically and religiously, one could argue, *I know a baby will go to heaven, but I am not so certain about a fetus, so I will therefore give birth to the child and then kill it.* This is a perverse argument, I admit, and one that will result in a charge of premeditated murder; but there is a religious logic to it. This argument dovetails with the argument that, this child's life will suck, therefore, we ought to kill the child.
11. However, it is clear from the Old Testament that God prefers life over death<sup>1</sup>:
- 1) The concept of "life" was regarded as the highest good, while "death" was seen as the worst evil. Hence the challenge found in Deuteronomy 30:19 ["Today I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose Life, so that you and your children may live."](#)
  - 2) Man is not a chance or a mere assemblage of cells, but created in the image of God. Hence, the shedding of innocent blood was strictly forbidden. Genesis 9:6 Exodus 23:7 Prov. 6:16-17
  - 3) Children are never seen as "unwanted" or as a nuisance, but as a gift from God -- the highest possible blessing. Psalm 127:3-5 113:9 Gen. 17:6 33:5
  - 4) In a sense, there is an immortality achieved through one's descendants. God's "promise" to Abraham to make of him a great nation is passed on to Isaac, Jacob, and to Jacob's sons. [Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him](#) (Psalm 127:3) See also Gen. 48:16
  - 5) Sterility and barrenness are seen in the Bible as a curse, a source of great shame and sorrow. Hence, Peninnah's harsh ridicule of Hannah, the prophet Samuel's mother, because of the latter's initial barrenness. 1Samuel 1:6. Gen. 20:17-18 30:1, 22-23
  - 6) God works in the womb fashioning the person there for His purposes. Psalm 139:13-16 Isa. 49:1,5 Jer. 1:5
  - 7) In general, the people of the Old Testament saw life as the highest good and death the worst of evils; they saw man as being created in the image of God, and children as the highest possible blessing; they understood immortality as being achieved through one's descendants; they saw sterility and barrenness as a curse, and they believed that God is at work in the womb. It would be very difficult that this same people of God believed abortion to be the removal of meaningless cells from the woman's body.

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12. Even though there is no clear prohibition of abortion in the Bible, the idea that the absence of a direct prohibition meant that women had a God-given right to kill their offspring would have been utterly foreign to the Hebrew culture of that day for the reasons cited above.<sup>2</sup>
13. Early Judaism condemned the practice of abortion<sup>3</sup>:
  - 1) *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (written between 50 B.C. and A.D. 50) says, "A woman should not destroy the unborn babe in her belly, nor after its birth throw it before the dogs and vultures."
  - 2) *Sibylline Oracles*: includes among the wicked those who "produce abortions and unlawfully cast their offspring away" as well as sorcerers who dispense abortifacients.
  - 3) *1Enoch* (first or second century B.C.) says that an evil angel taught humans how to "smash the embryo in the womb."
  - 4) Philo of Alexandria (Jewish philosopher, 25 B.C. to A.D.41) rejected the notion that the fetus is merely part of the mother's body.
  - 5) Josephus (first-century Jewish historian) wrote, "The law orders all the offspring be brought up, and forbids women either to cause abortion or to make away with the fetus." (A woman who did so was considered to have committed infanticide because she destroyed a "soul" and hence diminished the race.)
14. Early *Christian* writings also disapproved of abortion<sup>4</sup>:
  - 1) *The Didache*: "You shall not murder a child by abortion nor shall you kill a newborn."
  - 2) *The Epistle of Barnabas*: "You shall love your neighbor more than your own life. You shall not murder a child by abortion nor shall you kill a newborn."
  - 3) *Apocalypse of Peter* [describing a vision of Hell]: "I saw women who produced children out of wedlock and who procured abortions."
  - 4) Obviously, these texts are not the Bible, and therefore, they are not authoritative. However, these texts, writes Gorman, "bear witness to the general Jewish and Jewish-Christian attitude of the first and second centuries, thus confirming that the earliest Christians shared the anti-abortion position of their Jewish forebears."
  - 5) Tertullian (circa 155 - 225 CE): "...we are not permitted, since murder has been prohibited to us once and for all, even to destroy ...the fetus in the womb. It makes no difference whether one destroys a life that has already been born or one that is in the process of birth." Tertullian, "Apology" (9:7-8)
  - 6) [http://www.religioustolerance.org/abo\\_hist.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/abo_hist.htm) lists a number of early Christians who specifically were opposed to abortion.
  - 7) Although, it is clear that early Jewish and Christian tradition is not the basis of our faith, it also provides us with the thinking of those who are our spiritual heritage.
  - 8) As an aside, there were some early saints who did not believe that

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abortion was a sin, including St. Augustine and St. Jerome. [http://www.religioustolerance.org/abo\\_hist.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/abo_hist.htm) It is rather ironic that the two earliest saints claimed by the Catholic church were in favor of abortion.

15. The verse often quoted by both sides of this controversy is Exodus 21:22-25: "And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him; and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if any harm [= *evil, mischief, hurt*] follows, then you must take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, and bruise for bruise."

- 1) It is clear that God is speaking of a miscarriage here.
- 2) There are several possible outcomes: the mother and child survive; the mother survives and the child does not; the child survives and the mother does not; neither the mother nor child survive.
- 3) The phrase *there is no further injury* logically suggests that mother and child survive; however, there is still a fine levied for this.
- 4) *If any harm follows* does not distinguish between the mother and child. Let's say, the child was born blind as a result; would there be no penalty?
- 5) Furthermore, the child would like take a breath as exiting the womb, so using this verse to argue for or against abortion based upon ensoulment (when we receive the human soul) is rather futile. The Bible does not distinguish here, either between the mother or the child or between the child taking a breath when born or not.
- 6) It is illogical to try to interpret in this text such distinctions where the text itself does not explicitly teach such distinctions.
- 7) See

<http://www.priestsforlife.org/speakersmanual/ch4theologicalcasebible.htm> for further commentary on this passage.

16. So, what about R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s approach that, when each child is born, God breathes into that child the breath of lives, which pattern was set for us with Adam in Gen. 2:7?

- 1) Biologically, in the womb, our bodies function with the use of oxygen, although not by using our lungs.
- 2) As we have covered in our study of Psalm 51, the sin nature is a part of the genetic makeup of the child in the womb.
- 3) The Bible does not specifically distinguish between the life of the woman and the child when a miscarriage is caused, treating the child's life as less important.
- 4) There are several passages where the child in the womb is given specific identity.
- 5) So, even though there is a certain beauty to the logic that we receive our soul at birth, breathed into us by God, I have a difficult time reconciling that with women using abortion as a form of after-the-fact birth control.

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- 6) Therefore, since God has allowed conception to take place, I would take the stand that we ought to respect the process which God has chosen for the development of a child in the womb, and to not interrupt that process.
  - 7) If the life of the woman is actually in danger, I would choose the mother over the child; but this is far less than 1% of the abortions which are performed.
  - 8) As callous as this may seem, I do not favor aborting children conceived by rape or by incest. Again, this is a very tiny percentage of the abortions which are performed. This is also based upon having seen a public speaker who thanked her birth mother for giving birth to her, even though her birth mother was impregnated by a rapist.
17. Since it is quite difficult for me to make a determination about what quality of life exists within the soul, I then look at those who favor abortions and those who are against them. We have those on the political left who support abortions. They say, *abortions ought to be safe, legal and rare*; however, their policies make abortions abundant and now, about 2 out of 5 women have an abortion. Furthermore, even though those on the left seem to think that knowledge of things sexual are absolutely necessary for all children, they do not believe that women seeking an abortion should know much about anything. They don't want them to have a sonogram; they don't want them to see a film of an abortion occurring for the time period they are thinking about; they don't want them to know about what exactly is in their bodies at the time that they want an abortion. Given that this is the side which supports abortion, I would rather be on the other side of this controversy.
- 1) One of the pro-abortion sites that I visited (<http://www.elroy.net/ehr/abortion.html>) argued in favor of abortion with the verse: *Let the day perish in which I am born, And the night that hath said: 'A man-child hath been conceived.'* (Job 3:3). Their reasoning was, Job's life sucked so bad when he wrote those words that aborting him would have been a good thing. The lack of logic here is stunning. God chose Job to develop unique information about God and the Angelic Conflict; Job's life and suffering is integral to Biblical thinking—so how can anyone argue that, God is saying here that, abortion for Job would have been the way to go? Isn't this really expressing Job's personal sorrow rather than God's preference that Job had been aborted?
  - 2) There was even a group which was trying to get women to wear a badge or a ribbon indicating that they are proud to have had an abortion. For some reason, that never really caught on, even with liberals. Would anyone wear a badge saying, "I killed the fetus in my womb; yay me!"
18. Let me offer a logical and theological reason against abortion: we believers are made up of a soul, a spirit and a body. God does not view the body as unimportant. When we are raised from the dead, we will be raised in a resurrection body. There are offshoots of Christianity which teach Platonist concepts, such as the soul yearns to be free of the human body, so that it can be



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pure; but Bible does not teach that we will spend eternity separated from our bodies. God has specifically determined that our eternity will be spent in a resurrection body. Therefore, even if the cells being formed in the womb merely represents a body and a format soul, that is not reason enough to view aborting the fetus as a trivial and nonmoral choice. If God places us into resurrection bodies in eternity and human bodies in time, then we ought not to take His process of forming the body as an unimportant matter.

19. The creation/making of the body is never presented as a trivial thing.
  - 1) The body is made by God before He breathed the breath of lives into it. Gen. 2:7
  - 2) God uses the womb of the mother to protect the child. Psalm 139:13b
  - 3) God has clothed us with a human body, which protects the soul. Job 10:11
  - 4) In eternity, we will have a resurrection body. 1Cor. 15
  - 5) If God makes and protects the human body, ought we not to do the same?
20. Based upon the explicit Bible verses above, as well as upon logic, I remain unconvinced that a cavalier attitude toward abortion is the right approach (between 1–1.5 million abortions performed each year in the United States is a pretty cavalier approach).
21. Whereas, I am not completely decided when it comes to ensoulment (when our souls and bodies become one), I am convinced that abortion simply as a method of after-the-fact birth control is wrong. Whatever kind of life is in the womb is a process set up by God and ought not to be interfered with.
22. Therefore, when faced with this controversy, I would rather stand on the side of life.

<sup>1</sup> From: <http://www.priestsforlife.org/speakersmanual/ch4theologicalcasebible.htm>

<sup>2</sup> From: <http://www.priestsforlife.org/speakersmanual/ch4theologicalcasebible.htm>

<sup>3</sup> From: <http://www.priestsforlife.org/speakersmanual/ch4theologicalcasebible.htm> These examples apparently were lifted from Michael Gorman's article "Why Is the New Testament Silent About Abortion?" (*Christianity Today*, Jan. 11, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> As above.

Possibly a worthy book to pursue this topic further would be: Michael Gorman, *Abortion & the Early Church*, Intervarsity Press, 1982. Let me also suggest *Handbook on Abortion* which can be purchased for shipping costs alone.

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Many advocates for life are challenged with myths and tough questions posed by abortion supporters. Much of the truth about abortion receives little attention in public discourse, for it exposes what we, as a nation, would rather not see. Following are myths and questions frequently raised by abortion proponents, and facts that will help you with the abortion debate.

*Abortion Myths* comes from [www.texasrighttolife.com](http://www.texasrighttolife.com)

## Abortion Myths

**Myth: Abortion is only legal through the first trimester.**

**Reality:** Due to the radical scope of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, a right to abortion was effectively established for the entire term of pregnancy for virtually any reason, whether for sake of personal finances, social convenience, or individual lifestyle. Therefore, no significant legal barriers of any kind whatsoever exist in the United States that prevent a woman from obtaining an abortion for any reason during any stage of her pregnancy.

**Myth: Women really need abortion for health reasons.**

**Reality:** An Alan Guttmacher Institute survey found that nearly one-half of women obtaining abortions said they used no birth control method during the month they got pregnant. Add to this the fact that, at most, only five percent of all abortions are done for the mother's physical or psychological health. Rape and incest are cited as reasons for less than 1% of all abortions. Nationally, 82% of women obtaining abortions are unmarried. These statistics strongly suggest abortion is used primarily as birth control.

**Myth: No one knows when human life begins.**

**Reality:** Biologic human life is defined by examining the scientific facts of human development. This is a field where there is no controversy and no disagreement. 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 being, from fertilization, is alive, human, sexed, complete and growing. Ultrasound and medical technology have come a long way toward helping the public understand when life begins. The point on which there is disagreement is whether this biological human being is a "person" worthy of rights and protection.

**Myth: Abortion is an unfortunate necessity and doesn't happen often.**

**Reality:** At least 1.2 million abortions take place each year in the United States. According to a 1999 study by The Alan Guttmacher Institute, nearly one in four pregnancies ends in abortion.

**Myth: Abortion is used mainly as a last resort, mostly for pregnancies that result from rape or incest.**

**Reality:** In a study conducted by The Alan Guttmacher Institute entitled "Why Women Have Abortions," women were asked to give specific reasons why they had an abortion.

The top three answers were:

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Unready for responsibility

Can't afford baby now

Concern about how having a baby would change her life.

The three reasons which came in last place and were tied at 1 percent included:

Was a victim of rape or incest

Husband or partner wanted the abortion

Didn't want others to know she has had sex or is pregnant.

Therefore, abortion is not mainly used as a last resort.

**Myth: Abortion is needed to reduce child abuse - unwanted children will be abused children.**

**Reality:** Legalizing abortion was supposed to help reduce child abuse, since it was assumed that most abused children were unwanted at birth. This theory has been disproven by scientific studies as well as by the evidence that child abuse has sharply increased since abortion became legal.

In 1973, when abortion became legal in the United States, there were 167,000 cases of child abuse and neglect reported. Yet in 1980 there were 785,100 cases - an increase of 370% from 1973. Furthermore, in 1987 there were 2,025,200 cases reported, which represents an increase of 1112%.<sup>1</sup> While a portion of this increase is due to better reporting, experts agree that these figures reflect a real trend toward ever higher rates of abuse.

Rather than helping stop child abuse, legal abortion has actually contributed to its sharp rise due to the detrimental effects abortion has on women's self-esteem and the ability to deal with stress. Dr. Philip Ney, in a widely read study on the connection between abortion and child abuse, notes:

"... elective abortion is an important cause of child abuse. Recent evidence indicates many women harbor strong guilt feelings long after their abortions. Guilt is one important cause of child battering and infanticide. Abortion lowers women's self-esteem and there are studies reporting a major loss of self-esteem in battering parents...." <sup>2</sup>

**Myth: The typical abortive woman is a poor, black teen.**

**Reality:** According to the Centers for Disease Control, 33% of women having abortions in 2001 were between the ages of 20 and 24, while only 18% were 19 or younger. According to The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 60% percent of women obtaining abortions are white and 71% have an annual income of over \$15,000.

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### **Myth: If abortion were made illegal, women would die in "back-alley abortions."**

**Reality:** One of the most common arguments abortion advocates make in defense of legal abortion is that making abortion illegal will cause women to go to the "back alleys" and obtain unsafe abortions. They cite how thousands of women died as a result of unsafe abortions before abortion was legalized through the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision.

First, it is worth noting that legal abortions are not even safe - they harm women physically and emotionally.

Regarding the myth of "back-alley abortions," Dr. Bernard Nathanson, co-founder of the National Abortion Rights Action League, admits that his group lied about the number of women who died from illegal abortions when testifying before the Supreme Court in 1972. "We spoke of 5,000 - 10,000 deaths a year.... I confess that I knew the figures were totally false ... it was a useful figure, widely accepted, so why go out of our way to correct it with honest statistics?"

Furthermore, the claim that thousands of maternal deaths occurred due to illegal abortion doesn't measure up when compared with other statistics. About 50,000 women of child-bearing age die each year - from all causes combined. To suggest that 10,000 of these deaths were from illegal abortion would make that the cause of one out of every five deaths, or twenty percent. This would have made illegal abortion the leading cause of death among women in that age group.

According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, the legalization of abortion was not responsible for reducing abortion-related deaths. The discovery of antibiotics in the 1940's actually reduced all deaths by providing effective treatment for infections. The National Center for Health Statistics reveals that before 1941, there were over 1,400 abortion-related deaths. Yet, after Penicillin became available to control infections, the number of deaths was reduced in the 1950's to approximately 250 per year. By 1966, with abortion still illegal in all states, the number of deaths had dropped steadily to 120. New and better antibiotics, better surgery and the establishment of intensive care units in hospitals all led to such a decrease, even in the face of a rising population.

Between 1967 and 1970 sixteen states legalized abortion. In most it was limited, only for rape, incest, severe fetal handicaps or deformities, and when the pregnancy jeopardized the life of the mother (all of which constitute only 5% of the abortion cases today). There were two notable exceptions - California in 1967 and New York in 1970 legalized abortion on demand.

Legalizing abortion should have eliminated some deaths related to illegal abortions, but that is not the case. In the years from 1963-1969, there were an average of

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approximately 55 deaths per year due to illegal abortions. In 1970, after this initial wave of laws legalizing abortions, there were 109. Deaths from illegal abortions actually increased.

By the year before the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision allowing legal abortion on demand in all fifty states, the death rate for illegal abortions had fallen to 24 in 1972 (with 25 additional deaths as a result of legal abortions). In 1973, there should have been a sharp drop in abortion-related deaths with abortion legal in all fifty states and "back-alley abortions" eliminated with their alleged total of maternal deaths. Yet abortion-related deaths increased again with 25 deaths resulting from legal abortion in 1973, 26 in 1974 and 29 in 1975.

Some have claimed that the number of illegal abortion-related deaths were not reported accurately or were underreported. Yet, when a woman was seriously injured by an abortion, she went to another doctor for care. The abortion practitioner was rarely involved at that point and the new doctor in many cases had to attempt to save the mother's life. In cases of maternal death, this new doctor was required to report, and falsification of the death certificate was a felony. Therefore, prior to legalization of abortion, it's safe to say that deaths from illegal abortions were rarely covered up.

Yet, even if the case can be made that deaths resulting from illegal abortions were underreported, it is equally safe to say that deaths resulting from legal abortions are underreported. In Maryland in 1991, there were four women who died from legal abortions that year. None of the four were reported to the Federal Centers for Disease Control for its statistics. Whereas prior to the legalization of abortion a second doctor, with little or no reason to cover up a death for which he or she was not responsible, was involved in an attempt to save the mother's life; with legalized abortion the abortion practitioner is usually the one attempting to save the mother's life when the abortion threatens her life.

Other specific instances help us see how reporting for the number of deaths related to legal abortions may be low. In 1977, an Ohio doctor noted that while the official statistics showed no abortion-related deaths in Ohio that year, he personally knew of two. If one doctor knew of two cases, how many were there really?

Abortion was legalized in California in 1967. According to an article in the Los Angeles Times in 1972, official records showed four legal abortion-related deaths in the entire country from 1967 to 1972. Yet, a reporter for that paper uncovered three deaths in Los Angeles in just one month in 1972.

A reporter for the Chicago Sun-Times uncovered 12 legal abortion-related deaths in that city in 1978. The government statistics show only 16 deaths for the entire country in that year.

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Another important point is that many of the abortion practitioners performing abortions after Roe v. Wade were the same people performing illegal abortions. In the July 1960 edition of the American Journal of Public Health, an article by Dr. Mary Calderon, then medical director of Planned Parenthood, stated:

"90% of illegal abortions are being done by physicians. Call them what you will, abortionists, or anything else, they are still physicians, trained as such... They must do a pretty good job if the death rate is as low as it is... Abortion, whether therapeutic or illegal, is in the main no longer dangerous, because it is being done well by physicians."

Here is a candid admission that not only are illegal abortions not being done by quack doctors, but that the death rate from illegal abortions was "low." This flies in the face of claims of several thousand women losing their lives to illegal abortions and the claim that illegal abortions were performed by quack doctors and not by physicians.

In conclusion, there were not several thousand women losing their lives due to illegal abortions performed by quack doctors. Effective medical treatments helped reduce abortion related deaths and the legalization of abortion never played a significant role (and never will) in affecting the numbers of women who died from legal or illegal abortion-related deaths. That women continue to die from so-called "safe, legal" abortions (perhaps in greater numbers than we know) is a clear indication that abortion is unsafe and hurts women - legal or otherwise.

**Myth: Having an abortion will help our relationship by removing the stress of a pregnancy.**

**Reality:** Researcher Emily Milling studied over 400 couples with women who had made a decision to have an abortion. Her research confirmed that 70% of their relationships ended within one month of the abortion. Sociologist Arthur Shostak found that three out of four male respondents had persistent day and night dreams about "the child that never was." Linda Bird Franke wrote "In my research, almost every relationship between single people broke up either before or after the abortion."

**Myth: Abortions are not mentally or emotionally harmful to women.**

**Reality:** Dr. Anne Speckhard, in a 1985 University of Minnesota study, researched "long-term manifestations of abortion" (5-10 years), and found that 81% of mothers reported preoccupation with their aborted child, 54% had nightmares, 35% had perceived visitations with their child, and 96% felt their abortion had taken a human life.

Immediately after an abortion, many women report a feeling of relief, but guilt and depression frequently follow. A national poll found that at least 56% of women experience a sense of guilt over their decision, though the pollster himself acknowledged that many women will not even admit having had an abortion. In fact, a five-year study

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shows that 25% of women who have had abortions sought out psychiatric care, versus just 3% of women who have not had abortions. Further, numerous studies reveal that women who have had an abortion experience a high incidence of depression, stress, low self-esteem, suicidal feelings and substance abuse.

From <http://www.texasrighttolife.com/about/145/Abortion-Myths> accessed December 6, 2014.

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