

## Endnotes

1. Genesis 1:27; Job 10:8-12; Ephesians 4:24.
2. Genesis 1:26; Genesis 2:20; Psalm 8:5.
3. Genesis 1:26-30, 2:19-20; Psalm 8:6-8; *Book of Confessions*, 3.02; 4.006; 6.023; 7.010.
4. I Samuel 1:1-20
5. Psalm 127:3-5.
6. Genesis 4:1; Genesis 21:2; Genesis 29:33-35; Genesis 30:7; I Samuel 1:20; Matthew 1:20,21.
7. Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:4,5; Ecclesiastes 11:5; Job 31:15.
8. Genesis 16:11,12; Genesis 25:23; Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:4,5; Galatians 1:15,16; Matthew 1:18-25.
9. Human sperm and eggs both have 23 chromosomes. At fertilization, when sperm and egg are united, a single cell of 46 chromosomes is formed. From that point on, all that's added is time and nourishment.
10. Genesis 9:5,6; Exodus 20:13; Ezekiel 20:31; Amos 1:13; Leviticus 18:21; Jeremiah 32:35; *Book of Confessions*, 7.246.
11. *Book of Confessions*, 7.246.
12. Proverbs 24:11,12; Psalm 10:17,18; Psalm 41:1; Matthew 18:10; *Book of Confessions*, 4.111; 5.114
13. Isaiah 55:7; 1 John 1:9; *Book of Confessions*, 2.3; 6.064; 6.068; 6.083; 7.033; 7.180.
14. *Book of Confessions*, 5.098; 9.32-33; II Corinthians 5:18.
15. *Book of Confessions*, 7.245, 7.246.
16. *Book of Confessions*, 4:108-109, 7.248-9, I Thessalonians 4:3-4; Proverbs 6:25-29, Proverbs 7:25-27; Exodus 20:14.
17. Malachi 2:15; Genesis 1:27,28.
18. Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion, "Do Justice, Love

Mercy, Walk Humbly (Micah 6:8)," adopted by the 1992 General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (USA)

19. "...for the fetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, and it is almost a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light."

• John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1950), 3:41,42.

"This Assembly regards the destruction by parents of their own offspring, before birth, with abhorrence, as a crime against God and against nature."

• General Assembly, 1869

"The fetus is a human life to be protected by the criminal law from the moment when the ovum is fertilized....As Christians, we believe that this should not be an individual decision on the part of the physician and couple. Their decision should be limited and restrained by the larger society."

• General Assembly, 1962

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# Abortion: A Guide for Students



Christians rely on the Bible for determining truth, and we look to it as our only infallible guide for faith and action. It is our authority for understanding the distinction between good and evil and for determining what is right and wrong.

Presbyterians Pro-Life

## The Bible's case for protecting unborn lives beginning at fertilization

### 1. God puts higher value on humans.

Human beings are made uniquely, in the image of God,<sup>1</sup> and are not only distinct from the rest of creation,<sup>2</sup> but also are rulers and stewards of everything else created by God.<sup>3</sup> Fertilization and the resulting birth of a baby are both acts that continue the human race and are a blessing from God.<sup>4</sup> The birth of a baby is a gift from God.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. God's purpose for us begins before birth.

Scripture commonly refers to fertilization, rather than birth, as the moment of our beginning.<sup>6</sup> God speaks of us as known, cared for, protected, and loved by Him before birth.<sup>7</sup> He often announces His specific purpose for individuals while they are yet unborn.<sup>8</sup> The teaching of medical science regarding the unborn is consistent with Scripture.<sup>9</sup> Scripture and science both show us that life begins at the moment of fertilization.

### 3. God forbids us to kill innocent human life.

<sup>10</sup> Scripture forbids the destruction of innocent human life including unborn babies. Our *Book of Confessions* includes in the sins forbidden by the sixth commandment "...neglecting or withdrawing the lawful or necessary means of preservation of life."<sup>11</sup>

### 4. God wants us to care for the needy and helpless.

<sup>12</sup> The duty to "bear one another's burdens" applies to pregnancy exactly as to every other aspect of human need. It is our task as Christ's followers to help those use the resources God has provided to find solutions to problem pregnancies that allow both mother and baby to live.

### 5. God freely offers forgiveness and restoration.

<sup>13</sup> God is rich in mercy and slow to anger. He offers forgiveness, healing, and new life

through Christ. We are called to extend the compassion, understanding, and grace of God both to those involved in sex outside of marriage and to those who have had abortions. We are to make the forgiveness, healing, and restoration available in Christ known to women and men who find themselves in these difficult circumstances, and to lead them gently toward repentance and faith in Christ.<sup>14</sup>

### 6. Scripture says we should care for innocent life in all cases.

<sup>15</sup> People who were conceived in incest or rape, or who are handicapped, or who live in dire situations of need are protected from being killed by the injunctions of Scripture, so should unborn children conceived in the same circumstances be protected. In circumstances where physical complications of pregnancy develop, every attempt should be made to preserve the lives of both mother and child.

## The Bible's case for decision-making prior to fertilization

Responsible decision-making regarding pregnancies arises from the biblical teaching concerning life and sexuality. A decision to enter into a sexual relationship should follow Scriptural teaching regarding chastity outside marriage and fidelity within marriage,<sup>16</sup> and it should acknowledge God's full intent for such marriage.<sup>17</sup> Since fertilization is the point at which a human life is formed, contraception should act only to prevent fertilization. Contraception that acts to destroy the newly formed life is a form of abortion.

## Why the current position of the Presbyterian Church (USA) on abortion is untenable for Christians

The PC(USA) policy document adopted by the General Assembly in 1992 says that:

*Problem pregnancies are the result of, and influenced by, so many complicated and insolvable*

*circumstances that we have neither the wisdom nor the authority to address or decide each situation.*

It considers moral judgments to be a matter of each woman's individual interpretation of what is right or wrong in her particular crisis situation, and says:

*...no law or administrative decision should limit access to abortion; limit information and counseling concerning abortions; or limit or prohibit public funding for necessary abortions for the socially and economically disadvantaged.*

This policy document of the PC(USA) fails to establish a biblical defense for killing innocent unborn human beings and departs dramatically from the Church's historical teaching on abortion.<sup>19</sup> It is based on a situational, quality-of-life ethic which is in direct contradiction to the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Presbyterian Church (USA) is in serious moral error in its teaching on abortion.

## The goal of Presbyterians Pro-Life with respect to abortion

Presbyterians Pro-Life calls the PC(USA) to repent of its current position on abortion. We call for a change of heart and a change of policy. We plead for our denomination to begin to promote the protection of unborn life and to counsel for solutions to problem pregnancies which allow both mother and baby to live and receive the blessing of God.

Our prophetic voice is expressed through the process of appeal provided for by Presbyterian government and by any other means not forbidden by Scripture, our church Constitution, or the laws of the land.

We trust that through the mercy and grace of God a change in the position of our denomination will effect change in the whole society.

