

On the undeveloped fetus:

Hence in the first place arises a question about abortive conceptions, which have indeed been born in the mother's womb, but not so born that they could be born again. For if we shall decide that these are to rise again, we cannot object to any conclusion that may be drawn in regard to those which are fully formed. Now who is there that is not rather disposed to think that unformed abortions perish, like seeds that have never fructified? But who will dare to deny, though he may not dare to affirm, that at the resurrection every defect in the form shall be supplied, and that thus the perfection which time would have brought shall not be wanting, any more than the blemishes which time did bring shall be present: so that the nature shall neither want anything suitable and in harmony with it that length of days would have added, nor be debased by the presence of anything of an opposite kind that length of days has added; but that what is not yet complete shall be completed, just as what has been injured shall be renewed. (*Enchiridion* 23.85.4)

On therapeutic abortion:

And therefore the following question may be very carefully inquired into and discussed by learned men, though I do not know whether it is in man's power to resolve it: At what time the infant begins to live in the womb: whether life exists in a latent form before it manifests itself in the motions of the living being. To deny that the young who are cut out limb by limb from the womb, lest if they were left there dead the mother should die too, have never been alive, seems too audacious. Now, from the time that a man begins to live, from that time it is possible for him to die. And if he die, wheresoever death may overtake him, I cannot discover on what principle he can be denied an interest in the resurrection of the dead. (*Enchiridion* 23.86)

Therefore brothers, you see how perverse they are and hastening wickedness, who are immature, they seek abortion of the conception before the birth; they are those who tell us, "I do not see that which you say must be believed." (*Sermon* 126, line 12)

- St. Ambrose, circa 370

The poor **expose their children**, the rich kill the fruit of their own bodies in the womb, lest their property be divided up, and they destroy their own children in the womb with murderous poisons, and before life has been passed on, it is annihilated.

- Basil the Great

"Let her that procures abortion undergo ten years' penance, whether the embryo were perfectly formed, or not" (*First Canonical Letter*, canon 2 [A.D. 374]).

"He that kills another with a sword, or hurls an axe at his own wife and kills her, is guilty of willful murder; not he

who throws a stone at a dog, and unintentionally kills a man, or who corrects one with a rod, or scourge, in order to reform him, or who kills a man in his own defense, when he only designed to hurt him. But the man, or woman, is a murderer that gives a philtrum, if the man that takes it dies upon it; **so are they who take medicines to procure abortion**; and so are they who kill on the highway, and rapparees" (ibid., canon 8).

She who has deliberately destroyed a fetus has to pay the penalty of murder...here it is not only the child to be born that is vindicated, but also the woman herself who made an attempt against her own life, because usually the women die in such attempts. Furthermore, added to this is the destruction of the child, another murder... Moreover, those, too, who give drugs causing abortion are deliberate murderers themselves, as well as those receiving the poison which kills the fetus. (St. Basil the Great, *Letter* 188:2, circa 370)

- John Chrysostom

"Wherefore I beseech you, flee fornication. . . . Why sow where the ground makes it its care to destroy the fruit?—where there are many efforts at abortion?—where there is murder before the birth? For even the harlot you do not let continue a mere harlot, but make her a murderess also. You see how drunkenness leads to prostitution, prostitution to adultery, adultery to murder; or rather to a something even worse than murder. For I have no name to give it, since it does not take off the thing born, but prevents its being born. Why then do thou abuse the gift of God, and fight with his laws, and follow after what is a curse as if a blessing, and make the chamber of procreation a chamber for murder, and arm the woman that was given for childbearing unto slaughter? For with a view to drawing more money by being agreeable and an object of longing to her lovers, even this she is not backward to do, so heaping upon thy head a great pile of fire. For even if the daring deed be hers, yet the causing of it is thine" (*Homilies on Romans* 24 [A.D. 391]).

- Theodorus Priscianus (c.4th -5th century AD)

It is never licit to give something that will cause an abortion. As Hippocrates points out, it is not fitting that the innocent office of a doctor be stained by complicity in such a serious offense. But if they attempt to avoid the birth on account of either a defect in their womb or the difficulties associated with their age, they greatly risk their lives to earn their health just as one risks killing the tree by applying something to the branches or boats which are tossed about by a storm must throw away their cargo. (*Euporiston III*, VI, 23)

- Jerome

"I cannot bring myself to speak of the many virgins who daily fall and are lost to the bosom of the Church, their mother. . . . **Some go so far as to take potions, that they may insure barrenness, and thus murder human beings almost before their conception.** Some, when they find themselves with child through their sin, **use drugs to procure abortion**, and when, as often happens, they die with their offspring, they enter the lower world laden with the guilt not only of adultery against Christ but also of suicide and child murder" (*Letters* 22:13 [A.D. 396]).

- The Apostolic Constitutions

"Thou shalt not use magic. Thou shalt not use witchcraft; for he says, 'You shall not suffer a witch to live' [Ex. 22:18]. **Thou shalt not slay thy child by causing abortion, nor kill that which is begotten.** . . . [I]f it be slain, [it] shall be avenged, as being unjustly destroyed" (*Apostolic Constitutions* 7:3 [A.D. 400]).

- Council of Trullo, canon XCI, 692

Those who give drugs for procuring abortion, and those who receive poisons to kill the foetus, are subjected to the penalty of murder.

- John Calvin

"...for the *foetus*, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, (*homo*,) 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 *foetus* in the womb before it has come to light." (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Last Four Books of Moses*, trans. Charles Bingham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 3:41, 42).

Where does this leave us? Let us be aggressive in our open defense of the unborn and those who are born with significant medical needs. Let us continue to live in the long historical lineage of God's people who spoke for and continue to speak for the unborn and for those who cannot speak for themselves. May we continue to remember that the issue of abortion and infanticide is fundamentally the war waged by Satan's seed to destroy the offspring of the woman. And may we do everything within our power to protect and enable families to raise their children in the admonition and nurture of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Waukesha Bible Church
553 W24079 Glendale Road
Waukesha, WI 53189
262-542-7177
www.waukeshabile.org

“Abortion, Infanticide and the Church of Jesus Christ”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths

With no desire to be too assuming, I would like to begin by defining what is meant by the terms abortion and infanticide. This will establish a common understanding of both acts.

Abortion:

Abortion is the medical term for ending a pregnancy by various means before the natural term.

<http://www.justice-explained.com/abortion-g.asp>

Infanticide:

1. The act of killing an infant.
2. The practice of killing newborn infants.
3. One who kills an infant.

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/infanticide>

I think as Christians we need to remind ourselves of the war waged by the serpent's seed against that of the woman's seed as stated in Genesis 3:15.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel” (Gen. 3:15).

I do not need to wonder why this present world system appears antithetical to the plight of the unborn or those born with significant medical conditions. The war we fight as believers is to protect the life of the unborn and those whose physical existence is marked by significant problems. We should not concern ourselves with the opposition we face by those within government. Although as Americans we can speak to the idea of our founding fathers and that we are a Christian nation built on the principles of a Judea-Christian ethic, we do need to awaken from our comfortable existence and realize that “this world is no friend to grace.” The issue of abortion and infanticide will divide our nation for the simple reason that our nation is the offspring of Satan's seed. This does not negate God's providence and watch care over all of what He creates, but as a nation we are not the “chosen people of God.” It is only because of common grace that we have enjoyed a modicum of moral conduct and behavior. As Americans we have the constitutional right to vote our convictions, but let us not assume the ground is level. The government, although appointed by God, is of Satan's seed. We are not living in a theocracy or in a pre-fall state. Satan's seed is at war with the seed of the woman. Our warfare is fought in the protection of life, all life regardless as to ethnicity, geography, or age bracket. My concern is not what the government has to say concerning the issue of life, but what the Bible says and

how His people have understood these truths. I find it tragic when the government redefines what constitutes a family or the significant hurdles one must overcome in order to adopt a child when over a million babies are murdered and destroyed each year or when the media is quick to show us images of brutal warfare, but sit silent in showing us the most common although radically disturbing images of abortion or infanticide. If we but saw, we would stop the discussion.

Yet our responsibility to obey God in the area of life's sanctity is not fulfilled by simply voting for a pro-life candidate. Although this is necessary, it is not ultimate. We have this privilege as Americans, but do we not have a greater role to play than simply voting for a pro-life candidate? Friend, I expect to do nothing but find Satan's seed waging war against the woman's. My quest is to enable and empower the church, this church, to speak for and minister to those situations that are directly and immediately touched by the abortion and infanticide concerns.

What follows are various statements concerning the Church of God and her consistent stance for life and against abortion and infanticide. As His people we are not divided on this issue. And as it concerns our current political administration, we will always be at war with Satan's seed. Let us now venture forth and bathe in the long history of how the church of Jesus Christ has always spoken for life and protected those who are unable to protect themselves.

- The Didache

"The second commandment of the teaching: You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not seduce boys. You shall not commit fornication. You shall not steal. You shall not practice magic. You shall not use potions. **You shall not procure [an] abortion, nor destroy a newborn child**" (*Didache* 2:1-2 [A.D. 70]).

The difference between the way of life and the way of death is great. Therefore, do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant.

The Way of Death is filled with people who are...murderers of children and abortionists of God's creatures.

- Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion* (97 A.D.).

The law, moreover enjoins us to bring up all our offspring, and forbids women to cause abortion of what is begotten, or to destroy it afterward; and if any woman appears to have so done, she will be a murderer of her child, by destroying a living creature, and diminishing humankind.

- The Letter of Barnabas

"The way of light, then, is as follows. If anyone desires to travel to the appointed place, he must be zealous in his works. The knowledge, therefore, which is given to us for the purpose of walking in this way, is the following. . . . **Thou shalt not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shalt thou destroy it after it is born**" (*Letter of Barnabas* 19 [A.D. 74]).

- The Apocalypse of Peter

I saw a gorge in which the discharge and excrement of the tortured ran down and became like a lake. There sat women, and the discharge came up to their throats; and opposite them sat many children, who were born prematurely, weeping. And from them went forth rays of fire and smote the women on the eyes. These were those who produced children outside of marriage, and who procured abortions. Those who slew the unborn children will be tortured forever, for God wills it to so.

"And near that place I saw another strait place . . . and there sat women. . . . And over against them many children who were born to them out of due time sat crying. And there came forth from them rays of fire and smote the women in the eyes. **And these were the accursed who conceived and caused abortion**" (*The Apocalypse of Peter* 25 [A.D. 137]).

- Athenagoras

We say that women who induce abortions are murderers, and will have to give account of it to God. For the same person, would not regard the child in the womb as a living being and therefore an object of God's care and then kill it.... But we are altogether consistent in our conduct. We obey reason and do not override it.

"What man of sound mind, therefore, will affirm, while such is our character, that we are murderers? . . . [W]hen we say that those women **who use drugs to bring on abortion commit murder**, and will have to give an account to God for the abortion, on what principle should we commit murder? For it does not belong to the same person to regard the very fetus in the womb as a created being, and therefore an object of God's care, and when it has passed into life, to kill it; and not to expose an infant, **because those who expose them are chargeable with child-murder**, and on the other hand, when it has been reared to destroy it" (*A Plea for the Christians* 35 [A.D. 177]).

- Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2, circa 210

Our whole life can go on in observation of the laws of nature, if we gain dominion over our desires from the beginning and if we do not kill, by various means of a perverse art, the human offspring, born according to the

designs of divine providence; for these women who, in order to hide their immorality, use abortive drugs which expel the child completely dead, abort at the same time their own human feelings.

- Tertullian

"In our case, a murder being once for all forbidden, **we may not destroy even the fetus in the womb**, while as yet the human being derives blood from the other parts of the body for its sustenance. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing; nor does it matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to birth. That is a man which is *going to be* one; you have the fruit already in its seed" (*Apology* 9:8 [A.D. 197]).

"Among surgeons' tools there is a certain instrument, which is formed with a nicely-adjusted flexible frame for opening the uterus first of all and keeping it open; it is further furnished with an annular blade, by means of which the limbs [of the child] within the womb are dissected with anxious but unfaltering care; its last appendage being a blunted or covered hook, wherewith the entire fetus is extracted by a violent delivery.

"There is also [another instrument in the shape of] a copper needle or spike, by which the actual death is managed in this furtive robbery of life: **They give it, from its infanticide function, the name of embrosphaktes, [meaning] "the slayer of the infant," which of course was alive**. . . .

"[The doctors who performed abortions] all knew well enough that a living being had been conceived, and [they] pitied this most luckless infant state, which had first to be put to death, to escape being tortured alive" (*The Soul* 25 [A.D. 210]).

"Now we allow that life begins with conception because we contend that the soul also begins from conception; life taking its commencement at the same moment and place that the soul does" (ibid., 27).

"The law of Moses, indeed, punishes with due penalties the man who shall cause abortion [Ex. 21:22-24]" (ibid., 37).

They [John and Jesus] were both alive while still in the womb. Elizabeth rejoiced as the infant leaped in her womb; Mary glorifies the Lord because Christ within inspired her. Each mother recognizes her child and is known by her child who is alive, being not merely souls but also spirits. (Tertullian, *De A ninta* 26:4, circa 215)

For us [Christians] we may not destroy even the fetus in the womb, while as yet the human being derives blood from other parts of the body for its sustenance. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing; nor does it matter when you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that

is coming to birth. That is a man which is going to be one: you have the fruit already in the seed. (Tertullian, *Apology* 9:6, circa 220)

- Minucius Felix

"**There are some [pagan] women who, by drinking medical preparations, extinguish the source of the future man in their very bowels and thus commit a parricide before they bring forth**. And these things assuredly come down from the teaching of your [false] gods. . . . To us [Christians] it is not lawful either to see or hear of homicide" (*Octavius* 30 [A.D. 226]). (Felix Marcus Minucius, Christian lawyer, circa 215)

Some women take medicines to destroy the germ of future life in their own bodies. They commit infanticide before they have given birth to the infant.

- Hippolytus

"**Women who were reputed to be believers began to take drugs to render themselves sterile, and to bind themselves tightly so as to expel what was being conceived, since they would not, on account of relatives and excess wealth, want to have a child by a slave or by any insignificant person. See, then, into what great impiety that lawless one has proceeded, by teaching adultery and murder at the same time!**" (*Refutation of All Heresies* [A.D. 228]). *Refutation of All Heresies* 9:7, circa 215

Reputed believers began to resort to drugs for producing Sterility and to gird themselves round, so as to expel what was conceived on account of their not wanting to have a child either by a slave or by any paltry fellow, for the sake of their family and excessive wealth. Behold, into how great impiety that lawless one has proceeded, by inculcating adultery and murder at the same time.

- Council of Ancyra

"Concerning women who commit fornication, and destroy that which they have conceived, or who are employed in making drugs for abortion, a former decree excluded them until the hour of death, and to this some have assented. Nevertheless, being desirous to use somewhat greater lenity, we have ordained that they fulfill ten years [of penance], according to the prescribed degrees" (canon 21 [A.D. 314]).

- Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Sometimes, indeed, this lustful cruelty, or if you please, cruel lust, resorts to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it was advancing to life within the womb, should be slain before it was born. (*De Nube et Concupiscentia* 1.17 (15))