

## Clarkson Academy—Part 3 Lecture Notes

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Big picture: Successful pro-life apologists present their case in four steps. First, they clarify the debate, clearing away distractions. Second, they make a compelling case for life using science and philosophy. Third, they answer objections convincingly. Fourth, they teach and equip.

### Step #3: Answer objections persuasively

Review of the basic pro-life argument:

- P1: It is wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being.
- P2: Elective abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being.
- P3: Therefore, elective abortion is wrong.

Pro-life case stated in 1-minute or less:

The science of embryology tells us that from the earliest stages of development, you were a distinct, living, and whole human being. You didn't come from an embryo. You once were an embryo. Philosophically, there is no relevant difference between the embryo you once were and the adult you are today that justifies killing you at that earlier stage of development. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not good reasons for saying you could be killed then but not now.

Review of the substance view of human persons:

1. Substances are living organisms that maintain identity through time and change while property things, like my car, do not. What moves a puppy to maturity or a human fetus to adulthood is not a mere collection of parts, but an underlying nature or essence that orders its properties and capacities. As a substance grows, it does not become more of its kind; it matures according to its kind. It remains the same kind of thing from the moment it begins to exist. Thus, a substance retains its identity even if its ultimate capacities are never fully realized. A dog that never learns to bark is still a dog by nature. That is, it the dog's particular nature, not the realization of some capacity he may or may not develop, determines what kind of thing he is.
2. General objections to the substance view—and replies:
  - (a) Religion—Arguments are true of false, valid or invalid. Calling an argument “religious” is a category mistake. The pro-life case from science and philosophy must be answered, not dismissed with a label.
  - (b) Self-awareness—Why is that value giving? Results in savage inequality and proves too much.
  - (c) Consciousness—What do you mean by “consciousness?” Undermines human equality.
  - (d) Sentience—Why is that value giving? Wasps are sentient. Undermines human equality.
  - (e) Human exceptionalism is religious and cruel to animals—Again, arguments are valid or invalid, true or false. It's not enough to simply assert species membership doesn't matter. Our understanding of pathology says otherwise. A dog that can't read isn't a tragedy. A 16-year-old girl who can't is one. Is there no difference between eating a hamburger and a Harold burger?
  - (f) Humans can't vote or drive before a certain age—confuses natural rights with positive ones.
  - (g) Viability—Measures our technology not the essential nature of the unborn (fetal surgery example)
  - (h) Embryo parallel to brain-dead person—Confuses “no more” with “not yet.”
3. Specific objections to the substance view—and replies.
  - (a) David Boonin's “desire” argument—Proves too much, results in inequality, and can't say why it's wrong to surgically alter the brains of fetuses so they never desire anything.
  - (b) Michael Tooley's “potential” argument—Confuses passive potential with active potential and fails to distinguish between making someone better off and making him worse off.
  - (c) Steven Pinker's anti-dignity/anti-metaphysics argument—First, if disagreement means the pro-life case for dignity fails, Pinker's own case fails because pro-lifers disagree with it. Second, consent and autonomy are

inadequate for grounding bioethics. Third, Pinker's own view is not neutral. He advances a metaphysical worldview of his own—materialism.

- (d) Peter Singer's infanticide/animal rights argument—His view results in inequality for living things. Moreover, he can't escape charge of "speciesism" and his atheism provides no basis for grounding his moral oughts.

4. In short, functionalist arguments are flawed:

- (a) Fail to tell us why value-giving characteristics are value-giving.
- (b) Prove too much
- (c) Result in savage inequality
- (d) Undermine inalienable rights
- (e) Reducing pro-life view to "religious" entails a category mistake.
- (f) Historically, every time we opt for performance view terrible injustices follow (Ota Benga, etc.)

Tactics—handling objections with grace and truth

1. Too many Christians assume the burden of proof when they shouldn't. If I claim there's a pink elephant hanging from the exit sign (some of you just looked), it's not up to you to refute me; it's on me to prove my claim. I made the claim; I bear the burden of proof.
2. When you are under fire, you can get back in the driver's seat by asking 3 key questions. Greg Koukl calls them "Colombo" questions, named after the famous television detective played by Peter Falk. The goal is not dominance, but clarity. You want to convey Christian truth with an artful method.
  - (a) What do you mean by that?
  - (b) How did you come to that conclusion?
  - (c) Have you considered the implications of your view?

Colombo Question #1: "What do you mean by that?"

1. Purpose: to gather information so you can accurately understand your critic's view. This question alone often disarms the challenge.
  - (a) The Bible's been changed many times. (Oh? How so?)
  - (b) You're a religious, political extremist! (What do you mean by "extremist?")
  - (c) Christians involved in politics violate the separation of church and state." (Do you mean that only non-religious people should be allowed to participate in their own government?)
  - (d) Science and faith exclude each other. (What do you mean by "science" and "faith?")
2. Asking "What do you mean by that?" disarms many challenges to pro-life view:
  - (a) Embryonic stem cell research is more promising. (How so? In what ways?)
  - (b) Pro-lifers force their views on others. (Really? How so?)
  - (c) Embryos are just a mass of cells. (What do you mean by that?)
  - (d) I have a right to choose! (Choose what, exactly?)
  - (e) Women have a fundamental right to abortion. (What do you mean by "fundamental?" And where does this "fundamental" right come from?)

Colombo Question #2: "How did you come to that conclusion?"

1. Purpose: to reverse the burden of proof and get you out of the hot seat. It forces critics to give reasons for their claims:
  - (a) The Bible is full of fairy tales. (Why would you believe a thing like that?)

- (b) No one can say which beliefs are right or wrong. (Then why believe you?)
  - (c) No one religion or person sees the whole truth. (How would you know that each sees only a part unless you can see the whole, something you just claimed was impossible?)
2. Asking, “Why do you believe that?” forces abortion-choice advocates to provide evidence (justification) for their claims. It puts you in the driver’s seat:
- (a) Thousands died from illegal abortion before 1967. (How do you know that?)
  - (b) Fetuses are not self-aware. (Why is self-awareness value-giving?)
  - (c) Pro-lifers just want to prosecute women who have abortions. (What’s wrong with a law that says you can’t kill innocent human beings and if you do, there will be consequences? If the consequences fit the crime, why are they unfair?)

Colombo Question #3: “Have you considered the implications of your view?”

1. Purpose: to show that your critic must pay too high a price to hold his view. Examples:
- (a) Everything is just an illusion. (If so, how could we know it?)
  - (b) You shouldn’t judge! (Have you considered that you just did?)
  - (c) You Christians shouldn’t tell people how to live. (Isn’t telling someone not to do something telling him how to live?)
2. Examples from pro-life discussions:
- (a) Fetuses have no right to life because they’re not self-aware. (Have you considered that newborns aren’t self-aware either?)
  - (b) Fetuses have no desire to go on living. (Have you considered what follows from that? The capacity to desire anything doesn’t occur until several weeks after birth.)
  - (c) Moral concerns should not get in the way of scientific progress. (Have you considered that you just justified the Tuskegee Experiments?)
3. Putting it all together—Using all three “Colombo” questions to graciously reply to critics:
- (a) Objection: Laws can’t stop all abortions.
    - Do you mean all or most?
    - How do you know most women won’t obey the law?
    - Have you considered laws against rape don’t stop all rape but they do stop most? Why should it be any different with abortion?
  - (b) Objection: Reproductive cloning is very different from therapeutic cloning.
    - Tell me what you mean by “cloning.” That is, how is it done?
    - How is the specific act of cloning different in so-called therapeutic cases? If the act of cloning is identical and results in a living human embryo, why am I wrong to say that all cloning is “reproductive?”
    - Have you considered that the only difference between the two types of cloning is how we treat the resulting human?
  - (c) Objection: Your abortion pictures are fake!
    - Which ones? Given you think my pictures are fake, what do real abortion pictures look like? That is, how do they differ from these?
    - So, if you aren’t sure what real abortion pictures look like, how do you know these are fake?
    - Have you considered that if abortion is okay, there pictures shouldn’t bother us?

(d) Objection: Embryos have no desire to go on living and thus have no right to life.

- When you speak of “desire,” do you mean one that I’m consciously aware of?
- Why must I have a conscious desire for something before I can justly lay claim to it? That is, why is having conscious desires value-giving in the first place?
- Have you considered that a slave can be conditioned not to desire his freedom, yet he’s still entitled to it in virtue of his humanity? And what if my desire to live is greater than yours? Does that mean I have a greater right to life than you?

(e) Objection: The Bible is silent on abortion; therefore, abortion is okay.

- What do you mean by “silent?” Do you mean the word is not mentioned or that we can’t draw any conclusions from what’s written? Are you saying that whatever the Bible doesn’t expressly condemn it condones? If not, what’s your point?
- Tell me why you think the biblical authors don’t mention abortion by name? What are your reasons for thinking their alleged silence justifies abortion?
- Have you considered that the Bible doesn’t condemn many things by name including female infanticide and drive-by-shootings? Does that make them okay?

Other questions to ask:

1. Are you deeply interested in doing what is right or are you committed to a point of view?
2. When confronted with a good argument against a position you hold, what is your obligation?
3. Here’s a brief case for my view. Where does it go wrong? (syllogism)
4. If abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being, what’s wrong with passing laws against it?
5. If there is no objective right and wrong, why tolerate other views?
6. If nobody has the truth, why listen to other viewpoints?
7. If it’s wrong to hurt people because of their skin color or gender, why is it okay to hurt them based on size, development, or dependency?

[[Roll video](#) of UGA students—diplomacy not D-Day]

Bodily Autonomy Arguments:

1. Thomson concedes for argument’s sake that the unborn are human and have a right to life. However, even if the unborn are human with a right to life, they do not have the right to use another person’s body to sustain their own lives if that person wishes to withhold support. Abortion is the justified withholding of that support. Using her famous violinist analogy, Thomson likens unwanted pregnancy to being forcibly hooked up to a famous musician who suffers from an illness and needs your kidney to survive. True, you can be a Good Samaritan and let him use your body, but must you? Along the way, she describes the fetus as an intruder, though an innocent one. The mother may justly remove the intruder if she wants to withhold supporting him. Indeed, mothers have no special duties to children they do not consent to conceive. Biology alone cannot make them responsible for dependant offspring.
2. Quick reply— for Thomson’s argument to work, the relationship between the mother and the intruder must parallel the mother’s relationship to her own child. However, the alleged parallels aren’t parallel:
  - (a) Women don’t wake up and just find themselves pregnant. Other than in the cases of rape, they willingly engage in an act that is ordered toward procreation. Indeed, there can be no intruder until two parents create him.
  - (b) If I unplug the violinist, he dies from his underlying pathology. If I “unplug” the fetus, he dies because I intentionally kill him. You might even argue that although the violinist’s death was foreseen, you did not

intend it by withholding your support. Indeed, as Kaczor points out, a general in a just war may foresee that some of his troops will be killed in battle, but he does not intend their deaths. Conversely, with elective abortion, the death of the unborn human is not only foreseen; it's intended. The fetus dies not from an underlying pathology, but from an intentional act of dismemberment.

- (c) Abortion is much more than withholding support—it's actively killing another human through dismemberment or poisoning. Indeed, per Thomson, I not only have the right to remove an innocent intruder from my yard; I can cut him up and throw his body parts in the garbage! As abortion-choice advocate and philosopher Mary Anne Warren points out, "mere ownership does not give me the right to kill innocent people whom I find on my property." Or, as Frank Beckwith points out, calling abortion merely the withholding of support is like suffocating someone with a pillow and calling it the withdrawing of oxygen. In short, it is one thing to withhold support. It is quite another to slit your victim's throat.
- (d) Why should anyone accept that a mother has no more duty to her own child than she does a stranger that is unnaturally hooked up to her? The very thing that makes it plausible to detach from the violinist—namely, that he's a stranger unnaturally hooked up to you—is the very thing that is not the case in the mother's relationship to her own child.
- (e) Thomson overstates the inconvenience of pregnancy. It is not a prison bed and many women enjoy it.
- (f) My kidney was not designed to benefit another person. The uterus was designed to support a child.

### 3. Reply to Thomson—Christopher Kaczor<sup>1</sup>

- (a) If the mother has a right to bodily integrity, so does her child. Abortion violates that integrity. Indeed, the loss of bodily integrity is immeasurably worse for the fetus than the mother. The mother has only one good at stake—bodily integrity. The child has two goods at stake—bodily integrity and life itself.
- (b) If humans have a right to bodily integrity and thus have no duty to donate a kidney, then humans in the womb have a right not to have their bodily integrity fatally violated.
- (c) If no one should be forced to donate a kidney to save a human life, it's even more obvious that a fetal human should not be forced to undergo a lethal violation of bodily integrity to save the mother from being one. In short, it is the fetal human who completely sacrifices bodily integrity, not the mother!
- (d) Thomson is inconsistent. That is, while it's true that you did not choose to be hooked up to the violinist, it's equally true that he didn't choose to be hooked up to you. If you may unplug yourself by directly killing him, then he should be free to unplug by directly killing you. True, the fetus lacks the power to detach, but the question here is not power but the moral right to detach at the cost of the mother's life. Suppose the fetus had an agent to help him do this the same way a mother has an agent to perform the abortion. Is the fetus morally justified detaching even though it kills his mother? In short, if the violinist may not unplug himself causing your death, then you should not unplug and cause his. I guess you could say the sword cuts both ways.
- (e) Reverse Thomson—There are medical cases where the fetus benefits the mother (as in MS). Suppose there were a case where the fetus actually kept the woman alive. Does that give the fetus a right to kill the mother?
- (f) If biology confers no special duties to family members, an adult may desert his aging parents on grounds he did not consent to care for them and thus owes them nothing more than he does a total stranger.
- (g) If mothers have no special duties to children in virtue of their biological relationship, then neither do fathers. That is, deserting dads owe no child support to women they abandon—unless they consent to take responsibility for the kids. However, no man has ever avoided child support by claiming, "the condom broke." Even if a man stipulates ahead of time that he won't care for a resulting child, the law still holds him responsible.
- (h) Thomson misuses the "Good Samaritan" analogy. The Good Samaritan did not go beyond his duty; he did his duty. Indeed, Jesus used his behavior as an example of what it means to love one's neighbor. In short, his actions were obligatory, not optional.

### 4. Counter examples that challenge claims for absolute bodily autonomy:

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<sup>1</sup> From *A Defense of Dignity* (South Bend: Notre Dame Press, 2013) and *The Ethics of Abortion*.

- (a) Thalidomide example (Rich Poupard): Should a pregnant mother have a right to take the drug even if it results in a deformed child?
- (b) Pregnant woman in remote cabin example (Poupard): If a surrogate consents to carry the child for nine months, but refuses to provide any care after birth, can she refuse to feed the child with breast milk if she gives birth in a remote cabin?
- (c) Accutane example (Poupard): Is it fair to demand that women use contraception before buying the drug?
- (d) Paul W's thought experiment: What if the mother simply won't let the child leave her body?
- (e) Men can be drafted and forced to use their bodies for military service against their consent.
- (f) Supreme Court in Roe rejected bodily autonomy argument.
- (g) You don't have an absolute right to free speech. You can't yell fire in a crowded theater for fun.
- (h) Ask, "Does owning a place give you the right to hurt the people who live there?"
- (i) Prankster example (Tony George): While you sleep in the hospital, a musician prankster plugs himself into you just for the thrill of doing it. He takes precautions to avoid harming you, but in this case the precautions fail. As you awake and move to detach yourself, a doctor yells "stop!" It turns out your kidneys were damaged by the prankster and now you need his kidneys for nine months to survive. However, upon waking, the prankster, who put you in this dependant situation, decides you have no right to use his body without consent and he detaches. You die. This is terribly unjust. The prankster engaged in an activity he knew could cause you to need the use of his body. Therefore, his withholding support is outrageous.

Eileen McDonough—From Choice to Consent:

1. Summary—Just as a woman has a right to use deadly force against a fetus who invades her body without consent, so she may use deadly force against a fetus who massively invades her body and curtails her liberty without consent. Pregnancy is similar to rape. Just because a woman consents to sex does not mean she consents to pregnancy.
2. Reply to McDonough:
  - (a) Why should anyone think a rapist has the same relationship to her body as her own child?
  - (b) Pregnancy is not violent assault. It changes the mother's body in ways it was designed to handle.
  - (c) McDonough is mistaken about the nature of consent: We consent to initial behaviors, not outcomes. Suppose I said: "I consent to sex, but not getting an STD!"
  - (d) Fathers must pay child support to children they never consented to raise.

David Boonin's Defense of Thomson:

1. Summary--Parents have no special duties to offspring simply because they engaged in sex that in turn resulted in a needy child. Boonin says that we must distinguish between being responsible for someone's existence and being responsible for the fact they exist, with the result that they are in need. For example, a doctor who saves a patient's life with medication is not responsible to use his own body to sustain that patient should the medication eventually trigger a life-threatening condition.
2. Reply to Boonin:
  - (a) Boonin's doctor analogy fails. The doctor kindly extended the patient's life but did not cause it. The parents, meanwhile both cause the child to be *and* place him in an imperiled condition.
  - (b) Patrick Lee's speedboat counterexample: If I knock kids in the water, can I claim that although I am responsible for their being in the water, I am not responsible for the fact they can't swim?
  - (c) Rich Poupard's mother in cabin example: If a mother lets her newborn starve on grounds that although she is responsible for the child's existence, she is not responsible for its resulting neediness, would we excuse her behavior? If an infant can only tolerate the mother's milk (no formula) and she refuses to use her body to feed him (thus committing infanticide), should we applaud her right to bodily autonomy?

Review of why bodily rights arguments fail:

1. Abortion is much more than merely withholding support. It's actively killing.
2. We may not have obligations to total strangers who are unnaturally hooked up to us, but we do have obligations to our own offspring.
3. You can't reasonably separate consent for sex from consent for pregnancy.
4. Bodily autonomy is not absolute.

Street level objections: 6 bad ways people argue about abortion

1. They assume rather than argue. Example—back alley argument: The law can't stop all abortions. Women will be forced to get dangerous illegal ones.
  - (a) Philosophical reply: Argument begs the question by assuming the unborn are not human. Otherwise, the argument is saying that because some people die attempting to kill others, the state should make it safe and legal to do so. But why should the law be faulted for making it more risky for one human to intentionally take the life of another completely innocent one?
  - (b) While all deaths from abortion are a tragedy, it's false that 5,000 to 10,000 women died annually from illegal abortion. Experts from the other side affirm this (Teitze, Nathanson, Callahan, Calderone).
  - (c) The claim that laws can't stop all abortions is silly. Laws against rape don't stop all rape.
  - (d) Women are not forced to have illegal abortions. They choose to have them.
2. They attack rather than argue (ad-hominem)—

Example: Men can't get pregnant. Only women should decide the issue:

- (a) Arguments don't have gender; people do. Pro-life women use the same pro-life arguments.
- (b) If men can't speak on abortion, Roe v. Wade should be reversed as men decided it.
- (c) Leads to bizarre reasoning: Should only generals decide the morality of war?

Example: Pro-life advocates have no right to oppose abortion unless they adopt unwanted children

- (a) How does my alleged unwillingness to adopt a child justify killing him?
- (b) Argument begs the question: It assumes the unborn are not human. Can we kill toddlers who are unwanted?
- (c) Plenty of people want to adopt unwanted kids but can't due to bureaucratic red tape.

Example: Pro-life advocates are inconsistent for opposing abortion but supporting the death penalty.

- (a) Suppose we are inconsistent. How does this refute humanity of the unborn?
- (b) The argument attacks a strawman. The pro-life view is not that it is always wrong to take human life, but that it's always wrong to do so without justification, which abortion does.
- (c) The consistency sword cuts both ways. The abortion-choice advocate is against capital punishment but supports abortion. Doesn't that make him inconsistent?

Example: Pro-life advocates are too narrow and should broaden their focus to oppose war, poverty, care for the environment, AIDS, etc.

- (a) Suppose we are too narrow. How does that justify intentionally killing an innocent human being? Could abortion still be wrong even if pro-lifers fail to fulfill all their obligations?
- (b) How does it follow that because I oppose the intentional destruction of an innocent human being, I must take personal responsibility for curing all of society's ills? Is the American Cancer Society "too narrow" because it focuses on one particular disease and not others? To be effective, pro-life advocates should focus on one big moral issue, not many.
- (c) Why should we believe that the deforestation of the Amazon carries the same moral weight as dismembering a human fetus? While many issues are important, they don't all carry the same moral weight.

- (d) War is a contingent evil that must be prudently considered. Abortion, however, is an absolute evil and laws that permit it are scandalous. Critics of the pro-life view are asking us to overlook an absolute evil in favor of preventing contingent ones.
- (e) Of course abortion isn't the only issue, any more than slavery was the only issue in 1860 or killing Jews the only issue in 1940. But both were the dominant issues of their day.
- (f) The U.S. government can't stop economic inequity in Thailand, but it can ban the killing of unborn humans within its own borders, which is why pro-life Christians have political duties.

Example: Pro-life advocates should work to reduce abortion by focusing on its underlying causes rather than working politically to make it illegal.

- (a) Imagine someone saying that underlying cause of spousal abuse is psychological, so rather than banning wife abuse, the state will provide free counseling for men.
  - (b) There are underlying causes for rape, murder, and theft, but that hardly means its misguided to pass laws against them.
  - (c) Why are liberals even concerned about "reducing" abortion? If it doesn't unjustly kill an innocent human being, why care how many happen each year?
3. They assert rather than argue. Example—Women have a right to choose:
- (a) Argument or assertion? Where does right to choose come from?
  - (b) To reverse the burden of proof, ask: Why would you believe a thing like that?
4. They confuse functioning as a human with being one. Example—Embryo not self-aware.
- (a) Why does self-awareness matter? Why is it value-giving in first place
  - (b) Proves too much: disqualifies newborns.
  - (c) Results in savage inequality: those with more self-awareness are more valuable than those with less. Far better to argue that although humans differ immensely in terms of characteristics, they share a common human nature.
5. They change moral claims to preference ones—Example: Relativism
- (a) Pro-lifers don't oppose abortion because they find it distasteful. They oppose abortion because it's wrong.
  - (b) Relativism defined: Right and wrong are not objective, but subjectively determined by culture or individual.
  - (c) Society-does relativism: Societies disagree on right and wrong, therefore nobody is right. However, it does not follow that because people disagree, there are no right answers.
  - (d) Society says relativism: What's right and wrong is determined by what your society says. However, under this rule, there can be no such thing as an immoral society and moral reformers would be evil by definition.
  - (e) I-say relativism: Right and wrong are up to me, the individual. Thus, there can be no such thing as an immoral individual.
  - (f) Relativism is self-defeating, meaning it can't play by its own rules. Relativists say non-relativists are wrong.
  - (g) Relativism can't say why anything is wrong, including intolerance.
  - (h) Relativists can't live that way. They inevitably make moral judgments.
6. They hide behind the hard cases. Example—"Rape justifies abortion."
- (a) Ask: How should a civil society treat innocent human beings who remind us of a painful event? Is it okay to hurt them so we can feel better?
  - (b) Argument assumes unborn are not human: Can we kill a toddler if his father was a rapist?
  - (c) The argument from rape, if successful at all, would only justify abortions due to rape, not all others.

Example—Pregnancy threatens the mother's life.

- (a) While the overwhelming majority of abortions worldwide are done for socio-economic reasons (rather than life-threatening ones), ectopic pregnancy poses a serious risk. If the physician does not act, he will lose both mother and embryo. It is better to act to save one life rather than lose two, even though the unintended but foreseeable result is the death of the embryo (who we can't save anyway).
- (b) Competent physicians can usually treat other threats to the mother's life without ending the pregnancy.

**Task #4: Teach and equip—engage your community!**

1. Engage by establishing a biblical foundation for human value and church responsibility:
  - (a) Pro-life syllogism from Scripture—The Bible's alleged silence does not justify abortion:
    - P1: Scripture affirms that all humans have value because they bear the image of their Maker.
    - P2: Because humans bear God's image, the shedding of innocent blood is forbidden.
    - P3: The science of embryology affirms the unborn are human from conception.
    - P4: Therefore, the unborn bear God's image and thus biblical commands against shedding innocent blood apply to them as they do all other humans.
  - (b) Churches have a duty to speak on abortion because doing so relates to the Great Commission:
    - P1: The GC tells us to go make disciples.
    - P2: We make disciples by teaching them to obey all Christ commands.
    - P3: One of those commands is we are not to shed innocent blood.
    - P4: Abortion is the shedding of innocent blood.
    - P5: Therefore, abortion relates to the GC mission of the local church.
2. Engage by equipping church lay people to make a case for life:
  - (a) Teach them to summarize the pro-life view in 1 minute or less using science and SLED.
  - (b) Train ALL PRC staff and volunteers in pro-life apologetics.
  - (c) Make presentations to church youth groups
3. Engage by preaching a cross-centered gospel of hope:
  - (a) When clergy ignore abortion, they don't spare post abortion women and men guilt; they spare them healing. Hidden sin is keeping them out of fellowship with Christ.
  - (b) With the gospel, post-abortion individuals find healing knowing they are judged on Christ's righteousness not their own.
4. Engage by restoring meaning to the word "abortion."
  - (a) How to use visual aids responsibly
  - (b) Use cognitive dissonance to get people thinking
5. Engage by systematically training students to defend a biblical worldview, including pro-life issue:
  - (a) Presentations to church youth groups
  - (b) Presentations at Catholic and Protestant high schools
6. Engage the mind! Keep reading. Top 10 books to master (in order of simplicity):
  - Peter Kreeft, *The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1982)
  - Greg Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009)

- J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997)
- Francis J. Beckwith and Greg Koukl, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997)
- Scott Klusendorf, *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2009)
- Ramesh Ponurru, *The Party of Death* (Washington, DC: Regency, 2006)
- Francis J. Beckwith, *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Christopher Kaczor, *The Ethics of Abortion: Women's Rights, Human Life, and the Question of Justice* (New York: Routledge, 2010)
- Patrick Lee, *Abortion and Unborn Human Life*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010).
- Hadley Arkes, *First Things* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986)
- Hadley Arkes; *Natural Rights and the Right to Choose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

## Appendix:

### Short Debate Intro—England

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Context: *In March of 2015, a young British pro-life advocate was asked to debate at King's College, London. The task before her was challenging. First, she was only given 24 hours notice about the event. Second, many of those present believed a free exchange of ideas on abortion should be censored unless a "woman's perspective" is dominant—by which they mean a pro-abortion woman's perspective. She was given eight minutes to make her case. What follows are my suggestions for her opening remarks.*

#### **Introduction: Announce Your Objective**

Good evening. In tonight's brief exchange on the topic "Abortion and free speech—whose perspective matters?" my aim for our time together is really quite modest: I'm hoping for clarity. I'm confident that even if you disagree with my position, at least you will be clear on my reasons for holding it. I'll begin by defining abortion, after which I will layout my reasons for thinking that gender is not the primary issue that divides us. Finally, I'll answer two common objections to my view before hearing what you have to say.

#### **Step #1: Define Your Terms and Frame the Debate:**

Abortion is best defined as "the intentional killing of a human fetus." This definition does not unfairly stack the deck and is accepted by many abortion-choice advocates. In his book *Life's Dominion*, Ronald Dworkin writes, "Abortion deliberately kills a developing embryo and is a choice for death." Former Planned Parenthood President Faye Wattleton is even more direct. "Any pretense that abortion is not killing is a signal of our ambivalence, a signal that we cannot say yes, it kills a fetus." Dr. Warren Hern, author of *Abortion Practice*—the medical text that teaches abortion procedures—told a Planned Parenthood conference: "We have reached a point in this particular technology [D&E abortion] where there is no possibility of denying an act of destruction. It is before one's eyes. The sensations of dismemberment flow through the current like an electric current." ("Warren hern & Billie Corrigan, "What About Us? Staff Reactions to D&E ." paper presented at the Association of Planned Parenthood Physicians, Sand Diego 1978).

Whether it's right or wrong to *intentionally* kill a human fetus depends on whether that fetus is a member of the human family. To answer that question, we must examine the validity and soundness of the respective arguments, not the gender of one advancing them. To assert that only women can speak on abortion is to commit the ad-hominem fallacy—that is, attacking the person rather than the argument he or she presents. It also raises a troubling question: Which women get to speak? As Christopher Kaczor points out, there is no such thing as a "woman's perspective" on abortion anymore than there is a male perspective or a brown-eyed persons perspective. Indeed, feminists, let alone women in general, have no single perspective on the issue. This is true even for feminists who

support abortion. For example, feminist Naomi Wolf calls abortion “a real death” while feminist Katha Pollitt thinks it no different than vacuuming out your house. In short, while gender perspectives on abortion help us understand personal experience, they are not a substitute for rational inquiry. Rather, it is arguments that must be advanced and defended and those arguments stand or fall on their merits, not the gender of those espousing them.

The pro-life argument I will briefly defend can be put formally as follows:

P1: It is wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being.

P2: Abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being.

P3: Therefore, abortion is morally wrong.

Notice the argument is not gender-specific, but objective. Pro-life women and men defend it with science and philosophy.

### **Step #2: Defend Your Pro-Life Argument with Science and Philosophy.**

The science of embryology indicates that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. True, they have yet to grow and mature, but they are whole human beings nonetheless. Peer-reviewed medical journals—on both sides of the abortion debate—have affirmed this for decades. For example, in *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology* (Saunders/Elsevier, 2008), Keith L. Moore & T.V.N. Persaud write: “A zygote is the beginning of a new human being. Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm...unites with a female gamete or oocyte...to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual.” Meanwhile, an editorial in *California Medicine* as early as 1970 states: “Since the old ethic has not yet been fully displaced it has been necessary to separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing, which continues to be socially abhorrent. The result has been a curious avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone really knows, that human life begins at conception and is continuous whether intra-or extra-uterine until death” (“A New Ethic for Medicine and Society,” *California Medicine*, September, 1970).

Philosophically, pro-life advocates contend there is no morally significant difference between the embryo you once were and the adult you are today that justify killing you back then. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not good reasons for saying you had no right to life then but you do now. Toddlers are smaller than teenagers, but we don’t think large humans have a greater right to life than small ones. Nor do we, as a matter of principle, think development matters. Is a four-year old girl who has yet to fully develop her reproductive system less human and valuable than a university bound young woman? Put simply, I believe that each and every human being has an equal right to life and it’s wrong to deny that right based on gender, skin color, or one’s size or location.

### **Step #3: Quickly Review Your Argument and Dispatch Likely Objections:**

To review, the case for or against abortion stands or falls on the strength of one’s argument, not his or her gender. To say otherwise is fallacious—after all, pro-life women make the same arguments as pro-life men. That’s precisely why I presented a scientific and philosophic case for my position that is objective instead of personal. That case might be mistaken and I’m open to hearing it is mistaken should the evidence point that way. But censoring arguments because we don’t like the spokesperson just won’t do. Remember, if men can’t speak on abortion, our nation’s liberal abortion laws must be reversed given they were, in the main, determined by male MPs.

It also won’t do to dismiss my case as religious. As philosophy professor Francis Beckwith points out, arguments are valid or invalid, sound or unsound. Calling an argument “religious” is a category mistake like asking, “How tall is the number five?” Put simply, my scientific and philosophic case must be answered, not dismissed with a label.

Moreover, just because my pro-life argument is consistent with a particular religious viewpoint doesn’t mean it can only be defended that way. Admittedly, the claim that humans have value is difficult to ground in a strictly materialistic world. After all, in a universe that came from nothing and was caused by nothing, humans at any stage of development—born or unborn—are cosmic accidents. Nevertheless, while non-theists have difficulty grounding human value, they can certainly recognize, through reason, that each and every human being has an equal right to

life. Indeed, any of us with a sense of justice knows it is wrong to deny fundamental human rights based on one's skin color, gender, social status, or nationality. In the same way, we are capable of understanding that it's unjust to deny those same rights because of one's age, size, stage of development, or condition of dependency.

At the end of the day, the abortion controversy is not about gender politics, but a deeper and more profound question: *Who counts as one of us?* That is, does each and every human being have an equal right to life or do only some have it in virtue of some characteristic that none of us share equally? All of us are more or less rational, more or less self-conscious, and more or less sentient. But we are equally human because we share the same human nature, and we had that nature from the moment we began to exist.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts in the Q&A.